

# THE TIMES

OF

# HALCOTT

## SUMMER 2007

## VOLUME 39



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Fun with Scientific Nomenclature of the  
Catskills  
(with apologies to Ogden Nash) - PD



### Skunk

Mephitis mephitis

You often outwit us  
You lift up your tail  
So your odor  
can git us.

### Porcupine

Erethizon dorsatum

But

None iz on your bottom.

### Woodchuck

Marmota monax, whistle-pig

Loves grass, eats twigs.

### Beaver

Castor canadensis

Your teeth are picket fences.



## Opossum

A *Didelphis marsupialis*

Should live in Austr-y-al-is.

With pocketed navility

And prehensile agility

He knows just where his tail is.

## The Home Vegetable Garden

*By Norman Fuller*

A hundred years ago most farm families had huge vegetable gardens and people in town grew vegetables in their backyards. During World War II, having Victory Gardens was a way of contributing to the war effort. Even today, you can see gardens planted in the inner city.

A vegetable garden was a tremendous source of food for the farm family. My grandmother never bought a can or package of frozen or canned vegetables. It was also a source of income since the surplus produce was sold. Today, produce is sold in Farmer's Markets during the summer. Youth and adults exhibit vegetables at fairs.



The family vegetable garden gave the family a feeling of making contribution. Working together in the garden gave a feeling of family togetherness that is lacking in modern society.

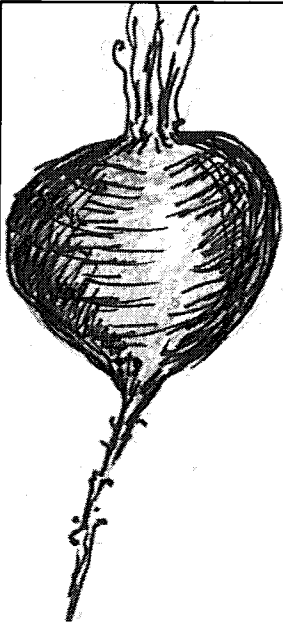
During the "early times," the men and older boys plowed and harrowed the

soil, marked out the rows and cultivated when needed. The women and children planted, weeded and harvested the vegetables. These families often saved seeds from year to year. The Shakers even sold seeds in the early 1900s.

Most of the cultivating was done with horses and the weeding was done by hoe or hand. Hoeing and weeding by hand for eight hours was backbreaking work. I began working in the family garden when I was about five years old. When I pulled out a whole row of beans, my mother gave me a lesson on which were plants and which were weeds. Rototillers weren't introduced until the late 1940s or early 1950s.

Manure from the farm was placed on the soil and plowed under. Manure was a good source of weeds and nutrients. Wood ashes were spread on the garden since they were a good source of potash. Corn was side dressed with nitrate of soda. Commercial fertilizers weren't always available.

Most insects were controlled by mechanical means. The children were given  $\frac{1}{4}$  can of kerosene and told to pick off potato bugs and drop them in the can. They were also told to destroy the egg masses. This had to be done every week.



Very few sprays or dusts were used since they cost money; some of the few that were used were copper sulfate, lead arsenic and rotenone.

Animals, or “varmint” as they were called, were as big a problem as they are today. The three worst were woodchucks, raccoons and deer. The old timers controlled

them by shooting, dogs, trapping and high fences. At our house we cannot grow sweet corn because of raccoons – those ringtailed furry eyed bandits.

Harvesting the vegetables in the fall involved the whole family. Vegetables that were canned were beans, corn, peas, some greens, beets, carrots, tomatoes and lima or shell beans. The average farm family canned 200 to 500 quarts in addition to some jars of pickles and relishes.

The women used the hot water method to can. The pressure cooker was not in use then. Then the jars were carefully inspected for proper seals, cooled, and placed on shelves in the cellar. Vegetables such

as beets, carrots, cabbage, onions, turnips, pumpkins, squash and potatoes were placed in the root cellar which was a cool, dry place with temperatures above freezing. Apples were also stored in the root cellar. Apples and potatoes were not placed near each other. The cellar served as a mini-produce store for the family. Freezers were not in general use until the early 1950s.

