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Autumn 2011 VOL 56

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

Goodnight, Irene!

When I was a kid, a popular exclamation was “Goodnight!” Well, goodnight, Irene, you sure did us a lot of damage. The whole northeast was poised on August 28th for a weatherman’s nightmare. Goodnight!! We watched mesmerized as your whirling terror, livid on the TV screen maps, moved slowly up the coast. The forecasts were frightening, and many of our weekenders escaped upstate to Halcott to avoid the anticipated hit on New York City. Goodnight! We were all in for a surprise. Irene dumped raging torrents of rain that turned our rural roads into rivers, raced along bearing all manner of debris, ripped out bridges, raced along some more, roared down to Fleischmanns and beyond where the ensuing disaster forced evacuations and the loss of everything for some. Everyone was hit in one way or another. The devastation, as we all know, was huge.

The roads of Halcott suffered enormous damage; culverts were washed away, road surfaces were torn and buckled, gaping holes were bitten out of the asphalt. There were so many dangerous points that the Highway crew ran out of emergency cones. By 8:30AM, the Town had declared itself in a state of emergency. Russell Bouton, Highway Superintendent and Greg Finch worked steadily from the beginning of the rain in the early hours, through the day, and into the night, pausing only for a change to dry clothing and for Penny’s stew (for Greg, which he said was delicious). At one point they had to evacuate Bertha VonHassel to the Grange Hall, our official evacuation site. Town residents kept close to home and telephones, checking on neighbors, reassuring each other. As the rains continued relentlessly, we all waited and watched. It was a grim time.

Monday morning dawned thankfully,

Above: Elk Creek Rd Bridge after devastation of Irene, Aug 28, 2011

sunny and mild. But, goodnight!! The mess was incredible and incredibly widespread. Catskill was reportedly under water. Mountaintop towns were terribly damaged. Over 100 families in Prattsville alone had lost everything.

Now it was time for the spirit of Halcott to rise up and deal with the problems at hand. Old timers said they had never seen such a storm, so



*Greene County Route 3
Marc & Carrie Neves driveway.*

there was little or no pattern or precedent to follow when trying to figure out how to put things back together.

Within hours, chainsaws were whining, excavators were grumbling, hauling, re-shaping, working on what Irene had so carelessly (so effortlessly!) displaced. Electricity was spotty, telephone service non-existent, but the can-do optimism of the Town is slowly and surely winning the day. There were many heroes here; we mention a few who merit thanks and commendation. Alan Reynolds and Alan White worked tirelessly for days (and nights!) together with Russell Bouton to put the roads back together even as they coordinated with a disaster-struck Greene County. Two major bridges that had been washed away belonged to the County and any temporary repair needed their blessing. Even though phones were out, electricity was out, these three men, between them, managed miracles.

Is there something to learn here? On the

good side of the ledger, the Town has a working evacuation site that has a generator and water. The Town had JUST finished a "Stormwater Assessment" project and thus could consult quickly with stream experts who knew our infrastructure and could give advice. The Town's website provided concerned family members with a contact number to call (when the phone service came back on) to find out about loved ones and was able to post information on road closings and pictures of the damage. On the not-so-good side of the ledger, our townspeople were not as prepared as we could have been. Homeowners need to keep a stock of bottled water. We need to keep a rotary dial phone for when the electricity fails but not the telephone service. We need to assess our proximity to a watercourse and perhaps leave a car parked on higher ground in case of driveway culvert washouts. Cellars need to hold expendables and not treasures (really difficult when storage space is at a premium!). But if one balances the ledger, I think the good side wins: Halcott is a community of caring people who look after one another. This is the treasure that Irene could never have washed away. So goodnight and goodbye, Irene. **IK**

I'll Fly Away *Michael DiBenedetto*

If anyone ever had any doubts about there being something more than us or that there is some higher power, something we can't understand or explain, they need only to have attended Donald Bouton's funeral.

