

The Times of Halcott



Autumn 2015 Vol. 72

Editors: Innes Kasanof; Peg DiBenedetto; Judy DiBenedetto; Karen Rauter; Carrie Bradley Neves; Art: Nina Kasanof

Solidago

Ah, Autumn! Sweet sadness of warm summer endings, but also anticipation growing for the joys of another season: knitting in front of a cheerful fire, cold noses, cold fingers....ummm, maybe not. But autumn also gives me the chance to sit back and assess how the weather patterns of spring and summer have produced the current year's bounty. It's been a banner year for apples for instance; everywhere I go, apple tree limbs hang low, burdened by an impossible load of red jewels. Or yellow. Or pale green. It has NOT been a banner year for blackberries at my house. Where did they go? Sadly, this year there were no showers of delicate white flowers along stone walls, adorning graceful but lethal stems signifying the blackberries to come. We cannot apply the apple truths to the blackberries. There was no late frost to kill the tiny buds that would, in sweet spring, be fertilized and swell in the sun of summer into fruitfulness. So what happened to the blackberries? Could blackberries, like foxglove, be biennial?

And so it goes. The tomatoes in my

garden were pretty good this year. The zucchini was predictable, like a faithful mutt who returns joyful and panting every year. Too many, too big, too hard to give away. I sink back in acceptance and chop, grate, freeze, disguise.

But how about the solidago this year? Commonly known as goldenrod, this wildflower of the aster family, in the last few years has rudely galloped through my garden. As I drive through the Catskills this fall, I don't remember ever having seen such a magnificent plethora — along the roads, in the fields, EVERYWHERE, in its bright yellow glory.

There is a form of goldenrod that grows in every state of our nation. In early spring, it jumps up, bright, green, fresh, and I think, "Oh, what are you?" If I'm bold enough to pull some out, I'm astonished by its tenacity. It is not a well-bred plant; it's a rogue with sinister white roots all along the buried stem. By summer, I'm looking up in its face. And when that golden school bus opens its doors for

kids, the unabashed goldenrod opens its now towering brassy heads for gardeners. Isn't it interesting that our first color in spring is golden daffodils and our last color in autumn is the infernal goldenrod?

I read on the internet that I am not alone in thinking goldenrod invasive, but it does seem to have some redeeming features. I learned (also from the internet, of course) that the name "solidago" means to "make whole." When I read through all the ways that goldenrod is used, I concede that it comes by this name honestly. It has been used on the skin to heal wounds. It has been used as a diuretic, as treatment for tuberculosis, diabetes, enlargement of the liver, gout, hemorrhoids, internal bleeding, asthma, and arthritis. In folk medicine, it is used as a mouth rinse to treat inflammation of the mouth and throat. In Europe they use solidago to treat urinary tract infections and to prevent or treat kidney stones. Oh, yes, and rubber! From solidago? The tires of a Model T that Henry Ford gave Thomas Edison were made from rubber gathered from goldenrod. A new found respect for this stately rod is dawning in my unforgiving gardener's heart. **IK**

in our zip code.

I remember, in first grade, placing a little colored ribbon on a local map to mark the location of my house and finding it fell outside the area the teacher had thought to print. It soon became apparent that not everyone in my class lived thirty-five minutes (equivalent in six-year-old time to approximately one-and-a-half eternities) from the school.

My AP Human Geography class introduced me to the debate

between determinists and possibilists: those who believe one's environment dictates social behaviors versus those who believe it does

not. While determinism is generally considered faulty and even racist on a global scale, I think Halcott is a micro-example of the theory's validity.



For most of my life, I've thought of the mountains as creating only isolation. I spent most of my childhood summers in our white-trimmed green barn with a heavy book in my small hands, staving off the slow creep of "nothing to do." It took a long time for me to recognize the influence of isolation's frequent companion: proximity. It was then I realized the blessing of living in a place like Halcott.