All shapes, kinds and descriptions of vegetables were grown in New York. Certain vegetables were grown in some areas and not in others. When I came to Greene County as a 4H agent, I had never heard of lima beans. Under a Sears Foundation Garden Program, I tried to introduce shell beans. They were a complete flop in Greene County. Everyone thought they tasted awful but people in Maine ate them.

The next year we introduced black plastic as a way of weed control. It went over very well. When we inspected some gardens, all we would find was the tomatoes under the black plastic. In gardening, sometimes you lose and sometimes you win. Sweet corn as we know it was not introduced until after the Civil War.

If you haven't tasted vegetables fresh from the garden, you have not lived.

My father used to say

that the only good sweet corn was that which had been picked, husked and cooked within an hour. Nothing can beat a tomato grown in your own

**Caterpillar Haiku**

*(with apologies to my PETA and Hindu friends)*

**I squash them sometimes  
To help keep the valley green;  
Sometimes I feel mean. PD**

garden.

One value of the home vegetable garden is the therapeutic value. Getting your hands dirty and working the soil does a lot to relax many people, including myself. The satisfaction of seeing the seeds come up and become vegetables to harvest is wonderful.

Home vegetable gardens are a lot of work and many people have given them up. I think they are worth the effort. The garden doesn't have to be big. Just try a few tomato plants – you'll like it.

### TOWN TOPICS

**FROM THE TOWN CLERK:** Dog Licenses are now available for up to 3 years. The catch is that the rabies vaccine cannot expire prior to the license expiration. Any questions, call the Town number, 254-6441 and leave a message for the Clerk.

**FROM THE HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT:** Please deposit ONLY RECYCLABLES at the re-cycling center at the Highway Department. People have been leaving computers, mattresses, furniture and garbage there. If you have any questions, please call 254-5736 for more information.

**FROM THE CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER:** Don't forget that building permit applications may be printed from the website, [www.townofhalcott.com](http://www.townofhalcott.com)

**FROM NANCY BALLARD:** NYS Public Service at 1-800-342-3377 is an advocacy group that will take your complaints about phone or electric service, etc. and help resolve them.

**FROM THE HALCOTT FAIR COMMITTEE:** There will be another planning

meeting of the Halcott Fair at 9:00AM on June 30th. Join us for hilarity and creativity with a slight dash of insanity.

### Native Son

John Burroughs (April 3, 1837-March 29, 1921) was an American naturalist and essayist important in the evolution of the U.S. conservation movement. According to biographers at the American Memory project at the Library of Congress, John Burroughs was the most important practitioner after Thoreau of that especially American literary genre, the nature essay.



*John Burroughs and "Cuff" at Roxbury, NY (Photo from internet)*

By the turn of the century he had become a virtual cultural institution in his own right: the Grand Old Man of Nature at a time when the American romance with the idea of nature, and the American conservation movement, had come fully into their own.

His extraordinary popularity and popular visibility were sustained by a prolific stream of essay collections, beginning with Wake-Robin in 1871. In the words of his biographer Edward J. Rinehan, Burroughs's special identity was less that of a scientific naturalist than that of "a literary naturalist with a duty to record his own unique perceptions of the natural world."

The result was a body of work whose perfect resonance with the tone of its cultural moment perhaps explains both its enormous popularity at that time, and its relative obscurity since.

Woodchuck Lodge is the beloved farmhouse which he occupied summers during the last decade of his life. During an open house day last summer, Bill Birns told me this story that was related to him by the late Dr. Palen, who, as a young boy, lived in a house on the road. He said

that John Burroughs would walk to the Roxbury Post Office each day to collect his mail and remembers that sometimes he would stop at the Palen house to nap. His mother would shush the children, saying "Be quiet while John is sleeping!"

As in Burroughs' day, Woodchuck Lodge remains a place of peace and beauty.

A National Historic Landmark, the lodge is located on Burroughs Memorial Road, three miles from NYS Route 30, just north of the hamlet of Roxbury in Delaware County.

The rustic farmhouse was built around 1860 by Burroughs' brother Curtis and was used by John as a summer home and writing retreat from 1910-1920. Burroughs listened to the Victrola

and welcomed the dawn on the front porch with its magnificent view, made some of the rustic furniture that still graces the parlor and entertained such notable guests as Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone, Thomas Edison, Hamlin Garland and Ida Tarbell.