This summer I stopped by to see Donald and gave him a David Francey CD, and on it was a song that always made me think of Donald and Shirley. The song is called "The Gate," about David's mother and father, after his father died. They had been together for eighty years. The mother had decided to walk over to see her daughter who lived quite a ways away. She hardly got around in her house let alone walking more than a mile on her own. So she headed out and, realizing she couldn't make it, was ready to give up. A



bird came by and started singing to her until she gathered her strength and moved on. When she could go no more, the same bird appeared again, singing to her. This happened three times before she finally got to

her daughter's house. She'd been gone over 3 hours. (And the family was frantic.) So David wrote this song with how "she hears him (his father) in the singing of the birds".

At Donald's funeral I walked from my car to the church and there was one grey flecked pigeon walking in the road by the cemetery, with lots of people and cars all around. It seemed to be greeting people coming to the church. I actually had to chase it off the road so cars could get through. It was so friendly that my grandchildren wanted to pick it up. I got to the church and asked Dennis and Mary if they had seen the pigeon. They said the pigeon had come as soon as the hearse arrived, and as the hearse was driving around the back of the church to unload the casket at the side door, the pigeon landed on the post for the church ramp. It then flew onto the back of hearse and stayed there as the casket was unloaded. Then it flew down onto the ramp, walked into the church past the casket, and down the aisle. It walked under the pews, and as Dennis tried to chase it out, it walked back to the side door and flew up onto the hay wagon that would be later used to take the casket to the cemetery.

About halfway through the funeral service I realized the reading glasses I would need later in the service were in my car. As I ran down past the cemetery, I saw the pigeon at the grave where a man was readying the grave for the casket. I said, "I see you have company," and he said something like "Yes, he's been here watching me."

The last hymn in the service was Don-

ald's favorite : "I'll Fly Away."

I'll fly away, Oh Glory, I'll fly away.

When I die, Hallelujah, by and by, I'll fly away.

I went back to the church and cemetery that night and the next morning; there was no sign of the pigeon.

Boo!

Pam Johnson Kelly

On Halloween night, about 1955, the 6

Kelly kids, Linda, Ginger, Sonny, Collin, Bryan and the youngest, 5-year-old Betsy, went trick or treating down the Halcott road. They had made a pretty good haul, and were happily headed home to take inventory of their sacks of candy.

On their way up Halcott road, close to what now is the "Kelly Road", a "ghost" jumped out from behind a large sand pile and scared the crew of kids. They all ran for their lives, and Linda, the oldest, following her mom's instructions, held tight to Betsy's hand. When they got to the end of the Kelly chicken coop at the beginning of the Elk Creek road they figured they had outrun the ghost and slowed down to catch their breath. At that moment, yet another "ghost" ran down across the Kelly farmhouse lawn screaming BOO!



Upon this second encounter with a ghost, the kids figured 'each man for himself', and ran for their lives for their home, which was the first house on the left going up Elk Creek Road.

They all made it safely home, and were breathlessly trying to explain their narrow escape to their mom, Mary, as she was trying to calm the hysterical kids. Later that evening, Betsy being afraid to sleep in her own bed, was in sister Ginger's bed, next to a window overlooking the front porch. Before long they heard heavy footsteps coming up the front porch steps of their house. Screaming and covering their heads with the blankets, they figured for sure the ghosts had followed them home.

To their great relief, they learned it was not a ghost, but their good neighbor, Bernie Wadler, also an Elk Creek resident. On his way home from a meeting, going up Halcott road, he noticed a trail of candy which started at the end of the Kelly chicken coop, up the Elk Creek Road, until it mysteriously stopped at the driveway of the Kelly home. He soon figured that to be the destination of the mystery candy trail. He knocked on the door, holding his collection of lost Halloween treats.

The kids' father, Odell Kelly, was not so warmly greeted when he arrived home and told Mary of his idea of scaring the kids on their way up the road. She informed him the kids had arrived home in a state of breathlessness and panic. And she didn't see the humor in his trick.

Little did Odell know, his own mother, Mildred Kelly, grandmother of the 6 trick or treaters, had the same idea. She was the second ghost the kids encountered on their way home! She was out on the yard of the Kelly homestead just waiting for them to appear. Thankfully the Kelly homestead farmhouse still stands but we don't know if "ghosts" still wander around the yard.

Let's Make Our Town An Energy-Efficient, Money-Saving Community!

