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The Times of Halcott

Autumn, 2006 Vol 36

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Halcott History

Ed. Note: Bob Johnson has graciously given the Times of Halcott a copy of a set of notes on the history of Halcott, made by his mother, Deborah Morse Johnson in 1936 on the occasion of a Grange program to celebrate the bi-centennial birthday of George Washington. The notes accompanied various skits and Bob can remember taking part in one of them as a 10 year old. We will publish bits and pieces of Deborah Johnson's work over the next few issues, for your enjoyment.

"It is difficult for us who live in this day of parcel post, electric telegraph, and long distance telephone to imagine a time when all supplies must be drawn from Kingston by horse team. But in our parents' childhood days the yearly trip to Kingston was the great event in family history.

"In the fall the firkins of butter, filled during the summer, were loaded on the heavy wagons, and started for the river. In about a

week the father returned with the yearly supply of groceries, rolls of muslin and a few new dresses, and perhaps a new pair of shoes, or occasionally a new piece of furniture. The railroad changed all this. When the Rondout and Oswego Railroad was proposed, the Town of Halcott issued \$10,000 worth of bonds to aid its construction. These bonds were of the denomination of \$500 and bore 7% interest payable on the first of February in each year. The first installment of \$500 of the principal was paid in 1874. The first train had come over Pine Hill about two years before. The road was sold under mortgage and the stocks which the town held became worthless. However, the bonds still existed until the last one was paid in.

"Several industries, long since abandoned, were carried on at this time. Tradition tells us of an old potash factory near the turn of the road which enters Johnson Hollow. Another was located near the angle made by the

Bushkill and West Settlement streams, near the Halcott Center post office [where Virgil Streeter lives today]. These supplied salaratus to Halcott housekeepers.”

Thank you, Deborah Johnson. Okay, folks, what is SALARATUS? *IK*

4-H Club Memories Revisited

Donald Bouton

When I read the article about early 4-H Clubs in the last issue of *The Times of Halcott*, it brought back some fond memories.

I joined the 4-H Club when I was ten years old. We had regular meetings at the Grange Hall. Leslie Streeter was our leader. I believe our early county leaders were D.B. Fales and later John D. Merchant.

On some Saturdays, if we were to do woodworking, we would meet at the Jim Garrison barn and use his farm workshop. Liberty Parker was our teacher. We made bird houses, desk files, book ends, and other wooden items. Lib was a very good instructor and had all the tools of the trade.

The times when we were to work at the rope work, Marion Morse was our teacher. In the early days, nearly all farmers used a powered hay-fork to take the hay to the top of the barn. This consisted of using a one inch rope about seventy-five feet long. Occasionally, the rope would break and Marion would get a call. He could splice it so you could hardly tell where the break had been. He taught us how to tie all kinds of knots and then use them on the farm. We also made rope halters for calves and cows.

I made a display of several knots and hitches and in the fall of 1930 sent them to the State Fair in Syracuse and received first prize – I was one happy kid! Yet today, when I tie two

balls of twine together in the hay baler, I think of Marion and use one of his knots that could “never come untied.”

We also raised animals for our 4-H projects. My brother raised Holstein calves and heifers, while I chose registered Duroc Jersey pigs. We took them to the local fairs and also to Syracuse.

We had a 4-H chorus. The leader for the girls was the wife of our pastor, J.P. Venerable, and for the boys it was Jimmie Morrison. I remember spending different afternoons at the Morrison home practicing for one of our get-togethers.

Our Club had a book file. Leslie purchased several books for us. We could take them for two weeks and then pass them on to the next member on the list. One book I distinctly remember and enjoyed was *Silver Chief* by Jack London.

I think that joining an active 4-H Club is one of the very best ways of growing up in the country.

From the Life of a “Haunterpreneur”

Ed. Note: Josh Pultz, son of Nan and Lee Austin, and his partner Jeff Matisoff have made the very courageous leap into self-employment, following a dream that may have been partially inspired by one Halcott Halloween of many years ago. Josh and his cousin Claire DiBenedetto “haunted” the Maples, silhouetted against a lighted window, for the benefit of all the Halcott children who traveled up Greene County Route 3 on a hay wagon. Various other adults along the way, dressed in scary costumes and borrowed canes, jumped out at the passing wagon, much to the delight of the kids. Today, Josh and Jeff are creating a Haunted



House in Atlanta. Here is a letter depicting their troubles and triumphs as they prepare for their opening in October:

One of the first things that our haunted house consultant (the self-proclaimed "Godfather of the haunted attraction industry") told us was that if opening a haunted house were easy, everyone would be doing it. That might explain why you don't see a haunted house on every street corner – it ain't easy.

