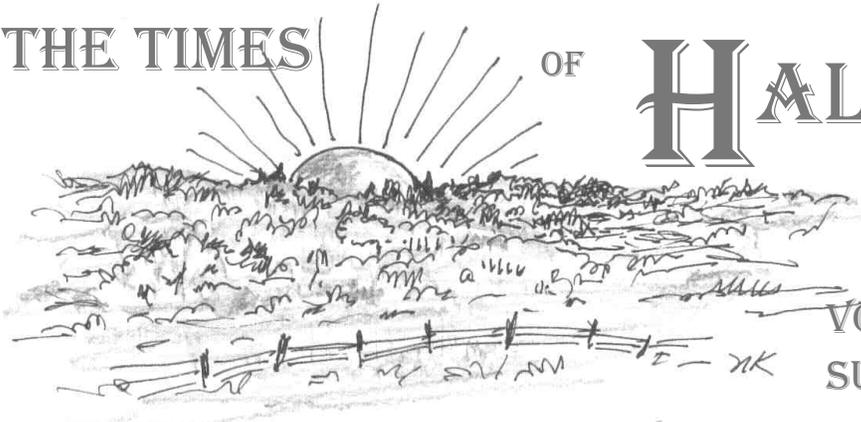


THE TIMES OF HALCOTT



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EDITORS: INNES KASANOF; PEG DIBENEDETTO; JUDY DIBENEDETTO; KAREN RAUTER. ART: NINA KASANOF

**Blue Skies and Blue Eyes**  
*Carson S. Bouton*

Oh, blue skies and blue eyes  
Living life at its best;  
With sunshine in the morning  
Sets in the golden west.

There is no place on earth  
I'd rather be than right here,  
A nice day in the Catskills  
With a day that is clear.

It all seems so perfect  
As the cattle they roam,  
On my farm in the Catskills  
At my Catskill Mountain home.

It's a good country livin'  
A million miles from harm,  
In the shelter of the Catskills  
At my home on the farm.

**Bees**

*Kurt Reynertson*

*A swarm in May is worth a load of hay; a swarm  
in June is worth a silver spoon; but a swarm in*

*July is not worth a fly.* – beekeeping proverb

As the economic meltdown has taken center stage in the media, the buzz about Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) has been relegated to the news archives. But many beekeepers around the country are still experiencing crashing hives and disappearing bees. Bee losses in other countries around the world are also being reported.

**HALCOTT FAIR**  
**JULY 18TH**  
**12 NOON TO 6PM**  
**MUSIC, BAKED GOODS, TREASURES, CRAFTS,**  
**CHICKEN/PORK ROAST, PERENNIALS, KIDS' FUN**

While cell phone towers are no longer seriously touted as a cause, CCD remains a mystery. The root of the disease is

now blamed on viruses, mites, and other bee pathogens; chemical contamination from pesticides and diesel fuel (many beekeepers migrate thousands of hives for pollination services); stress; poor breeding; and possibly a combination of all these factors.

My bees, however, seem to be doing just fine. Surrounded by acres of wildflowers and forest, they don't have far to go to get what they



need. And that's good, because here in our valley, the season is shorter than NYC (where I kept bees for about 7 years). The winter is longer and colder, so their proximity to good forage is an advantage. Last year, some of our neighbors reported better than average apple yields, saying they saw more bees in their orchards and gardens than ever before. I can't be sure whether the bees they saw were my bees or feral colonies living in the forest, but I'll take credit if it's thrust on me! Honey bees were first brought to the US by early colonists, and have been escaping into the forests ever since. Knowing that Virgil Streeter kept bees here in Halcott for years makes me think that there must be many escaped, naturalized, feral colonies in our woods.

Bees expand into new geographic locations by swarming. As a colony builds up its numbers in the spring, a vigilant beekeeper will add hive boxes to give them more space, or the bees, feeling the squeeze, will naturally divide the hive by swarming. As a swarm becomes imminent, they build a special peanut-shaped cell and move a newly-laid egg into a royal jelly-rich environment to create a new queen. The special care and diet this larvae receives triggers genetic switches that make her grow larger than all the other bees, with functional ovaries for breeding. When she emerges as an adult bee, the virgin queen will fly away with several thousand workers to find a new home. It's a fascinating thing to watch so many bees in the air at once. The sound is incredible, and it's remarkable how tame they can be. They typically engorge themselves with honey prior to this expedition, and the "stuffed" feeling of a belly full of honey makes them less aggressive. Plus, at that moment, they don't have a home to defend. They often congregate on a branch and wait for scout bees to find a suitable hollow tree or other space to set up the new home. Once a spot is found, and a consensus is reached, they move *en masse* to the new location and settle in, building new comb and gathering nectar and pollen for brood rearing. The queen doesn't necessarily direct the swarm, but her presence is essential to the survival of the new



colony.