Visitors are still most welcome at Woodchuck Lodge, though the interior is open only on specified weekends, when

**COME  
TO THE  
9TH ANNUAL  
HALCOTT FAIR,  
JULY 21<sup>st</sup>  
AT THE  
GRANGE HALL  
THIS YEAR WE BEGIN  
AT 3:00PM AND RUN TIL  
9:00PM**

**There will be all the activities of last year, with the addition of a live auction and dancing starting at 7:00PM to the music of "Country Express." Dinner will begin at 5:00PM and will include the option of a BBQ chicken half for \$5.00 or for \$10.00, a chicken or pork dinner with gravy, 3-bean salad, potato salad, corn if it's in season, dinner roll and dessert.**

trained guides will explain the place of this house in the life and work of the famed nature writer, whose magazine articles and collected essays raised public awareness of the environment during the industrial age.

After touring the Lodge and surrounding grounds, visitors may wish to picnic at Burroughs Memorial Field State Historic Site just up the road. Maintained by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the site includes an outdoor exhibit featuring information and images about Burroughs' life, the "Boyhood Rock" where he daydreamed as a child, and where he was buried on his birthday in 1921. The site is open daily from dawn to dusk.

Woodchuck Lodge will be open from 10 to 2 on the following weekends in 2007:

May 5-6; June 2-3, July 7-8; August 4-5; September 1-2; and October 6-7.

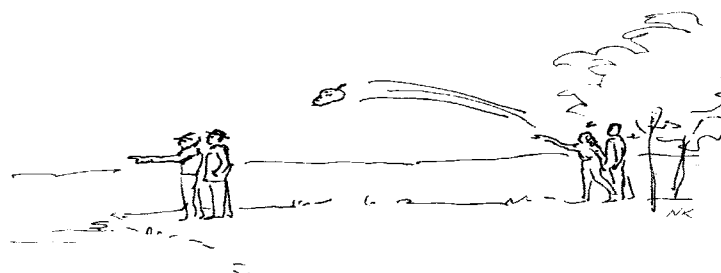
There is no admission fee, but donations toward the restoration and upkeep of the house and site are greatly appreciated at Woodchuck Lodge, Inc., PO Box 492, Roxbury, NY 12474. **KR**

### **Taking Aim at a Famous Publisher (Which one? We'll never know...)**

*By Ruth Reynolds as told to daughter Peg DiBenedetto*

I grew up in Woodstock. A writer by the name of Will Durant had a house down the road, which we passed by to swim in the stream. When I was about 12, I was walking by, and Mr. Durant called me

over; he wanted me to meet some of his friends. He introduced me to the publishers, Mr. Simon and Mr. Schuster. One of them had wandered away a bit, and was looking out toward the mountains. I don't know if it was Simon, or Schuster. We were in the orchard, and there were some rotten old pears on the ground. Mr. Durant picked one up, handed it to me, and asked if I could hit the fellow. I said I could, because I almost always hit what I aimed for. I threw that pear and it just exploded mush all over his back. Whichever one it was didn't say anything to me; neither did Mr. Durant, but I shouldn't have done it and I felt bad that I didn't apologize to the fellow. I did think, though that Mr. Durant should have at least given me a quarter for



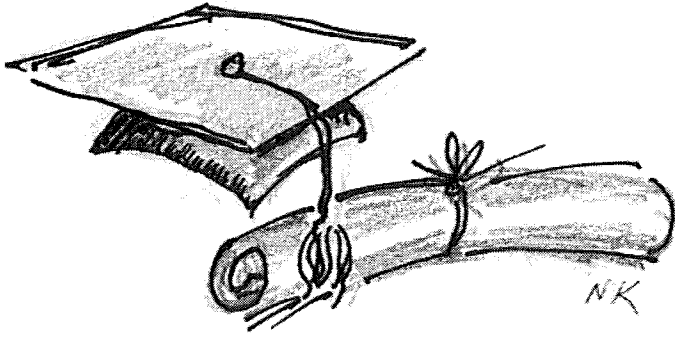
hitting him! But then we all went up to sit on the porch, and Mr. Durant brought out good fruit for us to eat.