Over time, sheer closeness creates an acutely friendly breed of person. This is because of those January mornings when your engine dies a mile from your house. The nearest repair station is twenty miles away and you forgot your gloves on the kitchen table. Oh, and you're at the bottom of a valley, which means no cell service. Cars don't come along County Route 3 more than once every twenty-seven minutes, so you can't afford to hold a grudge against anyone who might be passing by. I wouldn't say the mountains necessarily cause people to be friendly, they just sift out those who aren't.

The clearest influence of the mountains is in our idiosyncratic dialect; a Catskillian might say they are going "up to Roxbury" even if Roxbury is south of them, because it is upstream. The same

ISOLATION AND PROXIMITY

Julian Rauter

I grew up between mountains, in a small, green, and distinctly difficult-to-escape place whose motto is You Can't Get Here from There. I live in the Catskill Mountain town of Halcott Center (local pronunciation: Haw-kitt, population: 258). Viewed from afar, it resembles a big green bowl pressed into a great mound of earth. To stand out in a Halcott field is like being in the courtyard of a medieval fortress, surrounded by great immovable walls that yield for no human will or mechanism. Sometimes I see them as sentinels keeping all enemies out; other times as guards keeping me in.

The town motto refers to the fact that Halcott is completely blocked off from the rest of Greene County by a mountain ridge that can only be traversed by way of a precarious unpaved road that no one recommends taking. As a result, I go to school in a different county: computer software does not always recognize Halcott as a real town

speaker might say they were “over to Walton,” meaning that they had to cross a mountain to get there. This is not uncommon in mountain cultures; the Triqui people of Oaxaca have no words for “left” and “right”; rather, directions are described as “uphill,” “downhill,” and “transverse.”

A linguistic anthropologist I interned for this summer told me this when I asked whether he thought geography was capable of determining social behavior. He made it clear that researchers can’t empirically demonstrate a causal relationship, but we can say the two are certainly correlated.

It’s impossible to prove that I would be any different had I grown up somewhere else, but until I leave home, I’ll never know. For now, I’ll keep believing that isolation and proximity made me who I am: a reader, a talker, and a citizen of the mountains.

Farm Report

Summer 2015 has been a particularly active one on Halcott’s dairy farms. Along with the usual milking, feeding, cleaning, fencing and hay making chores, several new Watershed Ag Program projects have been completed or are in the works at this time at both the Johnson and DiBenedetto farms. As with previous Watershed projects, all of these new Best Management Practices will not only help keep waterways clean but also aid in improving the existing farm environment for both man and animal.

At Tim and Christl Johnson’s farm, the major projects include laneway work and a compost/feeding facility. The laneway, completed earlier this summer, replaces the old path the milk cows used to get from the barn to the pasture. Tim explained that the culvert that ran under the old laneway had become plugged causing ponding to occur where the cows had to walk. Muddy walkways are hard on cows’ hooves so the new, drier laneway should benefit hoof health and improve

cow movement to and from the pasture. The compost/feeding facility is being built up at the Deamer barn as this article “goes to press.” This facility will be a roofed structure with a concrete floor. The four bay compost area helps the Johnson’s solve the issue of what to do with the material scraped from around the cow feeders at their main dairy facility. This material is a mixture of manure and long hay that can--and often does-- plug the pump at the Slurry Store (manure holding structure). Having a place to compost it will save on pump repairs and, as an added bonus, give the Johnsons some excellent fertilizer for their fields. The covered feeding area will provide an easier to manage place for Bruce Rowe’s beef cattle that currently reside at the barn.

The main projects at the DiBenedetto farm were repairs to the milkhouse waste system and installation of a solar watering system for the grazing cows. Happily, local contractors Fred and Brian Enck and Titan Drilling did much of the work on these projects. The original milkhouse waste system was put in several years ago to solve the problem of dealing with the wastewater coming from our milkhouse and milking parlor. Because

of our barn’s proximity to Vly Creek, a system was designed to pump the wastewater up the hill behind the barn to a grassy filter area. This summer, the older, worn out pumps were replaced with newer ones and some of the waste will now be pumped into the manure spreader to go directly on the fields rather than having such a volume to go on the hill. The solar watering system was installed

down in the fields behind the Grange Hall to replace an older watering system that was destroyed in one of our flooding events. Our cows have used the waterers, which are at several places where they graze, twice through now and everything works great. It’s amazing how much water that single solar unit can pump to keep the herd of thirsty cows content in the summer heat; our hats go off to the Watershed planners and engineers as well as to those who installed everything! This solar project will be a feature at the September 23 pasture walk



sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension here on the farm.