Awhile back I read an article about a town on Long Island that wanted to do just that, so they gave each household one compact fluorescent

light bulb along with literature on the cost-savings, hoping it would encourage people to switch out all of their light bulbs. Consider this the same thing, except that the info is from *The Times of Halcott*, and you don't get a light bulb, but reading this may help you save a lot of money.

There is an outstanding young fellow in Fleischmanns named Todd Pascarella who does household energy audits. Not only

that, he does the \$250 audit for free or at a reduced rate, depending on your total household income. Here in Greene County, if your income is less than \$144,400 you get one for free, which I bet means most of us, and anything for free is a no-brainer. Todd's number, by the way, is 254-6599 in case you're already reaching for the phone.

Todd will show up at your home with a flashlight and various box-things and gizmos. He will poke around the dark corners and spaces in your house that you never knew were there, and certainly haven't cleaned in a long time (don't worry – he doesn't care), and *he will find* places where cold air creeps in (or blows through) during the winter, which has made you spend more money on heating fuel (if you turn up the thermostat) or socks and sweaters (if you don't). He will make knowledgeable, New York State certified suggestions about how to plug those leaks, fix the windows, install weather stripping, and more. He will take 2 hours of your time and leave you with a list of the improvements you can choose to make, or not. Also very cool about Todd is that he can suggest programs to help pay for some, or most, of those improvements! Then, when you've



whittled that list down, you'll find that your house feels warmer *and* you are paying *less money* to heat it! Brilliant! You would think that people would be jumping up and down to take advantage of this, but they're not, so New York State keeps offering more money and trying to come up with more ways to entice people into this program. The only explanation I can come up with for this is that when you tell people that energy efficiency could save the United States over 1.2 *trillion dollars* (McKinsey Report 2009), their eyes glaze over and it's the same as telling them that the toxic air emissions of 1 hour of mowing your lawn is equal to driving your car 100 miles

(ScienceDaily 2001) or that burning 10 pounds of household garbage in a backyard burn barrel can produce as much air pollution as a modern incineration plant burning 400,000 pounds (NYS DEC). People either don't believe it or just don't want to care. However, Halcott residents seem to be slightly more intelligent than everyone else and I predict that Todd will become very familiar with our town.

The time to do your energy audit is now, before the cold weather kicks in, because who wants to install windows during a snowstorm?

If you want to know more, go to nyserda.org for about 2 days' worth of reading material. Or just call Todd (254-6599); he'll tell you everything you need to know. **PD**

HALCOTT FAIR!

Our annual Fair, July 16th this past summer, was another huge success. As I looked around the Grange, I was struck by all the visiting that was taking place. Several people remarked about what a great institution the fair had become. It really takes a lot of effort on the part of a lot of people to pull this off and we need to pause to do some thanking. The overlords of the fair, the symphony conductors are the splendid team of Kari Pagnano and Jennifer Bouton, with Innes Kasanof, sort of buzzing at their elbows trying to be of help. They are at the top of the command chain, and under them is an enviable number of

really nice people. To start with: no event can possibly happen more than once without an efficient set-up AND clean-up crew. Lee Austin has assembled a state-of-the-art group who can put up and knock down tents at the blink of an eye.

The dinner is always a big draw and this year, Susan Benedetto orchestrated a fabulous "Think Italian" meal with lasagnas, sausage, peppers and onions, meatballs, salad – the works. Camille made 5 lasagnas and helped in so many other ways. Pat Pagnano cooked side by side with Susan in the kitchen for three days. Katy, Mike, sister-in-law Michelle with fiancé Frankie worked as well.

Carrie Bradley Neves not only added music, but worked in the kitchen putting together lasagnas for an entire day on Friday.

Vic and MaryLou Pagano were always there to lend a hand. Vic manned the hot dogs all day until there were no more dogs. Speaking of which, the hotdogs have always been donated by Pete and Nancy Ballard, along with the buns and the popcorn.

Susan and Fred Herzog helped tremendously, handling the setting up and running of the ever-expanding attic treasures. They were there for set-up, the fair and clean-up - three days worth of work. Fred brought labels, set up and printed pricing stickers that were very helpful. Susan also helped in the kitchen.