From time to time, feral bees are reported to crash from diseases as well. It's hard to know for sure. Recently, I've heard from beekeepers around the country that feral colonies are booming once again. And that's encouraging, because they represent a treasure trove of valuable genetics that beekeepers can incorporate into managed colonies, especially at a time when breeding may be the best way to fight CCD. Virgin queens make one crucial flight to mate with several drones before settling in to lay up to 1500 eggs a day. Feral bees are generally well-adapted to their local environment, and may have other desirable traits – disease resistance in an unmanaged state for one. I recently made "splits" of my hives, simulating a swarm by taking a few frames from each hive and separating them into "nuc" boxes. If all goes well, the bees will make a new queen for each split, and my new hives will thrive. The virgin queen in these new colonies will mate with drones in our valley in special "drone-congregation areas," mysterious places up in the air where drones tend to hang out looking for queens. Somehow, the queens know where to find the boys they need. If they breed with the local feral population, then the genetic mix in my apiary increases.

Another great way to increase the number of hives and diversify apiary genetics is to capture feral swarms that are searching for a new home. While they wait for scout bees to find a hollow tree, a beekeeper can scoop them up into a hive box. These boxes, created to mimic a natural hive, are usually a welcome find for swarms, and the feral bees often move right in to their new home – as long as the queen has been scooped up with the rest of the swarm. Without a queen, they usually head back to their original hive.

Beekeepers are always looking out for swarms, and I'm no exception. You can never predict exactly when swarms might be seen, but early summer is a good bet. Feel free to call us (254-5753) if you see a swarm, and if I'm lucky, we'll be around to swing by and whisk them away. If you'd like to learn more about bees and

beekeeping, feel free to swing by our place on Elk Creek Road. I'm always happy to show off the bees. Just don't approach them without me or the right protective clothing! Between the electric bear fence and the tens of thousands of bees packing a powerful sting, you might get quite a surprise!

In the meantime, keep your eyes in the skies, and your ears tuned in for a buzz.

### **Shopping** *Bill Bernhardt*

In our neighborhood on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, Tuesday morning is the only time in the week when the Sanitation Dept. trucks are willing to pick up miscellaneous rubbish (the skateboard with one wheel missing that one has been meaning to dispose of, a box of tiles matching the floor in the bathroom as it was 15 years ago.)

Monday afternoon into Monday evening is not only the time for throwing out the superfluous, it is also the time for scavenging for the necessary. As I walked the block between Amsterdam Avenue and Broadway one recent Monday evening, I saw bundles of lovely wooden boards, neatly tied with string, sitting in piles along the curb, along with a discarded box of sky-blue electrical wire rolled on a spool that must have held thousands of feet, a step-ladder in fine condition if splashed with many colors of paint, and a torn canvas shopping bag full of nails, screws and brackets for mounting every type of shade and venetian blind.

The curbside is just about the only place in New York City to get lumber or wood these days. All of the local lumber yards have gone out of business, their premises taken over by chain drug stores and bank branches. The hardware situation is pretty much the same. I searched in vain for a nut to fit a knob on the chest of drawers in our Halcott bedroom.

Sometimes you have to wait a long time for something to turn up. I needed some lengths of lath about 2-3 inches wide to secure some trans-

parent plastic panels forming a window under our porch in Halcott. I struck out at Home Depot and Lowe's. Then, one day, as I was passing a brownstone renovation on 105<sup>th</sup> St. on my way home from alternate side parking, I saw a dump truck loaded almost to the top with just the kind of wood I needed. Nobody was in sight. I hesitated with felonious intent, not quite bold enough to commit my little theft in broad daylight. Just then, a very short, muscular young man with black hair, came down a ladder with another load. I pointed at the pile of wood in the truck. He grinned, climbed up



and offered me about 10 pieces, each about 4-6 feet in length. I waved my thanks and carried the pieces home.