Halcott Farm Products at Local Eateries

Did you know that local farm products are being used to enhance the menus of local restaurants? Yes, indeed, breakfast at the recently opened Goatie Whites in Fleischmanns can include the delicious eggs from Christl Johnson's gorgeous chicken flock. At present, the Johnsons are supplying about 30 dozen eggs per week for the dining pleasure of patrons to the Zellner family's wonderful establishment. Another local product, the DiBenedetto's Crystal Valley Farm Cream Line milk, is used at The Zephyr Restaurant in Pine Hill in their mouth-watering recipes. Both eateries give us all an opportunity to enjoy local even when eating out.

Harvest of Love

This summer Halcott once again showed its true colors, as this community has done for many years and for many situations. Indeed, this is a place that is not only beautiful to look at but beautiful in heart as well, a place that laughs together and cries together and bands together when need arises. So, when some of our own, the precious Dennis Bouton Family, needed help harvesting the hay fields so lovingly tended to by Dennis and his father, Donald, before him, many folks jumped at the chance to lend a hand. Throughout the day, despite the heat, all went like clockwork and much laughter and good-natured ribbing could be heard in the hay mow as each wagon of hay was unloaded and stacked away, safely preserving the goodness of the season's bounty to be opened at a later time. Everyone involved, and I hope no one is left out here, including Russell Bouton, Bruce Rowe and Tim Johnson on the tractor work, Gordon Smith hauling wagons, and the entire unloading/stacking crew of

Billy Miller, Greg, Connor and Elena DiBenedetto, Marshall and Nicky Bouton, Ashley Johnsmeier, and Kevin and Kenny Johnson will no doubt remember that day with a mixture of fondness and sadness.

CORRESPONDENCE

From Marilyn Bouton Gallant and Kathleen Bouton Mech

.... We are enclosing a copy of a newspaper clipping from 1948, which shows an article and picture of the officers of the Greene Valley Grange #881 in Halcott Center. [Ed. Note: a scanned image of this old newspaper picture appears on page 10 of this issue. It accompanied an article about the prize won by the Halcott Grange, the story of which will be printed in a future issue.] Many other area people, including our parents Carson and Dorothy Bouton held offices in the Grange throughout the years, too.

We are using a quote from the booklet called **THE HALCOTT VALLEY 1851-1976**: "On October 11, 1899, the Greene Valley Grange was organized at the home of Jefferson Mead." Our great grandparents, Roswell and

Mary Elizabeth Bouton, along with their son Marshall were all charter members of the Grange.

Marilyn found this entry in her diary written on October 3, 1955, "Mommy, Kathleen and I went to the Grange today. We were installed as officers in the Juvenile Grange #586. Kathleen was installed at the Lady Assistant Steward and I was installed as the Chaplin. Mrs. Mildred Kelly is our leader and she later gave us ice cream."

[Ed Note: Marilyn and Kathleen also enclosed part of an article written about the Grange improvement project done by the Halcott community in 1948, with the hope that somehow the rest of the article could be found. We will look for it and try to recreate it in a future issue. Stay tuned and thank you for reminding us of this wonderful story!]

From Joe Stienfeld:

[Ed note: Many readers commented that they enjoyed the two-installment article written by Pattie Kelder on Cats in the Catskills. We reprint letters from two:]

I loved the first installment on mountain lions. I wonder if you're aware that my mom sighted one right outside her kitchen window, I'd say sometime in the early 2000's. She didn't immediately call it a mountain lion, but described it very specifically: about the size of my Neapolitan mastiff (120 lbs), fawn colored, long tail, and a face like a cat. It was sniffing around her garden, looked at her through the window, and sauntered off slowly.

