

# The Times of Halcott



**SPRING !!  
2008  
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**Editors: Innes Kasanof; Peg DiBenedetto; Judy DiBenedetto; Karen Rauter. Art: Nina Kasanof**

## **Have You Any Wool?**

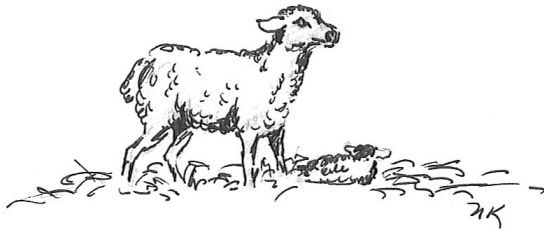
Although the calendar and snowy weather may not suggest it, spring in some ways has sprung a little early on parts of our farm. Lambing time is here! A few lambs were born shortly after the first of the year but then there was a lull in the action until about a week ago when a flush of new lambs made its appearance in the world. As of February 24<sup>th</sup>, we have had four sets of twins and four singles - twelve new little ones to date. Many of these lambs are part Cheviot, a hardy breed of sheep that has a white face and short, somewhat pointy, erect ears. We joke that the lambs look like little elves and when a group of them is together it looks like Santa's workshop down in the field.

Lambing season, like calving time, is truly a special event. The wonder of new life and the hope of new beginnings make each and every birth unique and blessed. No matter how many births we are privileged to witness we are still in awe of the miraculous nature of the whole process as well as the loving wisdom of

the Creator of it all. How tiny, rather helpless looking creatures can be born and then within a few short minutes begin to wobble to their feet to begin searching for the warm, nourishing colostrum from their mothers is an amazing sight to see. The focused care and protection the ewes show toward their young is heart-warming. Even as the lambs grow and begin to wander a bit farther from mom's side, it's interesting to hear them call for each other; they really can recognize one another by the sound of their voices.

Some readers may be wondering about lambing during cold or sometimes downright frigid weather. Actually, we've found that lambs born during inclement weather fare quite well if the ewes have a place to lamb that is protected from cold winds or rain. As long as the lamb gets dried off pretty quickly and gets to nurse shortly after birth, chances are excellent that the lamb will survive and thrive. This year my dear husband, with help from our nephew David, put up a "mini coverall"-type building that has been a tremendous blessing.

Previously, we had a makeshift hut that I had “built”. The flat, tarp covered roof had to be shoveled every time it snowed and the low roof had us hunched way over just to get in the shelter. Convenient it wasn’t. (Obviously, construction is not my calling.) Anyway, the new,



much improved shelter is open on one end so the sheep are free to go in and out as they please. The high roof makes the shed both airy and easy to work in. Furthermore, we are able to have portable pens that we can set up in the back of the shelter so a ewe with her newborn lamb(s) can spend a few days alone together away from the rest of the flock, which helps to ensure a good start for both.

After 2-3 days in the lambing pens, the ewes and lambs are usually ready to be let outside with the rest of the flock. If the weather is very cold at that time, the lambs are fitted with a wool jacket to help keep them comfy and warm as they first venture into the great outdoors. One thing we’ve discovered is that even though the ewes and lambs seem to enjoy the freedom outside, when bad weather hits they all have enough sense to retreat to the safety of the warm, dry, familiar environs of the shelter. (Sheep, in my opinion, are unfairly dubbed as “stupid”. Perhaps this will be a topic for future article!?) When the weather becomes more hospitable, the group will often then head back out under the sunny or starry sky. At these times it’s pure enjoyment to watch the young lambs run and play in their follow-the-leader

fashion as they tear around the small field and sometimes even over the back of an unsuspecting ewe who is just lying down minding her own business. We have free entertainment right outside our door!

Indeed, lambing season is a special, miraculous time. Perhaps if you stop by or drive by, you, too, can be treated to the sights and sounds of our little elves and their wonderful mothers. **JD**

## **Signs of Halcott**

**Bill Bernhardt**

Our search for a country home was also, with each new place we visited, a search for “signs.” As first time buyers, we wanted something to give us confidence, to tell us, “This is the place, the place where you belong.” But at the properties that we visited, there were no signs. The house might be beautifully situated by a pond or along a stream; there might be a wonderful, even a spectacular view. But there was no sign. We looked at each one with appreciation, and then passed on.