Just a few years ago it seems, although it may actually be longer than that, America—from Manhattan to Margaretville--was a country of small hardware stores and lumberyards. Not only were there shelves and drawers in which lurked the most obscure nut, bolt or strip of wood, but the old salesperson behind the counter could vividly demonstrate the technique for manipulating any conceivable tool at a moment's notice. Asking for the price of some little article produced a shrug and a muttered reply. For this bracket, a quarter; for that nut, a dime. If there were two people behind the counter, they could never agree about what amount, or number, of a particular item one should buy. "He'll need two feet of that," one would say. The other would look at him as if he had lost his mind. "Four feet. Maybe 5!"

As a result of current economic conditions, curbside offerings of free wood and tools may soon go the way of free email accounts. Soon,

perhaps, people will be inviting friends and neighbors into their apartments and houses to buy surplus lumber and tools. However, my dream is to find that nut for the knob on our chest in a reopened store on Main St. in Fleischmanns, where it will be called an "Heirloom Hardware Piece," and cost \$4.99. I will shake my head in disbelief...and then pay up.

### More on Paul Johnson .

*[In our Spring issue, there was an article on Paul Johnson and his amazing escape after being shot down in enemy territory in World War II. Nina Johnson, his widow, who supplied some of the story asked that we mention that Paul's sons live in the area. They are Randy Johnson, of Fleischmanns, and Keith Johnson, of Shandaken. We also heard from Pam Johnson Kelly, Paul's niece, who relates the following:]*

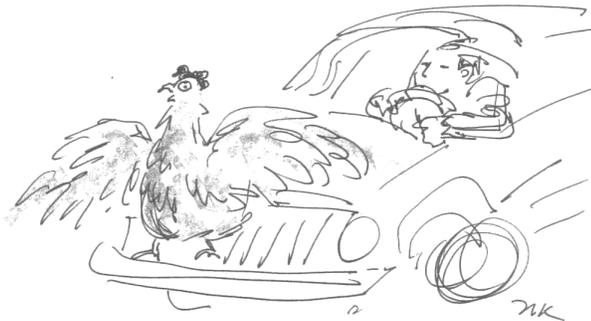
Thank you for the story of my Uncle Paul Johnson in the last **Times of Halcott**. I'd like to add a few anecdotes if I may. One can only imagine the little world of Halcott back in 1944, and my unassuming and rather shy Uncle Paul, in the U.S. Army Airforce and being on the other side of the world. Who could even imagine how far away that was? In 1944, there was no TV and probably little radio contact with the outside world. A trip to Kingston or Oneonta was a trek. The long trip on the winding roads was planned for days or even weeks. In my own childhood memories, in the 1950's, a trip to Margaretville to the feed store was a thrill! They had a penny gumball machine!

My dad, Garold Johnson, who was Uncle Paul's older brother, and my mother, Lena Haynes Johnson, lived on their dairy farm, now the Jim and Karen Rauter property. My mom was pregnant with my brother when Halcott got the news that on March 19 my uncle Paul had been shot down and was MIA somewhere in Europe.

In late May, my dad got a phone call he'd never forget. It was his brother, Paul, calling from the bus station to come pick him up! My

Dad proceeded to make a bee line down the Halcott road. When my Grampa Roy Johnson saw the car sail past his house at a high rate of speed he figured it was my dad taking my very pregnant (a word not spoken out loud back then) mom to the Margaretville Hospital. So, he waited for a phone call announcing the arrival of his first grandchild.

Apparently my grandpa didn't notice the chicken riding on my dad's front bumper. Only us oldies remember Emerson Kelly's chicken house on Kelly's turn - where Elk Creek road intersects with the Halcott road. From what I understand,



many a chicken has met her demise on her way across the road. This time, my Dad's speeding car connected with the unsuspecting feathered passenger. Story has it that not until my dad slowed at the stop sign at the end of Halcott road at Main Street, Fleischmanns, did the hen have an opportunity to jump free of the bumper. She was last seen making a run for it down Main Street.

I can only imagine the shock my Grampa Roy felt when my Dad drove into his driveway with the long lost son with him, thinking he was still MIA in Europe. A week or so later, May 27, my brother Paul was born. Many decades later, my mom told me they were planning to name him Erik, but chose to name him Paul after my uncle.

My brother was always referred to as "Little Paul" and my uncle was always "Big Paul" to the local population. Even after my brother had

grown to 6'2", he was still "Little Paul" to the Halcotters.

My grandmother, Neva Streeter Johnson, always cried when retelling any part of the story of her second son, Paul, getting shot down in WWII, and the ensuing story of his return home. So, as a child, I never dared ask questions. (If I could relive my childhood, I'd be one of those precocious little kids and ask questions and not care if anyone liked it or not!)