From Rev Phyllis Skidmore, who has served as pastor of the Halcott United Methodist Church::

Dear Pattie, I always enjoy the H.C. News, but this time – wow! Your writing about the mountain lion jogged my memory. One fall night after meeting at Roxbury Church (to discuss starting up the Sunday School), I was coming back to Fleischmanns on that twisty road that starts right in the center of Roxbury. On one of the S curves, a large cat jumped the stone wall, landed in the middle of the road and with one leap, cleared the stone wall on the other side. (Of course the road was narrow.) Tawny color, very long tail. I said I saw this cat, but Herb Blish and others told me, no way. There are no mountain lions in the Catskills! The DEC says so!! But I have a friend in the East Jewett United Methodist Church, Janet Nicholls, (170 Lawrence Rd, Hunter, NY 12442), who has a whole book of sightings.

From the old supervisor:

At the July meeting of the Halcott Town Board, I resigned as supervisor because of family health issues that demanded all of my time. The Board accepted my resignation and appointed Alan White to fill out my term, and then appointed me to fill out his term as town councilman! Both positions will be on the ballot in November. We are so lucky to have Alan take over. In a quiet and unassuming way, he has already been a great asset to Halcott. He has been on the town board since 2010. Before that, he gracefully guided the town through the thorny thicket of creating a Land

Use Code and then served as our first Zoning Board of Appeals Chairman. In his real job, Alan has worked for, among other jobs that I can't remember, the Nature Conservancy, and most recently as the director of the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development. But his real vocation is breeding goats on his farm on Bruce Scudder Rd. And making cheese. In fact, there are so many facets to Alan White that working with him to turn over the supervisorship has been a huge delight. The overriding and unspoken feeling that we seem to share, however, is a love for Halcott and a desire to see this Town thrive.

Everyone is cordially invited to meet Alan and me both at a Supervisor's Turnover Party, 5PM at the Grange Hall on Sunday September 27th. We will have chicken and pork BBQ from Goatie White's and hope that you will bring a dish to pass. **IK**

From the new supervisor:

The Grange looks great! Many thanks to the Greene County Sheriff's Department for providing the labor for the recent painting project at our Grange Hall. Halcott provided the funding for materials and the Sheriff's Department provided and supervised low risk inmates from the County Jail to do the work. Thanks also to Bobby Van



Photo taken in the 1990s before renovations began.

Valkenburgh for serving as our Grange Steward and working with the Sheriff's Department on this project.



Bob VanValkenburgh with Greene County deputy sheriff in background.

As a reminder, the Grange can be rented for family gatherings by contacting Town Clerk Patty Warfield at 518-610-1214 or by email at clerk@townofhalcott.org.

Halcott's Mini Transfer Station: Kip Johnson has agreed to serve as our solid waste coordinator and staff the garbage drop off day each Sunday morning from 10-12:00 at the Highway Garage. Tickets can be purchased from Town Clerk Patty Warfield or at Sam's Country Store in Fleischmanns. The recycling area continues to be available self-serve throughout the week. Please let us know if you have any suggestions for improving these services.

Highway Department Report: Russell Bouton, our dedicated Highway Superintendent,

reports that we are on track with the 2015 schedule of road upgrades for the town and that our equipment will be in great shape for the snow plowing season (*it's not that far away*). Over the past couple of years we have replaced or upgraded several major pieces of equipment and renovated the Highway Garage.

The Halcott Email List: If you would like to receive occasional town updates or emergency notices by email, please send your email address to supervisor@townofhalcott.org. We make every effort to keep these addresses confidential. Many of the current email addresses are changing as town residents sign up for the new cable service. For those people already on the list, please provide us with any updates to your email address. *Alan White*

PASSAGES AND SOME RETROSPECTIVES

[Ed Note: Autumn is a season of saying goodbye. Goodbye to the long days, the voluptuous garden bounty, the robins, the warm sun. Our Passages this issue also seem to deal with saying goodbye, a sadness that is softened by the remembrance that spring does come again.]