Nina Kasanof - helped for three days - and painted and donated her beautiful watercolors to benefit the fair.

Tim Mulvaney and Stephen Kosuch manned the flowers and beer/wine kiosk.

Judy Petrusky - she was there to pick up plants, help on set-up day AND clean-up day.

Laura Kasanof – made decorations beforehand, helped with the plants pick-up, doled out the endless supply of popcorn during the Fair, and was there for clean-up.

Bill and Elizabeth Bernhardt pitched in where needed on Fair day and helped with the clean-up as well. Maria Anagnos sat for attic treasure almost all day.

This year for the first time thanks to Karen Rauter,

we offered "stream catchers" for kids to study the inhabitants of the Vly Creek by filtering out the critters from the water as well as a Rubber Ducky race that was the rage among children of all ages. And for special projects, how about those aprons and calendars? Long hours went into the planning of the calendar, starting from the beautiful pictures taken, and then judged by a team of experts, Ben Patrusky, Vic Pagano and Laura Kasanof, and finally wrestled into a beautiful format by our very own Vickers and Beechler. The apron was designed by Kari Pagnano done in her special style. And David Grossman after providing music for the first part of the fair, stayed the course selling shirts, aprons, calendars, rubber duckies, and anything else that was on the crafts table. New York Spring Water donated tons of water that Chris Johnson brought by. Chris and Judy donated fresh milk.

The list of people who contributed their time and efforts to the fair is staggering and quite complimentary to this town. We should all give ourselves a hearty whack on the back in congratulations. Halcott is indeed small but MIGHTY. **IK**

Small Price Increase for Propane Group, with pre-buy or cost-plus options

Alan Adelson

We have concluded negotiations for the next 12 months of propane purchases for town residents who have registered with me and with Suburban as participants in the Halcott Center Propane Buying Group. Our new discounted "pre-buy" contract rate is \$2.49 per gallon. You do not have to go onto this pre-buy plan. If you wish, you can opt for "cost-plus" as follows.

For participants who did not buy at least 250 gallons last year, no pre-buy contract will be issued. Low volume users and participants who do not wish to pre-purchase their gallons at \$2.499 will be charged on a "cost plus" basis, taking the wholesale (Selkirk) price plus 76 cents per gallon. Today that price would be the same as the pre-buy contract rate: \$2.49 per gallon. But this rate will

fluctuate with the market. Suburban will continue to offer Halcott participants 35 free gallons as an incentive to participants bringing in new customers. Please spread the word. Find new customers. Our strength is in buying power. We now purchase well over 10,000 gallons annually.

Heating Fuel oil consumers can now participate in the buying group. Oil pricing for our group is 55 cents over Suburban's laid in cost. Today Halcott group oil price is \$3.759. New participants should contact me with the number of gallons you purchased in 2010 or in the past 12 months, and the price you last paid. We'll try to use our buying power to get you better rates as well.

Email me if you have questions. Alan Adelson alanadelson@verizon.net

New Guy on the Block

Halcott has a new small engine repairman, and not a moment too soon, as homeowners grapple with lawn mowers and weedwackers that have seen a long summer of service. Greg Dibenedetto, 254-4009, fixes most anything that we store in our garages, and if he is stumped, he goes online to tap into the experience of others. And if he's really stumped, he asks another seasoned and also very sweet small engine repairman, Dennis Bouton. (Halcott produces only sweet small engine repairmen). I know all of this, because this summer, in the middle of preparing for the arrival of guests, I was hurrying to mow my lawn when my trusty John Deere riding mower put his head down and refused to go any further. I first called my very own small engine repair guy (who I live with) (and yes, who is also sweet) but together we couldn't fathom the problem. I had planned to do a story on Greg, so I thought, "Well, this is a good time to test it out!" Greg was soon over (he does house calls) and the problem was diagnosed. By the next day, I was mowing. How triumphant I felt! I asked Tony to critique Greg's performance, and he was extremely complimentary. I won't say that we look forward to the next breakdown, but I will say that