March 19, 1950, I was born. It was the 6th anniversary of Uncle Paul being shot down in Europe. Maybe it softened that date for my grandma Neva. After 3 sons and 4 grandsons, she finally got a girl in the family!

### DOUBLE BOVINITY

As we look forward to calving season this year, we can't help but look back on the miracles that abounded in seasons past. Every year there are moments that stand out for one reason or another: a beautiful heifer calf from a favorite cow, a uniquely marked or unusually colored calf, or perhaps a gritty little calf that survives a difficult entry into the world. Last season was special for its number of twin births. Multiple births are common or even the norm in some farm animal species such as sheep and swine but in cattle they only occur in 1-3% of births. On our 70-cow farm we had 11 sets of twins! We had stretches of time when there were pairs of calves penned all along the middle of the barn. Twins, rather than singles, was almost like the new norm for us, as the following paragraph illustrates.

I remember one Sunday morning in particular when Elena and I were taking care of the farm while Chris and Greg were on a missions trip to Mexico. We were rushing around to get chores done before church when a cow named "Gal" decided it was a good time to start calving. We put her in a cozy stall where she could calve and be alone with her calf for the day. Thankfully, the calf came quickly and easily so we were able to get off close to on time. When we got back home,



I went over to check on Gal and her calf before lunch. Momma was contentedly munching on hay and the calf was curled up snoozing away. All seemed well except I noticed that the calf appeared to have more black on it than the one I remembered from the morning. What was going on? Then I saw it. In the back corner of the pen was the whiter calf that had been born before we left home. Gal had given birth to another calf while we were at church! I had to chuckle at the surprise and wonder of it all.

When we speak of the "year of the twins" people often ask if farmers hope to have lots of twin calves. Actually, twins in cattle can present challenges not as often associated with regular single births. For example, twins may create unique calving difficulties. Sometimes the first calf will come as it is supposed to: two front hooves first with the head and the rest of the calf not far behind, but then the second calf may come back hooves and tail first in which case it needs to be born rather quickly so it doesn't drown in the fetal fluids. Other difficulties occur when the two calves are tangled up in the cow's womb and thus need to be sorted out before they can be born. Another concern in twins is when a heifer (female) is born twin to a bull (male). Generally, the heifer of such a pair will be sterile. Finally, twin births sometimes bring health issues to the momma cow herself.

Happily, however, problems don't always come with twins and it's simply and beautifully a double blessing. We can then just enjoy watching the development of these closely related pairs. As with human twins, some calves will look much alike while others appear very different. Sometimes one calf will be of normal size while the other is small or we may have two good-sized calves or two small ones. Chris Johnson once commented that she and Tim have noticed that the sets of twins that they milk on their farm tend to perform quite well. To be sure, a set of heifer calves out of a good cow is a great, bonus deal for the farmer.

What will this year bring? So far we have had single births only but the year is just getting started. We'll have to wait and see what kind of

special surprises God has in store for this calving season! *JD*

### **Kelly Laundromat**

Pam Johnson Kelly

Kelly Matthews, the great great granddaughter of Mildred and Emerson Kelly, is graduating this year from a high school in Jacksonville, Fl. My husband, Jerry Kelly, and I had the honor of meeting this young lady and her sister and parents while we lived in that area of Fl. Kelly Matthews' mom is the daughter of Emerson (Sonny) Kelly, Odell's Kelly's oldest son. To help me figure out all the generations, I had to stop and count on my fingers: Emerson, Odell, Sonny, Kolleen, and finally, Kelly.

I wrote a little story to send to her about the summer I worked for her great-great grandparents, (boy, if that doesn't make me feel old, I don't know what would) Mildred and Emerson Kelly. They had a summer laundromat in Elk Creek next to the little house they lived in. Their home was formerly a one room school house where my dad, Garold Johnson, and his two borthers, Paul and Earl, as well as Mildred and Emerson's three sons, Odell, Bob and Stanley, attended in the 1930's. (That poor teacher!).

The summer I graduated from Fleischmanns High School, in 1968, Mildred asked if I'd be interested in working in their laundromat for the summer. I was delighted for two reasons. Jobs were pretty scarce up Halcott, plus I just loved Mildred (Ballard) Kelly.