### ***HALCOTT'S GRADS***

Three high school seniors from Halcott received diplomas as members of the class of 2007. Lucas Bouton, the son of Dennis & Jennifer Bouton, and Melinda White, the daughter of Alan & Robin-White, graduated from Margaretville Cen-

tral School. Elena DiBenedetto, daughter of Chris & Judy DiBenedetto, finished her studies at the Catskill Mountain Christian Academy in Margaretville.

While at MCS, Lucas was in band and played baseball in grades 7-12. He was an outstanding first baseman for the Blue



will begin his collegiate career at SUNY Delhi by enrolling in the highly acclaimed Golf Course Management Program there.

Melinda will be heading off to SUNY Albany this fall. MCS' Valedictorian is enrolling in the honors college as a Political Science major with the possibility

of attending law school in the future. While in high school Melinda participated in many activities including band, drama club, Honor Society, and class leadership. This summer she will be employed at The Cheese Barrel in Margaretville.

Elena plans to make Rochester, NY her school year residence for the next four years as she attends Roberts Wesleyan College. She

will be entering the Early Childhood/ Special Education program with her eyes focused on teaching in the future. During

high school, Elena enjoyed soccer, band, and Honor Society as well as class and church youth leadership and teaching activities. Over the summer, Elena will be using her gifts in working with young children in addition to helping out on her parents' dairy farm.

Halcott salutes all three of our graduates. Congratulations on your

past accomplishments and may God bless your future endeavors. **JD**

Devils and he will continue to use his talents on the diamond this summer as a part of the newly-formed vintage baseball team in Fleischmanns.

Also this summer, Lucas will be busy working for his parents and grandparents mowing lawns and making hay. In August he





## PASSAGES

Timothy Petry, born March 16, 2007, a brother to join 5 year-old Kayla and parents Tim and Amanda. He arrived the same day the spring *Times of Halcott* hit the mailboxes, so no chance to tell you about it until now.  
.....

Halcott lost two heroes this spring, both important members of our World War II efforts and both cherished in our valley. Vic Pagano and Ruth Reynolds made our lives richer and will be missed.



*Judge Pagano marrying Jim & Karen Rauter.*

### **Victor M. Pagano**

He Loved His Family, Friends, Neighbors  
and the Countryside

*By Victor & Marylou Pagano*

"Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile."

-Albert Einstein

"But how did you ever find this place?" was a question often posed to Dad by relatives and friends visiting at the farm. He would explain that although born in the Bronx, he had lived part of his boyhood in

Parkville, where he had grown to love the country life. As a young man, he often hunted in the area, and in 1953 saw a newspaper ad describing a house and land for sale – perfect for hunting and fishing! And so, in 1953, he and Mom became part-time residents. A graduate of Manhattan Col-

lege and Teachers College of Columbia University, Dad pursued his career as a math teacher first in Yonkers, and then at Mamaroneck High School. However, his teaching schedule allowed him to spend every weekend, school holiday, and the summer months at his "home" on Turk Hollow Road. Then, finally, in 1978, he realized his dream of moving to Halcott permanently.

As one neighbor described Dad, he was "upright, civic-minded, and always useful to others". He served in the Army during World War II in Europe and North Africa, and was a member of the Margaretville American Legion Post #216. Professionally, he was a member of the Mamaroneck Teachers Association, the National Education Association, and the New York State United Teachers. Over the years, he served Halcott as a councilman, assessor, and deputy supervisor, and was elected to the position of Town Justice, a seat which he held for 30 years. His long



tenure brought him into contact with all in the Halcott community. One of his favorite, and most pleasant duties, was performing marriages. He officiated at our marriage, too, but that was somewhat easier than the time he had to reach the bride and groom by snowmobile.

At home, Dad was often found in his garage, a place filled with all sorts of items which might be needed one day. Most often he would be welding some piece of broken equipment. If not in the garage, he might be on his tractor mowing or haying. Always the teacher, he patiently taught my brother and me, as well as our friends and cousins, how to perform the many farm chores. Among those was baling the hay which was needed for our horses. According to our cousin Robert, he even made cleaning the manure out of the barn fun. Swimming in the pond, catching fish in the stream, tractor rides, playing softball, and picking berries are some of the memories he provided, not only for his children, but also for his grandchildren.