I'm thankful to know that there's another sweet repairman to rely on. **IK**

KELLYS MEET *Pam Johnson Kelly*

The annual Kelly reunion/ picnic was held at Stanley Kelly's sap house, Elk Creek Road, Halcott, Sunday, 14 August. There were 42 in attendance. The oldest Kelly family member there was Harold West, age 86. Harold's mother was Bertha Kelly West, whose parents, Effie Crosby and Lemuel Kelly, started the annual picnic over 80 years ago. Close behind Harold in age were his cousins, Doris Kelly and Norma Kelly Johnson. Matty Kelly, age 5, son of Kevin Kelly and Tim Haller, grandson of Anna Mech Kelly and the late Stanley Kelly, was this year's youngest attendant. Emerson (Sonny) and wife, Annie Kelly's grandchildren were the 6th generation of Kelly in attendance.

The furthest to travel were siblings Linda, Ginger and Collin, from Fl. The closest were Harold and Mabel West, Highmount, N.Y. One of the highlights was when Linda and Ginger led the group in a rendition of the Fleischmanns High School alma mater (1961 and 1962 graduates-though not of FHS). They both did some cheers from their cheerleading days. 'ORANGE AND WHITE, FIGHT, FIGHT!!!' Ginger had her cheerleader uniform handy, but Linda had donated her original one to the Fleischmanns Museum. I asked her if it made her feel old knowing her high school cheerleading uniform was in a 'museum'.

There was a great variety of food, not like one year, according to Bertha Kelly West, in a 1994 interview. She said she remembered one reunion when most everyone brought cake, and most of that was chocolate!

While observing a moment of silence prior to the Lord's Prayer, the stream running along in the back of the sap house could be heard. I thought about how the water goes so swiftly, as do the years.

BACK THEN

Pam Johnson Kelly sends us morsels from the past from time to time, that are fascinating when we measure them against the present. Here are a few with gratitude to Pam for her thoughtfulness.

From the **Catskill Mountain News** Oct. 20, 1944
WANTED --

One ton cider apples. Hubbell Bros., Kelly Corners Eggs, will accept cracked ones. Margaretville Bakery.

Would like to buy good rabbit dog. Anderson c/o News.

Big hogs, beef cows and calves. L.C. (Pete) Gray, phone number: Roxbury 2870 or leave word at Bussy's store.

MARGARETVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL NEWS:

Federal Lunch Program: This week we began the Federal lunch program. For 16 cents each child may buy a bowl of soup or a main dish, a salad, and a sandwich. Purchased separately this lunch would cost 19 cents with soup or 23 cents with main dish. In addition to this he may buy plain milk for three cents a half pint and chocolate milk for 6 cents. Ice cream or dessert may also be purchased for an additional six cents. The menus for the first three days this week for the lunches were as follows: Tuesday - hotdog, potato salad, muffin: Wednesday - celery soup, fruit salad, egg sandwich. Thursday - Spanish rice, cabbage salad, apple and lettuce sandwich.

Notice of Hearing on Preliminary Budget:

Notice hereby given that the Preliminary Budget of the Town of Halcott for the fiscal year Jan. 1, 1945, has been completed and filed in the office of the Town Clerk at Halcott Center, N.Y.... the proposed salaries of the following town officers are.... Supervisor...\$200. Justice of the Peace...\$80. Councilmen (each) \$72. Town Clerk...\$200. Town Superintendent...\$400.

By Order of the Town Board, Marshall Bouton, Town Clerk Oct. 7, 1944

CORRESPONDENCE

... From Pattie Kelder and the Halcott United Methodist Church: We continue to collect items for our time capsule, which we intend to bury near the Church. If anyone has any appropriate pictures, mementos, stories etc, that would enhance the history of the church, please contact Nancy Ballard at 254-4141 or Pattie Kelder at 254-5589. Hi,

... From Chuck and Tonia Fronckowiak who wish to thank everyone in the Town of Halcott for all that was done for them due to their loss at the time of the Hurricane Irene Flood.