We are in the early part of week two here in Atlanta and, all in all, things are rolling. We have two and a half out of four haunted houses built and, even with the lights on, it's a little scary, y'all.

Last Sunday began with the arrival of three, 53 ft semi trailers at our doorstep. Four hours and sixteen workers later, the trucks were unloaded – all those wood panels, lights, rigging, fog machines, bloody torsos.... It was all ours and all sitting in neat little piles in our empty grocery store.

Right now we're in the middle of building more walls, ordering lots of props – sides of beef, body bags, Jason masks and a high-tech laser – all the bells and whistles, and trying to stay on top of the little stuff. There is a clock on the top of our website (Screamworksatlanta.com -- check it out!) that provides a constant reminder and ongoing countdown to our opening night. I'm not quite sure what it's down to at the moment, I'm afraid to look, but it's ticking away.

-----10 Days Later -----
We have three of our four haunted houses as-

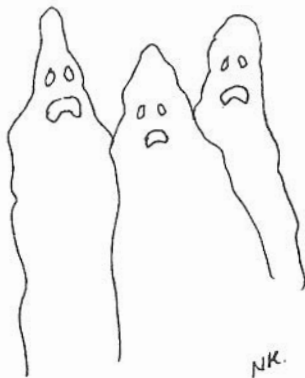
sembled. The fourth, Shipwreck, has to be completely built from scratch. That building started today. We spent most of last weekend shopping at antique and flea markets. One market was so big it took us two days to get

through. When all was said and done, we had purchased more pirate treasure chests than we care to mention and enough faux gold (read: plastic spray painted) pirate booty to sink a ship. The hunt for other props is coming along nicely too, although we had to draw the line at the suggestion to purchase eight "sides of beef" props for the butcher shop room in Shipwreck. Cost would have been \$8,000!

The next two weeks are about getting all our haunted houses up and then comes the detail - installing the effects and lighting, dressing up the rooms... We have given ourselves lots of time to get it all done, but lots needs to get done!

Knot-A-Lot Project Continues

All summer the intrepid Knotweed Eradicators of Halcott (that would be Dan Chesire, Innes Kasanof, the Delaware County Soil and Water friends and the dedicated Halcott Highway Crew) have been hard at work on Hazel Crosby's stream bank, trying to clear and clear and clear and clear and ... well, you get the picture. We have certainly become more familiar with knotweed. Wouldn't it be wonderful to harness that energy? The power of rebirth has been both enviable and enraging. At press time, we have planted Siberian irises and daylilies in its place, hoping against hope that these beauties will do the rest of the job for us.





How I Got to Halcott

Paul Steinfeld

Since my childhood, hiking has been a beloved hobby. It started in Claremont Park, near my home in the Bronx, and gradually moved northward to Tippet's Brook, Bear Mountain Park, and the Catskill Forest Preserve. New York State Conservation Department nurtured my activities with their literature, including trail guides and locations of lean-to shelters.

During the 1950s, I carried heavy responsibilities for the dependent, neglected, and emotionally disturbed children under the care of the Jewish Child Care Association of New York. At the Association's Pleasantville Cottage School my family and I lived on the grounds close by the 200 children and other personnel. This proximity permitted no relaxation from the multiple requirements of residential treatment. I soon learned that the economic benefits of housing and board as part of my remuneration could lead to "burnout" on the job, unless one could find a retreat during days off. This need for a retreat brought me back to the Catskills, where I began to hunt for a real home.

During the hunt I heard the term "abandoned farm." During World War II Catskill farmers found ready markets for anything they produced, from milk to eggs and vegetables. With the end of the war and development of traffic in agricultural products, the stony soil and hard winters of the Catskills could not compete with more benign terrains which could ship to the New York City markets. Therefore, many Catskill farmers sold out, or even abandoned their farms. A real estate agent in Kingston led me to Mr. Boscu's farm in 1958.