Dad passed away on March 13<sup>th</sup>. Although a man of few words, he touched the lives of many friends and neighbors, and was devoted to his family. Dad was very much looking forward to marrying granddaughter Krista and her fiancé Josh, on July 13<sup>th</sup>, and looking forward to his first great-grandchild to be born to granddaughter Alyssa and her husband Dennis. He and Mom would have

celebrated their 62<sup>nd</sup> anniversary in October. However, we know his spirit, and his quick smile will always be with us.

### ***Ruth Franckling Reynolds***

Early on the morning of May 15<sup>th</sup>, we lost Ruth Reynolds, wife of Ward and mother of Alan, Nancy, Warren and Peg. Ruth's flying career in World War II is beautifully documented by her family and can be found on the website [www.wingacrossamerica.us](http://www.wingacrossamerica.us), following the link to WASP on the Web, Final Flight, and then clicking on her name. And Ruth's granddaughter Claire DiBenedetto wrote a wonderful story about her WASP adventures in the Spring 2003 issue of *The Times of Halcott*.

But Ruth was even more than a pilot. She was very dear to me, the first person I met in Halcott, and became over the years a strong friend. When I look back over the part of Ruth's life that I knew, I am struck by what a good friend she was to many: she served the Town faithfully as the secretary of the Planning Board,



*Ruth Franckling as a WASP during WWII*

helping to shepherd in Subdivision Regulations and Site Plan Review, Halcott's two

land use laws. She served the church faithfully as the Financial Secretary, receiving and depositing funds, writing thank-you notes, and keeping the books. I remember a story of a "painting bee" at the Halcott church where Ruth, high up on a ladder with a paint can, was painting the ceiling. She told me, laughing, that suddenly the can fell from the ladder and landed -- right side up! She felt that the Lord was surely present that day.

She served others faithfully. When her mother-in-law, Claretta Reynolds began to fail in health, Ruth stepped in quietly, preparing meals, washing and cleaning daily. When daughter Peg and family moved to Korea for a year, Ruth sent over a tin of her famous chocolate chip cookies. She reported to me later that they had arrived totally pulverized, and had to be eaten with a spoon...

We retired to Halcott full-time in the summer of 1988 and when we looked out the window that first morning, we saw a garden planted around the house by dear friend Ruth with the help of Nina Kasanof. It contained poppies, bachelor buttons and primroses that still bloom with abundant joy in my garden today. We also saw some exciting red fruit on the cherry tree that had been planted during our absence to celebrate the birth of Kane DiBenedetto. We raced outside to see our cherries, only to discover radishes, tied onto the branches by dear friend Ruth. I

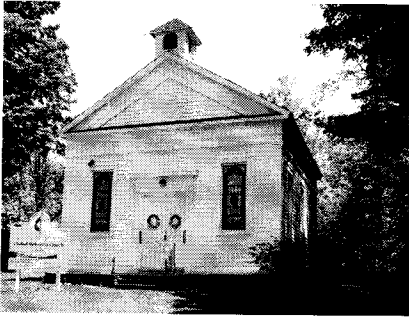
think she's still laughing.

Ruth loved her gardens. I remember her method of composting was to collect vegetable scraps in a Schwann's ice cream container, which when full, she would bury in the garden. By summer's end, there were ice-cream container-sized holes all over the garden. She grew some of the sweetest tomatoes ever, which were invariably ready before mine, a fact that she enjoyed I thought rather too much...

Running through these reminiscences makes me miss Ruth even more keenly, but how thankful I am to have known her. She was for me, and I suspect for many women, an example of great strength and quiet accomplishments. At the end of the day, Ruth could say with pride that she influenced many lives for the better. But if I know my Ruth, such a thought would never have crossed her mind. Goodbye, Ruth! Be well with God.