... From Dan and Joyce Peckham, Prattsville friends: "We are still in TX enjoying the 100 degree heat and sunny weather. Stopped by the local Starbucks shop in Katy, TX, for coffee and lo and behold, the lady behind the counter was from Halcott Center. Really small world here! She lived there for 15 years; their name at the time was Harvey and Bambi Holzman. Harvey was assessor at that time. She is now Bambi Temple and sends her regards to the Halcott Center folks"

... From Robin White:

I wanted to take this opportunity to let you know about our daughter, Melinda White's, recent achievements. She was a 2007 graduate of Margaretville Central School (Valedictorian), and went to the State University at Albany (Honor's College) to major in Political Science. After spending a semester last year as an intern in Washington, DC with the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Melinda returned to Albany to finish her senior year this spring as the Valedictorian of the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, Department of Political Science, State University of New York at Albany. In addition, this past April she was chosen to receive the Chancellor's Award for Excellence, receiving this prestigious award from both the SUNY Chancellor as well as the SUNY Albany President at the annual awards ceremony in Albany. At the present time, Melinda has been accepted into the State University at Albany's 5 year

graduate program, and is pursuing her graduate degree in Public Administration. She is very interested in energy topics, and was recently hired by NYSERDA in Albany.

... From Tina Nelkin who spent many years as a resident of County Route 1, and who writes that "as a member of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Team in Training program, I have pledged to raise money for blood cancer research and patient assistance programs. As a blood cancer survivor, this year I have been chosen to be the 2011 Honoree. Please make a donation to support my mission to fundraise for Blood Cancer Research and Patient Services. Please help me make this a special year by donating to "The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society" and mailing it to me, Tina L. Nelkin, 320 Fairhaven Blvd, Woodbury, NJ 11797; OR, visit my webpage at <http://pages.teamintraining.org/ti/zuiboarj11/tinelkin> Thank you! Tina."

PASSAGES

Oakley Charles Fronckowiak was born to parents Chuck and Tonia on April 27, 2011 and joins his sister Ava. His arrival was supposed to have been announced in the summer issue of TTOH, but the editor forgot. In an effort to get to know him in time for the autumn issue, I went to visit him with my camera. I took a splendid picture of the sleeping Oakley Charles with his older sister standing beside him, but you'll have to take my word for it, because I then proceeded to lose the camera. Great-grandmother Nancy Ballard says that he is growing like a weed. By now he's probably walking. **IK**

Jaelynn Emily Hackman was born to Tom and Rebecca E. Myers Hackman, January



31, 2011, at 1:11 a.m. She weighed 6lb. 14oz. She has 3 step siblings who all adore her. They are Josh, Joselynn and Jesse Hackman. The Hackmans all live in Lehighton, Pennsylvania.

Jaelynn's maternal grandmother is me, Pamela Johnson Kelly. Most of my paternal ancestors, Johnsons and Streeters, were born and lived their lives in Halcott. I grew up in Halcott. My kids have wonderful memories of visiting their grandparents, Garold and Lena Johnson. I'm hoping little Jaelynn has the opportunity to learn to love Halcott too.

Other grandparents are, Ralph Myers, Jr., Quakertown, Pa., and Tom's parents from Lehighton, Pa. She is fortunate to have a great grandmother, Helen C. Myers, Fleischmanns. Her aunt, Michelle Myers Krueger lives in Az., and uncle, Lonnie D. Myers, cousins, Erik and Kiersten, live in Chalfont, Pa.

Jaelynn's middle name, Emily, is the same as her mother's. I chose it for Rebecca's middle name because it was my mother's mother's mother's name. That would be my great grandmother, Emily Carroll Kittle. So, the name has passed to the 6th generation.

Michelle Myers Krueger, Jaelynn's aunt, flew in from Arizona in January to be present at her arrival into the world. In spite of ice storms, snow storms, the flu season, not to mention one of the coldest Januaries on record in the northeast, Aunt Michelle made it. It was a joyous occasion for us all.

On the other end of the spectrum of feelings, Jaelynn's paternal great grandfather, my kids' grandfather, **Ralph Myers, Sr.**, passed from this world about a week before her birth.