As I remember, the laundromat included a washer, an 'extractor', a large dryer or two, and a 'mangle'. My job at the laundromat was to remove the clothes from the dryer and fold them neatly and stack them. I think that was the closest I'd ever been to a clothes dryer. At my home, our clothes dryer was the solar dryer - the clothes line that ran the length of the long wrap around porch on our old farm house. Emerson's job was running the washer and then putting the wet clothes into the 'extractor'. The mangle was operated by Helen Kelly Finch and Freda Bellows. The sheets

and pillow cases, all were white back then, got dried and pressed at the same time as they were run through the mangle. The women fed the sheet into the mangle, then as it came out the other side, Helen held one end of the sheet and Freda held the other end, they'd fold the sheet with a rhythmic little dance type step. One, two, three and the big sheets were magically and quickly folded into a neat little rectangle.

Standing at the mangle all day was a hard and very hot job. I stayed away from the dreaded monstrosity. It was *very* loud and looked dangerous! Helen and Freda worked many hours and were skilled at it. Emerson's job of putting the heavy load of wet laundry into the extractor was not easy, especially when the laundromat was busy and going full tilt. Emerson's older sister, Bertha Kelly West, often brought a banana out to him for a mid morning boost.

Our lunch was furnished. At noon, sharp, we went to the little kitchen where Bertha would serve us a delicious egg salad sandwich on whole wheat bread, a leaf of garden lettuce, and a home made oatmeal or chocolate chip cookie. It tasted wonderful, and it is amazing to think about how many meals Bertha must have served up in her lifetime. I'm sure she started early since she was the oldest of the Kelly clan born on the Kelly homestead to Lemual and Effie Crosby Kelly.

Lucky were the 'city kids' from N.Y.C. who got to spend the summers in the Catskills. In 1968 there were still enough summer kids' camps around Fleischmanns to keep the Kelly Laundromat humming. Our little 'team' laundered jeans, shorts, tee shirts, sweatshirts, plus bed linens. Emerson and Mildred's grandson, Brian Kelly, was the laundry delivery transport, driving Emerson's ancient panel truck.

Each week Mildred handed me a tiny brown envelope containing my pay. It was cash, in bills and change. According to "Google", minimum hourly wage in 1968 was a whopping \$1.60. No wonder I felt like I was getting rich!!

After the summer of '68 passed, my life took me in many different directions and places, but I never forgot my first real job at the Kelly Elk

Creek Laundromat and the wonderful folks I had the privilege of working with there.

*[We are very grateful for the memories that Pam has jotted down for this newsletter. Readers can look forward to more of her reminiscences in future issues. Thank you so much, Pam and please keep them coming!]*

### **Rhinos and Warthogs and Elephants, Oh My!**

*[It is often remarked that people associated with Halcott are remarkable. Mike and Peg DiBenedetto are true examples, going places and seeing things that are far from our valley. In their words, "If you want something enough, it will happen." Most recently, they have returned from an African safari. We are privileged to listen in on their adventures!]*

On the outskirts of sprawling Nairobi, Kenya, lies a pleasant surprise – the Nairobi National Park - 50 square miles of fenced-in wilderness, abounding with zebra and rhino, lions and giraffe, in addition to about 400 other species.

Contained just inside the park boundary is an amazing little gem, the David Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage. You may have seen this incredible place featured on CBS 60 Minutes a few months back. Anyway, at 5 o'clock on a February afternoon, we found ourselves waiting for the return of the orphans and their human keepers from the daily mud bath at a mud hole within the park. We were waiting with our driver George, who had to keep after Michael. Michael would wander off, looking at stuff, and that would cause some commotion, because you don't *do that in parks, especially this one*, because the two and a half year old newly released rhino comes in most afternoon to say hello, and he's getting hormonal and cranky, and if he sees you wandering about he will charge you (read: kill you). So George is trying to corral Michael back to the enclosure, and baby elephants are coming down the path, and Michael has the camera so now I have to run and grab it from him, and I do, just in time for the parade of keepers and about eight baby elephants wearing colorful blan-

kets. I will admit that "The Baby Elephant Walk" from the old movie Hatari kept popping, appropriately, into my head.

We ooh and ahh as the babies find their little stalls and settle in for the night, each with a keeper and a bottle of milk. At which point, there's more commotion, and down the path come the three adolescents. Dinner is waiting, and nothing is going to stop these two-to-four year old "teenagers" from getting to it as fast as is absolutely possible. As they round the bend at full bore, it seems that our driver, George, did not realize the path they would be taking, and so is standing in front of the entrance to their "home" just about the time they arrive. I would not have thought such a large man could move so quickly.