**IK**





*PATTIE KELDER, CORRESPONDENT*

# THE TIMES OF THE HALCOTT METHODIST CHURCH SUMMER 2007

## **Change of Worship Time**

**Effective the first Sunday in July, our morning worship time will change from 9:00 to 10:30. Please help pass the word to seasonal residents.**

### **Graduates**

We extend congratulations to Kerry DeVito, daughter of Pastor Bill & Kay Hawes on receiving her LPN degree, to college graduates Erin and Carrie Asher and to high school graduates Lucas Bouton, **Elena DiBenedetto** and **Melinda White**. What a joyous time of accomplishment with new horizons in sight!

### **Upcoming Events**

Many thanks to all who came to the chicken BBQ this spring and to the Arkville Fire Department for hosting us. The BBQ will likely be in April again next year. Meanwhile, it's time to think about our bake sale at the Halcott Fair. We thank bakers and buyers in advance for your kind support. Choose from a wide selection of home baked goods or request a mouthwatering old time favorite.

### **Events for Youth and Children**

Early in July there will be an opportunity for young people to work on outreach projects. There are plans for assembling school kits and sending cards to wounded service personnel. Other ways of helping out are being considered.

### **Letters**

You may recall that Peggy DiBenedetto has visited Pat Wilkins in Ghana with school supplies on a couple of occasions. The children are most appreciative. Despite the expense of sending mail to the

US, Pat has forwarded letters and report cards from some of them. Some excerpts . . .

**FROM PAT** - "(Don't) be discouraged if your children did not do so well academically or if their attendance is low. . . Remember, school is not the only thing on their minds and their daily survival is a struggle. Some families suffer a loss of income when children are placed in school, and find it difficult to recover from these losses. In other cases, families migrate or a child is placed in someone else's care.

**FROM DANIEL**, whose report card comments include excellent, respectful, obedient, hardworking and serious—"I am writing to thank you for paying my school fees. I also want to inform you that I have passed my examination and am now in class four. May God bless you and have long life."

**FROM EMILIA**, who finds it difficult to get to school on a regular basis -"I am very glad to write you this letter. I know by the grace of God you are fine. I write to thank you for paying my school fees and buying my books. God richly bless you for your kindness extended to me. I promise to learn hard and to make good use of whatever you have spent on me."

**FROM MARY**, who is serious, respectful and regularly attends class but could do better. "The reason why I am writing this letter is to thank you for the great things you have done for me. May the Almighty richly bless you."

Closer to home, we often get letters from **ROSA-LINE CONSTABLE** in Clovesville. She started writing to us a few years ago when some of the high school and college crowd was still in Sunday

School. Along with appreciation for the cards we send, Rosie always shares some wisdom that reminds us of the important things in life. Recently she wrote: "Please excuse the delay in my answering your beautiful card. When I get a card from you people I always feel that God is a little closer to me than before. Since I don't get to church any more I spend my time reading the Bible. This is my 21st time to read it through cover to cover. Each time takes me a year so I've been at it a long time. Also I've read 14 books of the "Left Behind" series which are fictional character stories based on the book of Revelation. Reading keeps my mind active so I won't just sit and worry about myself. I have also learned to laugh at myself and forgive others who have hurt me in the past. That way you live longer and enjoy life no matter what it throws your way. Laughter is the best medicine when you are old. It keeps you feeling young. I know. God bless you and protect you with His Guardian Angels now and always."

During some of life's more difficult years, Rosaline penned many poems. Writing helped her keep things in perspective. She has been kind enough to share a few with this column, including this prayer:

Oh let me overlook, oh Lord, the faults that I do find  
In others, Lord -instead make known the many faults of  
mine.

Let me see the spark of GOOD in every one I see  
No matter how small, Lord, that tiny spark of GOOD  
may be.

Forgiveness of their wrongs to me - give me the  
GRACE to give  
That my own wrongs forgiven be - and CHRIST within  
me live.

Let me not take to heart all hurt - that bitterness does  
grow -  
Within my soul - but cleanse my heart - let anger from  
me go.

Let Thy GOODNESS grow in me that I might really  
know  
Through loving aid to others the LOVE which YOU  
bestow.

When others fall beside the way - give me the strength  
and GRACE

To lift their load of care for them - that they might see  
THY FACE.



*Rosaline R. Constable  
Fleischmanns, NY  
8:30 a.m, Feb 17, 1959*