Ralph Sr., (Lonnie), lived his teen years with his aunt and uncle, Libbie and John Kelder, on what is now Bouton road, in upper Halcott. He was one of the many young men from Halcott who served in WWII. Ralph, Sr. owned and operated the Esso station (later changed to Exxon) on the corner of Main Street, Fleischmanns and the Halcott Road for many years. He was well known

and respected by many local as well as seasonal people, who took their cars to him for mechanical work over the decades.

It is my goal to help my kids and grandkids always know that their roots are from the Halcott, Fleischmanns and Dry Brook area. There is a saying "you can never go home," but it helps me 'revisit' home when I pass memories of those people and events to them. **Pam J Kelly**

Finally, much of this issue has been devoted to memories of our precious **Donald Bouton**. He was the third leg of a triumvirate of oldsters whom we've lost this year. Donald's sweet, gentle

charm was irresistible. I remember the first Easter we came to Halcott, staying in our newly acquired Griffin house. It had snowed the day before and the sky was brilliant blue with a strong sun. Donald invited all of us to go sapping. It was a perfect day, trudging through the deep snow to empty sap buckets, tapping Donald's wisdom even as we tapped the compliant maple trees. City-folk will understand me when I say that there are some seminal

experiences in a rural community that tell you right away that this is where you belong. That spring day with Donald was one of them. If we had missed the cue, though, it was surely there again in early summer when we worked with him to arrange the hay bales in the wagon behind the baler as it spit them cheerfully into our faces. There is no greater gift to a community than a personality who beckons others to join in. Donald's quiet joy in his Halcott life, his contentment, his love of cows, hay and people (in that order?) was a smiling temptress crying, "Come and enjoy what I enjoy. It's free!" But then, true to his spirit, he always took the next step, patiently teaching us how to enjoy it. Oh, Donald, we will miss you, IK.



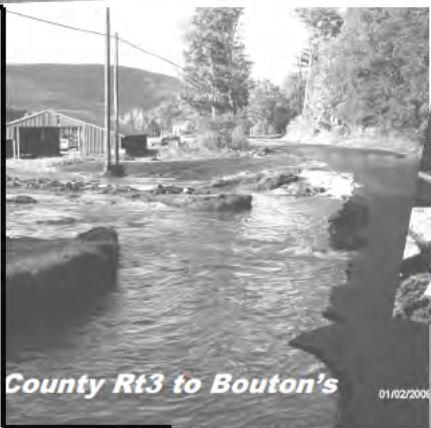
Irene's Legacy



Turk Hollow Rd at Ted Rhdazzo's



Greene Co Rt 3



County Rt3 to Bouton's



Entrance to Highway Garage



County Rt1



County Rt3 Bridge at Mead Rd



The Times of the Halcott Methodist Church

Summer, 2011

Pattie Kelder, Correspondent

Fond Memories of Donald Bouton

Genell Webb recently showed me a treasure rediscovered in her cookbook. It was a 2005 issue of the *Times of Halcott* containing some of Donald Bouton's boyhood memories about church. This reminded me that not all of Donald's stories have been told in print. Here are a couple, to the best of my recollection.

The Elderberry Patch (*Background Note: Elderberries are a sharply flavored fruit the size of BB pellets. If the birds don't get them first, they can be found growing on stemmy structures resembling over-sized Queen Anne's Lace umbrellas. The clusters must first be picked from tall bushes; then the berries must be painstakingly plucked from the stems. To say this is time consuming or labor intensive is an understatement. Purple fingers are the badge of perseverance.*) Some years ago while visiting Donald and Shirley, I shared fond memories of picking elderberries with my grandmother, Libby Kelder, for pie. In due time the patch had run out and I still mourned its loss. Donald confessed that he had a patch just sitting idle behind the house. This surprised me until I learned that he prized elderberries as much as his faithful cook despised them. Apparently he had lamented over the absence of this purple treat from the farmhouse table, for Shirley, recognizing the opportunity, promptly dispatched him to show me where to pick. Within a few days, Donald and I were enjoying Mom's elderberry pie and Shirley was off the hook!

Oddly, there was no invitation to the elderberry patch the following year or the next. I put it out of my mind until Donald sought me out apologetically one day. Something – or someone – had been getting into the elderberries. The patch was being picked clean. Not wanting to disappoint me, and perhaps, himself, Donald decided to help me pick from two or three bushes on the side hill behind

the barn. It was a difficult undertaking and the yield was disappointing, so this was our last elderberry foray.