Constantine Boscu, an immigrant from

Rumania, in 1933 had purchased a 106-acre farm in Halcott. Mr. Boscu, a skillful, hard worker, renovated his old farmhouse, which had been built about 1840, and lived there with his wife and daughter. Boscu's farm produced milk for the local dairy, chickens, eggs, and vegetables for local hotels. After his wife's death and his daughter's move to Long Island, Mr. Boscu found it increasingly difficult to operate his farm, especially since his own health was failing. He sold his dairy herd and farm equipment and rented his pasture to a neighboring farmer.

Mr. Boscu continued his high standards for the care of his farm. On August 8, 1958, when I came to take title to the farm, Mr. Boscu was busily liming the meadows. Shortly before that and after his agreement to sell the farm, he bought a new pump for the water system, because the old one wasn't working well.

Mr. Boscu has passed on, but we've been privileged to show the details of his stewardship to his daughter and her family when they've visited.

Breezy Hill Inn

Many of us have watched with great curiosity and enjoyment as the old farmhouse located on the Halcott "high road," once belonging to Helen Miller and the Meck family, broke free of its cocoon and became an amazingly gorgeous butterfly. The house was sold in December, 2001. For 33 months, Michelle and Alan Sidrane worked on it as well as on the grounds that surround it. Today, they are adding a garage/storage structure that will echo some of the same lines as the house.

In November 2005, the Inn opened for business, a lovingly restored, gracious and comfortable Bed and Breakfast. The *Times of Halcott* staff visited the Sidranes the other day for a peek at the results. What elegance! The

current owners have an obvious and abiding respect for the structure. Michelle told us as we toured, that the house has “beautiful bones,” and was built around 1910. They have kept the original footprint, seen in the second story, but added a wrap-around porch on the first floor where guests can sit and admire the spectacular views. Local resources have been used where possible, beginning with those who worked on the project: all work on the house was done by local craftsmen. Landscape paintings on the walls include artists from the his-



Alan & Michelle Sidrane on the steps of the Breezy Hill Inn

toric Pakatakan Art School. Most of the furnishings came originally from Roberts Auction. The woodwork throughout the house is extensive and beautifully refinished, showing off the local hardwoods from these Catskill hills.

The Inn has three rooms, each of which sleeps two, and one suite that accommodates up to five. Part of the porch is screened-in, inviting guests to wander forth with their sec-

ond cup of coffee. The cellar is a big surprise. It is light and airy, holding a conference/recreation room with a pool table and games, a work-out room, and a steam room. The Sidranes have arranged the landscaping so that there is a large flat grassy area beyond the porch entrance for a tent. A fundraiser for Belleayre Music Conservancy was held in early September. And speaking of the landscaping, the gardens that surround the Inn are a treat to inspect. There are banks of interesting hostas, borders of daylilies, as well as many other tastefully arranged perennials, all done by Alan Sidrane.

Visit their website at www.breezyhillinn.com for more information, or call them at 254-5615. You will be delighted as we were to witness the loving attention that has been given to the house. Michelle wondered aloud what Helen Miller would have thought if she had seen the house today. We are certain that she would have been pleased. We wish the Sidranes all the best. *IK*

Beyond 911

There are a few situations where calling 911 is inappropriate, but questions still need answering. For simple questions, you may call the Town central phone number, 845-254-6441, and leave a message for a town official. The machine then automatically dials that official and forwards the message.

People sometimes call in to 911 when they see smoke across the valley. The call triggers an alarm and when the firemen get there, they occasionally find that someone is just burning brush. The Fire Department asks that if you plan to burn a pile of brush, please call Tim Johnsmeyer at 254-4470 to report it. It is a common courtesy that we don't always think

about, but saves a lot of effort on the part of our dedicated volunteer firemen. *IK*

Correspondence:

“The Halcott United Methodist Church expresses its thanks and appreciation to the Halcott Community Fund for its generous donation to our Janet Kelder Riss Awards Fund. Thank you for your continued support. Nancy Reynolds, Financial Secretary.”

“To the Halcott Community Fund: Thank you for your generous donation and continued support. Sincerely, Lee Austin, President, Margarettville Memorial Hospital/Mountainside Residential Care Auxiliary.”