From Lucy Brockman Anemone

I recently received my mother's copy of the spring issue of ***The Times of Halcott*** newsletter. The letter from Blanche Beckmann about Odell Reynolds sparked many memories. I'm not sure whether I ever met Odell myself, but I heard his name often growing up.

My mother, Marjorie Meyers Brockman, died in November 2013. I enclose a copy of the photo montage we put together for her memorial. On the back is a picture of my mother, aged 6 or so, during a summer at the farm in Halcott. The story in my family is that her parents, my grandparents William Meyers and Gertrude Berman, met in Halcott when my grandmother's family was summering in the country and my grandfather was there recovering after World War I. So the Catskills and Halcott Center have a long, long place in my family's history.

My grandmother, great-aunts and mother all had many memories of summers in Halcott over



the years. I grew up hearing fondly-told stories of hay rides, dances at the Grange, summer romances at the swimming hole, and wonderful, wonderful food at the farm, whenever my mother's family got together. Though my sisters and I grew up in Washington, DC, we were taken to visit Halcott often over the years to see Claretta and other friends of my grandmother and mother still living in the area. In later years, my sister Susan took my mother up to Halcott to visit, continuing the

connection in the next generation.

Back to Odell Reynolds: My mother's reminiscences of him were very similar to Ms. Beckmann's, accompanied by sighs and starry eyes. He must have been something! He seems to have an almost mythic quality in the memories of "women of a certain age."

I'm so glad this copy of *The Times of Halcott* came to me so that I can keep my connection to this place of lifelong family memories. I'm pleased to

include a contribution to the Halcott Community Fund and for the newsletter. Thank you, Lucy (Brockman) Anemone, Richmond, California.

From Herbert Needleman:

Hello to all: Just a note to thank you for your time and work on ***The Times of Halcott***. We look forward to it each issue. It was nice to read the comments from Blanche Beckmann.

Your remembrance of Odell Reynolds was “right on” and of course Dennis Bouton. Hilton Kelly was our savior a long time ago when we were locked out of the house (Griffins) when we were down to snowmobile. Someday, I’ll write again.

Ruth Reynolds, World War II Pilot

By Wanda Dorpfeld for Columbia-Greene Media
[Editor’s Note: Sometimes we don’t get the whole story of a life in one issue of TTOH. Wanda Dorpfeld kindly gave us permission to use this newly published article on the history of some of Ruth Reynolds’ adventures during World War II. We are thankful to be able to share this with our readers!]

When David and I were writing our book, ***Legendary Locals of Greene County***, there were so many interesting people that we interviewed and researched. March being women’s month, I decided to write about one of the women I researched, Ruth Franckling Reynolds, whose story inspired deeper research into the period of history during WWII when a superb group of young women pilots became trailblazers and heroes.

Reynolds was born in Woodstock on January 12, 1918. As a young woman she helped her father on his dairy farm, but that didn’t stop her from taking flying lessons and getting her private pilot’s license in 1940 and her commercial license a year later at the Kingston Airport. It took her only one more year to earn her instructor’s rating, after which she became an instructor at Kingston Airport for the remainder of the year.

In the summer of 1941, Jacqueline Cochran submitted a proposal to use female pilots for noncombat missions during WWII. This would free up the male pilots for combat missions overseas. Another similar proposal was submitted