As the older orphans had their bottles, and hay, and



water, we were able to interact with them, and they with us – trunks and hands touching and learning about each other. Pretty remarkable. If you go to the website [www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org](http://www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org), you can see the stories of the orphans, and the history of the facility. The reason we were able to visit the orphanage at this special time of day, and interact with the animals, was because we had agreed to "adopt" an orphan for fifty US dollars. The costs associated with running this place are fantastic, and they depend upon the generosity of tourists for much of their funding. (The website offers adoption opportunities, by the way.)

I have bottle-fed many calves and lambs

over the years, so I was up to the fun challenge of giving three-year-old Maxwell his dinner. Maxwell is a gentle, huge, and blind black rhinoceros, and will always be in the care of Sheldrick staff. To touch his rough and heavy plates of skin and his coarse hair horn was a special treat. Only to



be topped when a keeper came down the path with the littlest rectangle of homeliness I've ever seen. It was a two-and-a-half month old baby black rhino- looking just like an adult, but without the horn- who ran right over to Michael and started rubbing on his legs. Michael loved it. They seemed totally enamored of each other. We got to spend a lot of time with this friendly little guy, named Maalim, before he was encouraged to his stall by a gorgeous young French woman, who comes by nightly to make sure he has his supper & is comfortably tucked in. Apparently, she has not only adopted him monetarily, but emotionally as well, and so Maalim enjoys special privilege among the orphans.

As we ended our Sheldrick visit, a comical-looking group of warthogs ran through the place, trailed by three bare-footed young boys, and it reminded us of farm kids growing up, chasing calves and pigs. Kids are kids, wherever they are, and only their moms think about shoes. These boys were grandchildren in the Sheldrick

family, and would love to come to the US to play at a water park. I'll trade them a water park for a rhinoceros any day.

This adventure was our introduction to East African wildlife; the prelude to a safari in Tanzania. Of all of the amazing places and wildlife we experienced, the Sheldrick Orphanage was perhaps our favorite, because of the personal interactions with the animals. There is a real possibility that not many more generations will be able to visit large mammals and predators in the wild. A facility such as Sheldrick ensures that tourists and internet travelers alike will become passionate about continued wildlife and habitat preservation. To paraphrase the quote: "We save only what we love; we love only what we know."

## Halcott Cemeteries

*Diane Galusha*

One fine evening in early May, I found myself climbing a private hillside off West Settlement Road towards a square rock wall with a huge pine tree at its center. The setting sun streamed through newly greening leaves to spotlight a line of crooked, weathered headstones lined up along the upper wall of this burial ground where at least 11 – and probably many more -- members of the Kelly family had been resting since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Thomas (1806-1869) and Jane Kelly (1805-1879), along with at least nine of their children, are buried in this peaceful place. Of those with headstones still visible for us to ponder, Martius was the youngest of the Kellys to

go. He died in 1845, just five years old. Philip was 16, Edmond 19, three others in their 20s. Two daughters, both 38, predeceased their mother, who



watched all of them, and her husband, pass away before she succumbed at age 74.

These silent stones have greeted the birds of spring every year for more than a century and a half, heralding lives long since lived and lost. There are several small family cemeteries like this scattered throughout the former farmlands of Halcott -- Dennis Bouton mows and looks after most of them. Some appear bigger than necessary -- where are all the headstones? -- until you realize that most of those interred lie beneath simple field stones, with no names, dates or poignant epitaphs.

I had come to Halcott looking for veterans. The Friends of Middletown Cemeteries had taken on the task of assisting Legion Post #216 in compiling accurate lists of veterans buried in Middletown and contiguous areas, including Halcott and Hardenburgh, and making sure someone was committed to placing flags on each of those graves. A conscientious circle of Legionnaires and volunteers had gathered information from Legion and census records, historical accounts, headstone inscriptions and the Catskill Mountain News to verify the names of veterans and their military service. (For the record, there are 724 known veterans in 18 local cemeteries.)

The big Halcott Cemetery is in good hands -- Lanore Miller, secretary of the cemetery association, keeps the burial records, and was able to supply a list of vets (73) and a map showing where they are interred.

Roger Davis, who like many of us, has a real affinity towards old burial grounds, had some years ago recorded inscriptions of a portion of the Halcott cemetery, but a complete inventory has never been done. Are there volunteers in Halcott who would like to record the information from these stones? They are a window into history, revealing family relationships, age spans, fraternal and religious affiliations, and sometimes clues to the manner of death. It is priceless information for researchers and genealogists.