PASSAGES:

Krista Jean Pagano, the grand daughter of Vic and Jackie Pagano has become an honorary member of the Cambridge Who’s Who, an organization formerly known as the Manchester Who’s Who, a prestigious business index of professionals in the USA, UK, Canada, and Australia. Congratulations, Krista!

Adina Johnson, whose ways and workings we’ve kept in touch with over the years in the *Times of Halcott*, is now back in our valley as a dairy farmer. Adina lives with Tim and Chris, her parents and milks 27 cows twice a day. I asked Tim if she’s doing business any differently than he had done, and he replied that she’s trying some new ideas, such as intensive grazing. We wish Adina the very best.

Sybil and Paul Margaritis are leaving beautiful Trinidad. On August 23rd she wrote: “We are relocating to London. The ‘relocating’ takes place next week. Felines are set with all their documents to enter the UK sans quarantine. Both cats are snuggled up next to me as I write.”



HALCOTT FAIR!

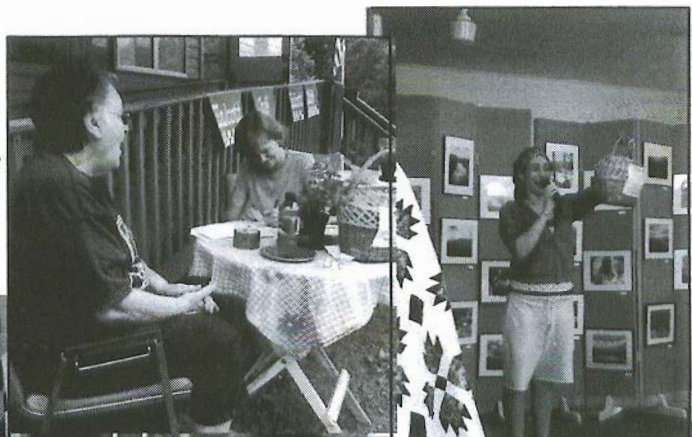
It was a wonderful year, yet again. From the set up to the clean up, people pitched in with good will, good grace, and good talent. Lee Austin’s set-up crew began the weekend on Friday afternoon with lots of good souls scratching their heads over the tent poles and parts. Finally, the tents came together. Meanwhile, the inside crews were laying out and pricing attic treasures, setting up tables, putting out crafts. The next day, by noon, we were just about ready. Perennial plants that had been potted up that spring were on display; Karl and Bertha’s roast dinner was beginning to waft wonderful smells into the building. The Halcott Community Fund had purchased some exhibit panels for the stage, and as a special treat, Anne Linden hung a beautiful collection of photographs taken of the area. Baskets of goodies, put together by different groups in Halcott were lined up, waiting to be bid on at the silent auction. Baked goods arrived for the Methodist Church bake sale. Ron Morse brought his delicious maple products to sell again. Nancy Ballard sold raffle tickets to both a quilt that she had made and for the 50/50 pot. Somehow, she enticed folks to purchase some of both. Alan Reynolds selected a very small part of his vast collection of fine music CDs that crooned

away all day on the Grange Hall's new sound system, courtesy again of the Halcott Community Fund.

People flocked to our fair from as far away as Pennsylvania (Tom and Rebecca Hackman), by surprise from Washington, DC & NYC (Sasha and Vanya Kasanof),

even from California (Erica Roberts) and of course, from the Netherlands to give out popcorn (that would be Laura

Kasanof!) The only reluctant partner was the weather – it rained big time in Halcott that day – the tents were pouring



water spouts, kids were sopping and the planned water pistol games had to be scrapped. Thankfully, the temperature was warm, even muggy, so that no one minded the occasional dousing. But aside from the rain, everyone seemed to have fun. At the end of the day, we couldn't believe that the amount of money we took in was more than

last year, when the sun shone and people were dry. It just proves how indestructible the Halcott spirit is. A great big thank you to all who helped. Let's do it again next year! As always, it'll be the third Saturday, July 21, 2007. *IK*

Photos courtesy of Greg Beechler. Starting at top, clockwise: Nancy Ballard selling tickets to Susan Benedetto; Jenna Konstantine selling tickets to everyone; Kari Pagnano, Bonnie Brown Moroff admiring kids' artwork; the photographer himself buying dinner tickets and unwisely leaving his camera unattended; Sasha, Vanya, Innes Kasanof; Bob VanValkenburgh & Alan Reynolds.