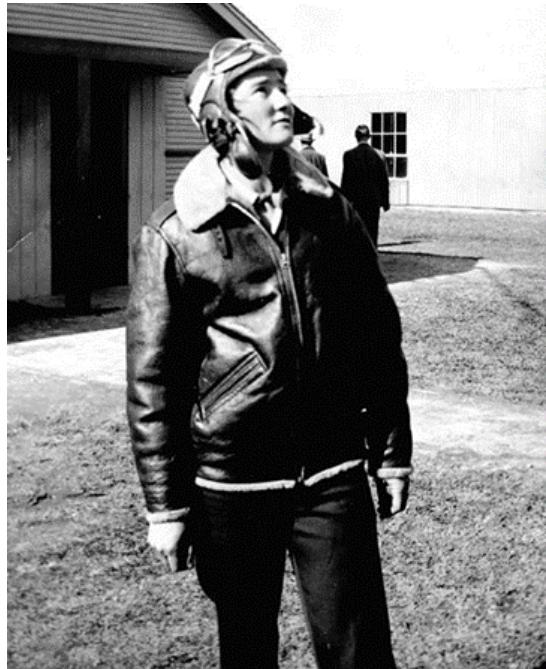
by Nancy Harkness Love. Initially, the ideas were dismissed. Eventually, two separate schools were set up. This idea was supported by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt who was quoted in her syndicated column, “My Day”, at an annual Roosevelt Home Club party in 1942 as saying: “This is not a time when women should be patient. We are in a war and we need to fight it with all our ability and every weapon possible. Women pilots, in this particular case, are a weapon waiting to be used.”

The Women’s Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS) was started on September 10, 1942 in Delaware with Love as its Director. The Women’s Flying Training Detachment (WFTD) was started on September 15, 1942 in Texas with Cochran as its director. They were pioneering organizations of civilian female pilots employed to fly military aircraft under the direction of the United States Army Air Forces (successor to the United States Army Air Corps and the direct predecessor of the United States Air Force). The two programs functioned independently until July 1943 when they were merged into one program, the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP), with Cochran as its director and Love as its program executive in charge of ferrying operations.

The newly formed WASP would carry on the same duties as the WAFS and WFTD teaching rookies, ferrying aircraft, transporting cargo, towing drones and aerial targets for live anti-aircraft artillery practice. Reynolds was in one of the first classes to graduate from the WASP training which included six months of training in Houston, Texas and seven increasingly difficult training schools during 1943 and 1944, mastering instrument flying, multi-engine training and pursuit transition. She became qualified to fly nineteen different military planes. After training, the pilots were stationed at different air bases across the U.S. Reynolds was stationed in Palm Springs, California.

On a memorial site titled Wasps on the Web, Reynolds daughter, Nancy, posted the following: “A typical week for her was to gas up a P-51 Mustang, fly 10 hours to Newark, NJ—hop a flight to Niagara Falls, pick up a P-39 at Bell Aircraft Factory and fly eight and one-half hours to Great Falls, Montana, hitch a ride to Long Beach or Palm Springs, and start all over again.” However, not every flight was typical for Reynolds.

Twice she experienced trouble. "Once after having her flight of several P-51 Mustangs mysteriously grounded for two days at Tulsa, Oklahoma, the women were finally given the green light for take-off. Ruth was one of the first to line up on the 2500-foot runway and pushed the throttle forward. The plane lifted and she was about to lift her gear when the engine quit. Heading at over 150 miles an hour toward an administration building, gas trucks and a crowd at the end of the runway, Ruth set the plane back down and wore the



tires down to the wheel hubs, finally stopping short of the dispersing crowd. The aborted flight solved the mystery of why the flights were held for two days. It confirmed there was water mixed with the gas in the field's underground gas tanks.

The other close call came while flying a P-63 at 8,000 feet over St. Paul, Minneapolis and going through the procedure for switching gas tanks. Again—a dead engine! Diving to get the wind-milling prop to restart the engine, Ruth kept going on gas remaining in the main tank for (a) safe landing at Fargo, North Dakota. She soon discovered the ground crew at Niagara Falls had neglected to remove plugs in the wing tanks that would

allow gas to flow freely."

The women in this program were not considered military personnel but were civil servants. If a woman was killed, her body was sent home at the family's expense without military honors. Often her fellow pilots collected what money they could to help with expenses. If there was enough money, the body would be accompanied home. There were no benefits for the family and no U.S. flag draped her coffin. Over 1,000 women served and thirty-eight women died-- eleven in training and twenty-seven on active duty.

In 1944, there was a bill introduced in Congress to militarize the women pilots and give them commissions. There was an avid anti-WASP media campaign, and male civilian pilots formed a lobby to protest the militarization of female pilots. The bill was defeated. The WASP program was ended on December 20, 1944. The WASPs offered to stay on for \$1 a year (the salary they were currently receiving), but the government said no. They paid their own way home. The WASP military records were sealed and stamped classified and sent to storage. No record of their service to their country was recorded in any historical accounts of WWII.