Friends of Middletown Cemeteries would be happy to meet with interested Halcott volunteers to launch this effort on Wednesday, July 8 at 6:30 p.m. at the cemetery. We have simple forms and

tricks for reading worn inscriptions (bring aluminum foil and cotton balls!). Hopefully, someone will step forward to collect the forms and enter them in a database which can be provided to the Greene and Delaware County genealogy and history websites to help researchers worldwide. Go to [www.dcnymhistory.org](http://www.dcnymhistory.org) to see dozens of area cemetery inventories online, including the partial Halcott inventory.

An inventory of the Margaretville Cemetery (some 2,000 stones) was accomplished by a handful of people every Thursday night during good weather for a year. The Halcott project would go much faster, but frequency and length of inventory sessions would be up to the volunteers. We found it to be an enjoyable, social, reflective time that we looked forward to every week.

Once the big cemetery is done, perhaps a few intrepid cemetery stompers would like to branch out and gather the stories in stone from the small family burial grounds elsewhere in town. Just ask Dennis for directions.

### **HALCOTT TEAM BRINGS HOME THE GOLD**

For the fourth year in a row, a 2-person team from Halcott has dominated the annual Team Trivia Challenge. This year, however, the dynamic duo of Jim Rauter and Alan Reynolds was no longer an option, as Big Jim was out of town. Alan chose an apt and able new partner in Toshi Sakai of Margaretville and New York City. Their team "Los Gringos" took an early lead and outperformed the only other 2-person team of Mark Neves and Carrie Bradley. However, by the third round of questions, Neves and Bradley's "Backwards Seven" (spell it out) team had overtaken "Los Gringos" and became the winners of the Gold.

The hybrid-Halcott 4-player team of Nancy Reynolds, Warren Reynolds, Faye Storm, and George put forth considerable effort and we hope had an enjoyable evening, but were not able to enter the medal circle.

The annual Team Trivia Challenge bene-

fits the Fleischmanns Community Church Building Improvement Fund, and a good time is had by all. **PD**

#### CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Innes:

As I read your paper, *Times of Halcott*, I am reminded of so many fond memories of Halcott Center. In 1969, when our children were 7, 10 and 13, we bought a cabin in Halcott Center. It was the best thing we could have done. We had so many wonderful times up there. Every season had its own beauty. Spring, with the mountains turning green, summer when we went swimming in Andes, fall with the beautiful colors of the trees and mountains and winter when we took up skiing at Belleayre Mt. Ski Slope.

One of the highlights of my kids' day was when they walked to Streeter's grocery store in Halcott Center to buy candy and snacks. Streeter's was also the Post Office for Halcott Center.

I remember Fleischmanns. It was such a special town. Solomon's Department Store was open, the bakery was open, DeMarfio's Restaurant was a great place to eat. The Fleischmanns Hotel was open. It was so beautiful. It reminded me of a hotel in Austria. The town was bustling every summer with visitors. Robert's Auction was the highlight of the weekend. House auctions were fun, too.

My children used to go out with flashlights at night looking for deer. We went to all the festivals they had in Margaretville, Fleischmanns and Roxbury. We spent 2 to 3 weeks' vacation every summer up there. We loved to eat dinner at Kass Inn and had Thanksgiving dinner there a few times.

We had some scary things happen, like a large snake in the box spring of our bed which turned out to be non-poisonous, thank goodness, and some dead mice when we would come back to the cabin after not being there for a while.

These memories will remain with me forever. Sincerely, Barbara Belgraiier, 212 Birchwood Rd., Coram, NY 11727.

#### PASSAGES

##### HELEN KELLY FINCH

On April 22 of this spring, we lost Helen Finch, 91 years young. Helen was Hilton Kelly's older sister. She never really lived in Halcott, but her best friend, Shirley Bouton does. Also, Helen worked in Halcott at several different jobs, (see Pam Johnson Kelly's story on the Halcott Laundromat above) and so we mark her passing as an honorary member of Halcott

She grew up side by side with Shirley in Red Kill, and they worked together as waitress/chambermaids at the boarding house, The Maples, run by Jim and Blanche Peet, Sybil Margaritis' grandparents. More recently, Halcott people will remember Helen as the gentle, reliable mail carrier for several years before Lanore Miller took the job. Helen would drive with her husband Clinton whom everyone knew better as Bucky in the car. Bucky usually sported a large cowboy hat.