Dominican Republic, 2006

Elena DiBenedetto

As I walked into church one Sunday morning a flyer was handed to me that really caught my attention. In July, a group from my church would be making a trip to the Dominican Republic to bring medicines and Jesus to the people of that country. I knew right away that this was the trip for me.

Altogether our group consisted of fifteen people including my Pastor and his wife, two other adults and eleven teenagers ranging from 14 to 19 years old. We would be meeting another Pastor and the rest of the team (which was a total of 26 people) in the Dominican Republic. We worked with Sound the Trumpet Ministries. This team goes down year after year, bringing medicines or ministering to the local baseball teams. Pastor Jim Jorgenson, who heads the ministry, was in constant contact with my pastor, Pastor Robert Engelhardt, to let us know of anything special we should bring and how we should prepare for the trip.

Step one: Paying for the trip: Altogether, the trip cost about \$1300 plus any spending money we wanted to bring with us for shopping and other stuff. This meant for many, if not all of us, a lot of working to pay it off. I began to work even more for my parents, also babysitting when I found the time. Even though it seemed like a lot of work at the time, it was well worth it (and we would be doing a lot more work once we got down there!).

Step two: What to pack: We had two meetings before finally setting off for the Dominican Republic mostly on what to bring or not bring, what to expect, and how to prepare. A lot of prayer time went into preparing for the trip covering everything from safety to being able to get all of the medicines

through customs. We were reminded not to bring anything expensive because you don't want it lost or stolen but to bring lots of bug spray! This was a great thing since there are no screens on the windows and many bugs. Every night before going to bed we would put some on and then again in the morning and whenever else throughout the day. (It was not fun to be bitten considering the bites usually were bigger than they are here at home.) We also needed the not-so-normal stuff such as a sleeping bag (which actually ended up being a sheet because it was so hot), pillow, towels, shampoo and soap and plenty of shorts and t-shirts since we weren't staying at a hotel.

Step three: Getting there: The team from my church met at 4am on Wednesday July 5th to load the cars and get to JFK airport on time. Everyone was so excited to go so we ended up not sleeping at all on the way down or even on the plane! We just couldn't wait to get to the D.R. So, after saying our good-byes to family, we all loaded into the vehicles and left Catskill Mountain Christian Center en route to the airport.

When we arrived at JFK there was a long line to get through check-in and it ended up taking about an hour and a half. Once through check-in we made our way to the gate and waited for our plane. Our first interesting experience was when we found out that half of our team did not have seats on the plane (which included mine)! That problem was straightened out and then we were off to the D.R.

When we looked down from the plane we could see farmland stretching on forever with huge mountains rising high in the distance. It was a beautiful country. As soon as we stepped off the plane we felt the heat but couldn't wait to get started. After

waiting a long time for our luggage, we were able to get through customs without a bag being checked which meant all of the medicines made it though (Thank You Lord)! We made our way out to the bus where Pastor Jim and Hector (our bus driver whom we came to love) were waiting for us and then we headed for the place where we would be staying.

We stayed at a Methodist Center with a school, which was surrounded by a fence and guarded by a guy with a shotgun who was waiting at the gate. (This was the typical thing to see down there--guards with big guns and high fences surrounding homes.) We unpacked quickly then began exploring the center. We had a large bathroom with seven showers, which we ended up sharing with cockroaches! One night one crawled on my friend in the shower and another was in one of my other friend's shower. Out back behind our dorms was a baseball field and basketball courts. The grass was different than here and the trees were awesome! Some had big red flowers and huge trunks with little brown lizards running about the branches. Palm trees were everywhere. They looked awesome in the evening when they were in front of the sunset. Chickens ran around everywhere and every once in a while you could see a cow or horse tied along side the road!

Most of our meals consisted of rice and beans but we also had yucca (cooked about a million different ways), pancakes and chicken which the one night we joked that it could have been one of the ones we saw running around the center that morning! The food was really good (most of the time-we had been preparing for the worst). We had to watch what we ate because water or fresh fruit could be bad. (We had to use water bottles to brush our

teeth because we couldn't use the tap water--definitely different than Halcott!) At one clinic we were given coconuts to drink from! We watched the guys go out and knock the coconuts down with a long pole and then they would cut the top off with machetes and hand them to you to drink. I think most people had a machete or two in the D.R.