Donald's Woodchuck Stand-Off

I believe it was on this occasion that Donald told me about the summer he matched wits with a woodchuck. Shirley, as the only witness, was usually the one who told the story. This time, he told the story on himself while she listened, laughing to the point of tears. I'm glad that Mary can corroborate this story, as it seems rather out of character for Donald.

During their years on the Griffin farm, Donald took to planting a garden in the fertile soil down back of the barn. Naturally everything that grew there was gigantic and the yield was prodigious. The location was perfect until the year a woodchuck came to dinner and stayed. Suddenly the garden became a battle zone! Never one to give up, Donald tried every eviction notice in the book – keeping the fence in repair, plugging entrance and exit holes, using scare tactics and all other manner of discouragements – all to no avail. As the summer wore on into its seventh or eighth inning, the score was Woodchuck: 1000; Donald: 0.

Total exasperation led the normally mild mannered farmer to plot the unthinkable. This was war! He would have to resort to . . . a permanent solution. During milking one night, after plugging all holes but one, Donald was spotted at the open hole with a pail of hot water and a baseball bat. The plan was to flush the woodchuck out for a final exit. Poor Donald didn't even have time to take up a batter's stance before the indignant woodchuck surfaced, shook hot water on his attacker, and disappeared. Shirley found him standing over the vacant hole with the bat and a bewildered face.

Outsmarted? Perhaps. Come the ninth inning in the spring, though, the garden was planted up by the house.

Aftermath of Hurricane Irene

The United Methodist Church desires to help people of the Catskills (and beyond) who are suffering hardship from Hurricane Irene. Bishop Jeremiah Park, along with officials from UMCOR (the United Methodist Committee on Relief) met with parish pastors in Margaretville at the end of August to assess needs, as did Red Cross workers, Salvation Army personnel and others. I'm sure everyone is grateful for the help they and our local volunteers have been giving. People desiring to assist this relief effort with financial resources can make checks payable to the Halcott United Methodist Church with Disaster Response on the memo line.

As always, 100% of monies received go directly to relief projects, this time in our own backyard. Thank you.

Faith in Action Autumn Clean-Up

In midsummer, the Administrative Council planned an autumn roadside clean-up for Saturday, September 10th with church and community members gathering at the Grange Hall at 9:30 a.m. for supplies, team assignments and rides to various Halcott locations followed by return rides to the Grange Hall for snacks and fellowship at noon. Due to the rude appearance of Hurricane Irene, however, the September 10th clean-up may have to be postponed. Please call for an update.

Time Capsule: Time Running Out

This church was organized 182 years ago! Awhile back, in anticipation of its bicentennial, we started gathering stories, pictures and mementoes of past church events to be sealed in a time capsule. Responses included

Mae Morse's Bible and several stories previously printed in this column. We know there are more stories and artifacts out there, so please dig them out and get them to Nancy Ballard as soon as possible.

Welcome to Halcott

Please extend a warm welcome to our newest neighbors and let us know if we have missed anyone.

- * Jamie and Mark Vogler (Donald and Shirley Bouton's place)
- * Hans and Tucker Hohn and Jennifer Peterson (Roy and Neva Johnson's place)
- * Chuck and Tonia Fronkowiak and family (house below Pete & Nancy Ballard)

Mark Your Calendars

***Tenth Anniversary of 9/11** – 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday, September 11th at the church; an occasion for the town as a whole to worship together as Americans, regardless of faith preference

***Crock Pot Supper** at 5:00 on Saturday, September 24th at the Grange Hall. Tickets available at the door: adults \$7.00 and children under 5 free

***Election Day Bake Sale** on Tuesday, November 8th at the Grange Hall. Thanks for your support.

***Community Christmas Program** at 7:30 on Saturday, December 3rd at the Grange Hall. All are invited. Call ahead for a spot on the program.

***Christmas Candlelight Service** at 7:30 on Friday, December 23rd at the church. All are invited to share the carols of Christmas.