Her duty ended, Reynolds went back to instructing and flying charters at Kingston. There she met Ward Reynolds, a veteran of service in the 11th Airborne Division, who became a pilot. They were married in 1946 and they opened a flying service, with two Piper Cubs, off a farm lot in Halcott Center, New York.

Starting in 1977, a movement began to provide recognition to the WASP. This movement culminated in members of the WASP receiving the Congressional Gold Medal for service to their country in WWII on March 9, 2010. Ruth Franckling Reynolds passed away on May 15, 2007.

Missing Pete

In the space of two issues of **TTOH**, Halcott lost two treasured members: Nancy Ballard in April and husband Pete Ballard on August 11th. Pete was rough, ready, jutting chin, fierce – but wait! He also cuddled woodchucks as pets, loved his kids, his grandkids, his great grandkids. As it seems to have been with all the wonderful people

Halcott has lost these past few years, Pete was an amazing and complicated man. He was a passionate lover of Halcott, born and raised here. He had vision about the town's future and was far sighted about the possible difficulties of development.

Pete reigned as Planning Board chairman from its inception, fair and balanced long before that concept was popular. He was highway superintendent for many years, overseeing the high quality of maintenance that Russell Bouton has so caringly continued. In fact, Pete quietly did so many things that it is difficult to remember them all.

What will I carry in my heart when I remember Pete? His surprising sweetness. The first year the Halcott Fair was to be held in the then newly renovated Grange, we were worried about the tall grass that was between the Grange and the stream. Before we knew it, Pete had gone home, gotten his bush hog, driven it all the way from Turk Hollow, and tidied up the space. But then he would come to town board meetings loaded for bear,

angry about something that had been done or not done. He was like that. His wife told me early on that Pete was "an easy keeper." I hung on to that through occasional seasons of bluster and frostiness. And discovering his softness under the prickles, I had to agree with Nancy. Pete, although not always easy, was a keeper. We now have lost them both. They join the others whom we've lost recently. These all were bearers of ethical standards that are keepers. They were strong, good people whose love went higher than themselves and who brought Halcott to where we are today. I am thankful for our keepers! **IK**

Their joy unto their Lord we bring,
Their song to us descendeth';
The Spirit who in them did sing
To us his music lendeth:
His song in them, in us, is one;
We raise it high, we send it on,
The song that never endeth.

From "We Come Unto Our Father's God," T. H. Gill, 1868

Their Grange Second in Nation



Caption reads: *Officers of Green Valley Grange 881 of Halcott Center, which won second prize in the recent nationwide Sears-Roebuck contest for community projects are (left to right, back row) Mrs. Bruce Scudder, gatekeeper; Mr. Scudder, secretary; Robert John-*

son, master; Fred Bouton, overseer; Bernard Wadler, color bearer. Front, Mrs. Lewis Crosby, lady assistant steward; Mrs. Emerson Kelly, juvenile matron; Mrs. Amos Avery, substituting for Mrs. Jay Kissick, Flora; Mrs. Bernad Wadler, Ceres; Mrs. Frederick Bouton, Pomona; Mrs. Donald Bouton, lecturer; Mrs. Bertha West, substituting for Stanley Kelly, steward; Donald Bouton assistant steward..

[Ed Note: The prize was awarded in 1947 and the story behind it will be told in a future issue of TTOH. We promise.]



The Times of the Halcott United Methodist Church

Autumn 2015 *Pattie Kelder, Correspondent*

Pete Ballard

Not everyone realizes that Pete was a church trustee. Remember the life-size nativity figures on the platform in front of the church a few years back? Pete donated them. They were there for several winters until the deer found the hay and the stiff north wind proved too much for the shepherds to withstand.