Our first church service, which was the second night, taught us about Dominican time. It was supposed to start at 7pm but when we arrived, the Pastor wasn't even there yet! It was in a small room on the third floor of a building so it was extremely hot and waiting wasn't much fun but well worth it. I think the service finally started at 8:30 but it was extremely powerful. We had to leave service early so that we could be well rested for the next day but we were later invited back to that church towards the end of the trip. Although the timing was different than what we're used to here we got used to it and usually just laughed about it.

Our first big test was the first medical clinic we did that Friday. We packed all the medical supplies on the bus along with the puppet stage, puppets and other kids equipment then piled on and headed to Lacey. Along the way we would pass through towns and you could tell which had more money than others. Most homes were made of concrete but in the very poor parts you would see small houses built from any wood the people could find so usually they didn't look very strong. We did see Mercedes, Audis and BMW's while down on the island but the mode of transportation most often seen was a moped. Whole families would drive by on one! No one was wearing a helmet; mothers would just be holding babies with little kids in between the adults.

When we arrived at the first site of the clinic it was an old broken down house with a small dirt yard and barbed wire fence

surrounding it. There was no electricity to the house either so we had to use a bathroom in a nearby house. There were a few people there, watching as we unpacked and started setting up. We then did a small service and then the fun began. We had a few puppet shows for the kids, which they loved then we handed out candy and just played soccer or volleyball the rest of the afternoon. They also loved the candy! We had lollipops, which were a big hit with the young and old. If you pulled out a bag of candy the children would swarm around you so then we had to try and tell them to form a line. This is when our new friend Hillary or her mom would come in handy because they could speak Spanish fluently. They were often called upon to translate for us. It was a lot of fun trying to figure out what we were trying to say to each other though.

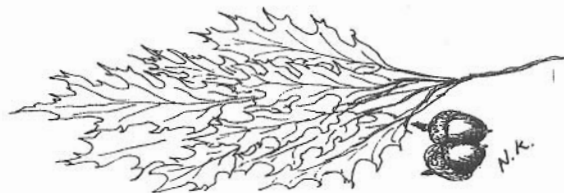
The Dominican kids were not very shy around us. They would see us playing with a ball and either just join in, or wait for us to motion for them to come. Each medical clinic seemed to be a little more difficult to try and get the kids to respond to "the Americans". It was like God showed us how we could play with them without having to know the language on the first day to give us confidence for the days to come.

All of the medical clinics we did were amazing. We did a total of four clinics throughout the trip and then several church services. People would come from all over looking for free medicines and check-ups by a doctor and would leave with more than that. Each clinic began with a small service consisting of a testimony by a team member or a short word then prayer. The Holy Spirit really moved through these times healing people and getting them saved so that they would know that they would spend eternity

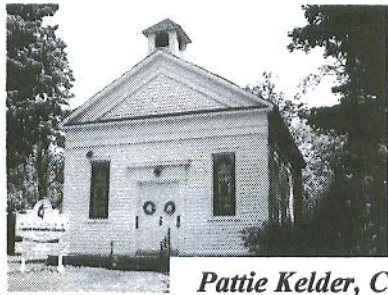
in Heaven. Just by playing with the children before seeing the doctor they would see the love of Jesus Christ through us.

The children were so cute. It was so cool to see how much their eyes lit up when you gave them a lollipop or blew bubbles. It was kind of sad to leave each day because you know you wouldn't see those kids again (unless you go back next year). You wanted more time to play and have fun but you know that you needed to get back to the dorms for dinner and sleep because the next day would be just as busy.

By the end of the trip we were all very tired and looking forward to the rest and relaxation time we had at the resort for the last two days but it was sad to go. Throughout the whole trip we saw around 800 people and so many people came to know the Lord and were healed of all kinds of sicknesses. At our last clinic a blind woman was cured and able to see. Also, we saw many women who had pains in their stomachs and after being prayed for they were healed. Jesus did many things through us that week, not only for the people of the Dominican Republic, but also for the team itself. Our lives will be forever changed. I would highly recommend going on a mission trip because you come to realize how much you have at home and you really will be forever changed.