Shirley told me that Helen was generous, honest and even tempered. She never heard her get angry, never fought with anyone, and "was never gossipy. She was one of the best people I ever knew and a joy to be with." High praise for a deserving lady. We salute her memory. **IK**

##### ELIZABETH "BETTY" EIBERT

Longtime Halcott resident Betty Eibert went home to be with the Lord March 20, 2009. She was 91. Betty was born February 14, 1918 in New York City to Joseph and Elizabeth Pickett Lenhardt.

She married Nicholas Eibert on April 7, 1940 and worked as a hairdresser in the Bronx for 19 years. After moving to Halcott in 1971, Betty became a member of American Legion Post # 216, the Sacred Heart Church in Margaretville, and the Sacred Heart Women's Society. She enjoyed bingo and visits from friends and loved ones. Betty donated faithfully to the Halcott Community Fund. She will be missed. A Funeral Mass was held on March 23 at Sacred Heart Church. Burial was May 27 in the Margaretville Cemetery Annex. **JD**



# The Times of the Halcott Methodist Church Summer, 2009

*Pattie Kelder, Correspondent*

## **Pastors**

Pastor Bill and Kay will depart for Pennsylvania on June 23rd where we pray they will find joy in their well deserved retirement. (Actually this will be Pastor Bill's second retirement!) We will miss them.

As a pastor exits one door of the parsonage, another pastor often enters the other door. This time there is a little breathing space. We will be welcoming **Pastor Peg Van Sieten** to Roxbury and Halcott on or about July 1<sup>st</sup>. She has a bubbly personality, a quick sense of humor, a caring heart and a commitment to serve the Lord. Her household consists of Holly, a beagle who is a trained therapy dog. Holly is reported to be a faithful parishioner as well as a faithful companion! Pastor Peg is well acquainted with rural life. She grew up as an only child in New Paltz and pursued her first career as an accountant in that area. She moves here from the United Methodist Churches at Callicoon and Narrowsburg near the Pennsylvania border. Pastor Peg looks forward to being introduced to the people of Halcott. We ask everyone to help her feel at home. Watch for news of events where you can visit with her.

## **People**

It is graduation time again! At press time we know of one high school graduate in Halcott. Congratulations to Greg DiBenedetto who will be receiving a Janet Kelder Riss Memorial Award from the Halcott United Methodist Church. We also congratulate college graduates

Jonathan Riss, Carrie Asher, Lucas Bouton and others on their accomplishments. Next hurdle for them: the job market or funding further education.

## **Food for the Body**

Several people who enjoyed the spring-time **covered dish suppers** at the Grange Hall have asked us to keep them going in the fall. Watch for notices of these and other events. All are welcome. Just bring a dish of food to share and maybe a board game to play after supper. In the meantime, don't forget the **bake sale** at the Halcott Fair on July 18<sup>th</sup>. Spaghetti supper tickets will also be available then.

## **Spaghetti Supper**

**Benefiting the Halcott United Methodist Church  
Saturday, August 15<sup>th</sup> starting at 5 p.m.  
at the Grange Hall  
Adults \$9.00  
Children 8 and under \$5.00**

## **Food for the Soul**

The interfaith Halcott Bible Study will continue to meet during the summer. New members and visitors are welcome. Some of the minor prophets are being studied in the coming weeks.

Everyone has a faith story. Summer is a great time to write a short inspirational piece for the next parish devotional book. An interviewer can be provided for those who find it easier to tell their stories rather than write them.

The summer worship hour is at 10:30 on Sunday mornings. There is always an invitation to

attend young people's events such as Sunday School, Youth Group, Vacation Bible School, Kids Helping Kids (assembling health and school kits), as well as projects not even imagined yet. Make your interests known. We will work with your calendars.

### **Lend a Helping Hand**

The Administrative Council has decided to renew a project for armed forces members who have been wounded in action. It is a simple task that can be done in the comfort of your own armchair. Just ask for a packet of 10 postcards (with suggestions as to content), fill them out and return them. The church will then mail your words of appreciation and encouragement to chaplains for distribution at hospitals. These get well notes will mean so much to our young heroes.

Another easy project is saving labels for Campbell's and General Mills' products as well

as the pull rings from cans. These help various groups, including the Red Bird Mission School in Kentucky and the Margaretville Central School PTA.

### **Feedback**

Suggestions for this column are requested. What are your favorite items? What new topics would you like to see? Thanks a bunch.



**THE TIMES OF HALCOTT**  
**813 ROUTE 3**  
**HALCOTT CENTER, NY 12430**