As a trustee, Pete would follow up on a plan to get the job done in short order. He was involved with leveling the floor, supplying a new bell rope and burying the time capsule. When illness kept Pete from crossing anything else off the list we knew that he and Nancy were *really* sick. We miss them both.

Guest Visit

This is a special invitation for the people of Halcott to attend worship on Sunday, September 27th at 10:30 am. On this occasion we will have a guest visit from the new District Superintendent, Rev. Tim Riss. Many still remember Tim from the early '80s when he pastored here and was a member of the Greene Valley Grange.

Later that day, at 4:00, a district wide celebration of his new appointment will be held at the Reservoir United Methodist Church in Shokan where guests will include Bishop Middleton and the other District Superintendents. All are welcome.

School Kits

Starting school around here generally involves shopping for new clothes, shoes, lunch pails, backpacks and other supplies. The picture is quite different in third world countries where school is not mandatory. There, only those who can be spared from the family work force and afford tuition can go

to school. Never mind school supplies, or even shoes for that matter.

Youngsters here in town will be gathering during September to design and fill canvas school bags for some of these children. Please get in touch for further information as to time and place.

Parish Picnic

There will be a picnic for the communities within the Upper Catskills Larger Parish at the village park in Fleischmanns at noon on Saturday, September 26th. The new pastors in Andes and Roxbury plan to be there for everyone to meet. Just bring a dish to pass and stop by on the way to the Cauliflower Festival for some fun and food.

Bake Sale

As the day at the Halcott Fair wore on, the bake table became a chocolate lovers dream. "Would you like your chocolate chip cookies with or without nuts?" "How about brownies – do you want them moist and chewy or cake-like?"

Eventually, however, fairgoers became sated and demand petered out. Down to the wire, a customer materialized from out of nowhere with a \$20 order for anything chocolate. Just like that, we were sold out!

A big thank you goes to all who participated, whatever the flavor. We look forward to seeing you again on Election Day.

The Last Rose of Summer

Since the advent of the Japanese beetle in Halcott, we can readily predict when the last rose will bloom. By July 4th our roses routinely succumb to the hordes. This year was different. Beetles were

few and far between. We had roses all summer long! We even have rose hips to add color this autumn as their hues change.

Ants, too, were conspicuously absent from the balsam and nasturtiums in the garden. Even better was their absence from the kitchen. Earwigs were among the scarce and slugs defoliated fewer plants than usual. Indeed, "For everything there is a season . . ." as the writer of Ecclesiastes tells us, and this year the season was floral.

That's good, because this was the year to move roses and peonies from the family farm. Alas, the root on one piece of rose bush was pitiful at 3 ½ inches long. Armed with instructions from Cornell Cooperative Extension, preparations began and prayers were said. Having to denude the poor thing so it would put energy into growing roots rather than photosynthesize food sure did pose a paradox bordering on Biblical proportions.

The Bible is full of horticultural references to tilling, pruning, harvesting and more. Like many before him, Jesus used God's own laws of nature to illustrate spiritual truths, demonstrating how outcomes that are improbable, when placed in God's hands, are indeed, possible. (Mt. 19:26, Jn. 15:2) If one didn't know any better,

pruning a plant back to make it produce would seem like an oxymoron. Losing one's life in order to gain life seems to be an equal conundrum. Yet Jesus did just that. He sacrificed his life so each of us could live again with him. On the other side of the same coin, however, he made it clear that he desires us to give of ourselves in the meantime by serving him. Of course we rebel at this notion, but Jesus told us God will honor those of us who do so. Sounds reasonable. (Jn. 12:26)

Back to the rose . . . the pathetic skeleton sat in the ground for several weeks, seemingly dormant. Then it demonstrated the principle of Jesus' strength made perfect in weakness by sending forth a visible show of new leaves to be nourished by its invisible new root system. (II Cor. 12:9) God fortifies people the same way. Spiritual growth that is sustainable must be rooted in the Word of God. When we take the time to be nourished by the Bread of Life we become better equipped for lives of service.

Note: Did you know it takes three years for trees and bushes to become fully established? Hmm . . . three . . . seems like there are some increments of three somewhere in the Bible, too.