**Halcott Cemetery Association
Dancake Breakfast, October 8th,
8 to 11 AM At the Grange Hall.**



Pattie Kelder, Correspondent

THE TIMES

OF THE
HALCOTT METHODIST CHURCH
Autumn, 2006

25th Anniversary

Where does time go? The Upper Catskills Larger Parish, of which the Halcott United Methodist Church is a member, will celebrate 25 years of shared ministry on September 24th in the Margaretville United Methodist Church. Several former pastors, including Tim Riss, Ken Williams, Phyllis Skidmore and Ralph Darmstadt, are planning to attend. What a reunion! While the deadline for making dinner reservations has passed, all are welcome to attend the 4:00 service where our dynamic bishop, Jeremiah Park, will deliver the message.

The service will begin with remarks from our clergy guests.

Prayers of the People

It has been a joy and a privilege to get together on Thursday mornings to pray for each other this summer. We are pleased that many neighbors in the valley have shared prayer needs with us. While we do not yet have a fall schedule, please be assured that we want to hear of your concerns in order to add our prayers to yours. "And this is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us." 1 John 5:14.

Bake Sales

Many thanks to the Halcott Fairgoers who baked and patronized our most successful bake sale to date! The next bake sale will be on Election Day, November 7th. See you then.



Times for Worship Services

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'" Ps. 122:1. Worship services continue to be held at 9:00 a.m. most of the year. The time usually shifts to 7:30 p.m. for the winter soon after Thanksgiving. This year the Christmas Candlelight Service will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 17th.

Community Christmas Program

This year the Community Christmas Program will be held at the Grange Hall at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 2nd. According to the grapevine, we may have a real baby Jesus on stage this year. Please start early to encourage your children's participation. The producer will be most grateful!

Reflecting

Fall is at hand and Veterans Day will soon be upon us. Five years after 9/11 and some 60 years after the end of WWII we are again a nation at war in a world which sorely needs peace. Yet we look forward in hope to safer times and give thanks every time an attempt to compromise that safety is foiled.

There is much we can do, as adults, children and families, to spread that hope to our military personnel. Cards can be written for chaplains to give to the wounded. Packages can be sent. Maybe Halcott can make an organized contribution. Please help by sharing your ideas, contacts, time and energy. In the meantime, here is an excerpt to ponder from *The Quilt of Hope* by Mary Tatem, published by Barbour Publishing, Inc. Used by permission.

A Touch of Home

After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes." Nehemiah 4:14 NIV

Sitting on his bunk in a primitive barracks, in a land devastated for centuries by rival powers, Dean tore into a package from his girlfriend continents away.

Loud guffaws rolled down the line of bunks when the opened box revealed a handmade quilt of pieced stars in quiet colors.

"A quilt! Little boy ready for his nappy?" Carl yelled, in one of the milder verbal jabs. A barrage of jokes accompanied playful punches from the men. The soldiers comprised a well-trained unit, built on easy camaraderie and trust.

"Shucks, I thought it was another care package full of cookies." Carl leaned over to look closer at the carton.

"There's more," Dean said as he held up a smaller box. "It's Laura's homemade caramels."

Brett made a grab for the caramels. "I get them all because I didn't tease, right?"

Dean outmaneuvered him and tossed several handfuls around the room. "There's enough for everyone," he said. The quilt was forgotten in the flurry of caramel grabbing.

Later that night, screeching rockets whistled

overhead and exploded near the camp, shaking the men out of their sleep. Such barrages were a frequent enemy tactic.

After a chorus of curses and exclamations, the men laid back in their beds, each soldier immersed in his own thoughts. They waited for their adrenaline to recede so sleep could return, forcing their minds to quiet to allow their bodies much-needed rest in preparation for the rigors of the upcoming day.

Dean pulled Laura's quilt closer to his chin in the cold barracks. He thought he could just catch the scent of her favorite perfume and guessed the other men might have liked a quilt for themselves. With memories of home, the warmth of family, and the delights of one very special girl, Dean finally drifted off to sleep.

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God's Pattern

Friendships are a gift. Friends encourage us when we are down. In the military, God uses the friendships and trust forged by hours of arduous training to help soldiers endure deprivation and survive danger. Memories of home, more peaceful times, and God's goodness to us in the past provide a place of mental refuge when a soldier – or anyone – needs respite from the realities of the moment.

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The Warmth of Hope

"You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety."

Job 11:18 NIV