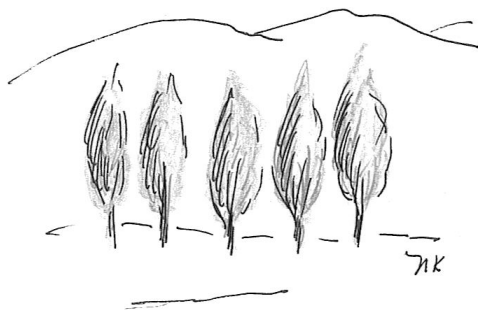
Turning off Greene County Route 3 down a steep drive, we noticed the number 53 on a wooden board next to the mailbox, a number of mysterious origin bearing no relation to the address of the property. Elizabeth said, “53. That’s the number of our apartment in The City. It’s a sign.”

The following weekend in her synagogue in New York, Elizabeth happened to meet Ilse Strauss Russell, a member of Bnai Israel in Fleishmann’s. A synagogue where she could pray on summer weekends. She felt this was a conclusive sign.

Finally, somewhat later, we noticed a line of poplar trees across the road on the edge of the Rauters’ field. That line of 5 poplars, the only trees of their kind anywhere along the

road, would become an essential part of our directions for friends visiting us for the first time. "Turn right down the drive with the poplar trees on your left across the road."

The poplar trees were also a sign. Twenty-five years earlier, we had lived for almost two years in Shijiazhuang, in China. The name means, "Village of Ten Families." Actu-



ally, by the time that we got there, Shijiazhuang wasn't the small village that it had been in 1900, but a city of 800,000 people. However, we lived on the very edge of the city, across from cotton fields and a small farming community that raised pigs and vegetables, where farmers made wide, flat noodles out of a slurry of sweet potatoes and put them up to dry on the flat roofs of their traditional courtyard style houses.

Lines of poplar trees had been planted along the roads leading out of Shijiazhuang into the North China Plain, a wheat and corn growing area. Other than those poplars, there was virtually no shade as far as the eye could see. In Spring, when the wheat was threshed, the farmers spread the grain out on the road to dry and one had to cycle along a very narrow track on the crown of the road. In August, during melon season, guards slept on small raised platforms to watch out for watermelon thieves

making midnight raids.

Our daughters Doris and Sophia were very young then and one of their delights was to visit the pigs in their two-story pens (ground floor and basement connected by stone stairs) a short distance away, just as we now walk down the road to look at the cattle in the field across from the Kasanofs.

It would be hard to imagine a climate more different from Halcott than what we experienced in Shijiazhuang. Rain of any kind, except for a few days in the Summer, was a very rare occurrence. Winds that blew a fine brown dust from Mongolia were more common. Once the cold days set in, padded clothing made everyone seem to have suddenly gained weight. But the nights were like the nights in Halcott. Once again we feel the darkness and quiet all around us. A night without moon or stars is truly black and totally still.

Although we went to Shijiazhuang not knowing a soul, colleagues and students at the University welcomed us and soon become our friends. We have experienced a similar warmth from neighbors in Halcott, including Nina Kasanof, whom we met for the first time on December 25, 2006, as we took one of our first walks down the road. She introduced us to Mike DiBenedetto, and they were our guides through our first country Winter.

On our first visit to Congregation Bnai Israel, the following Summer, the Rabbi asked newcomers to the service to say



where they came from. When we said we lived in Halcott, the President of the Congregation asked everyone else from Halcott to raise a hand, and suddenly we found ourselves surrounded by many of the neighbors who have continued to welcome us and confirm our sense that all the signs were right.

## Seven Summers in Halcott

*Arnie Weisshaar*

The Pine Hill Kingston bus had just pulled to a stop at Fleischmanns and the driver turned to me and indicated that this was my stop and to wait for the person that would take me to Halcott Center. Four hours earlier I had said goodbye to my mother at the bus station in New York City after having traveled there from our home on Long Island. Leaving her had been difficult as my young life had been turned upside down with the death of my father four months earlier in the year. The year was 1954 and I was all of 13 years old.

My parents had started traveling to Halcott sometime in the mid 1930s and always stayed at Lorenzo VanValkenburgh's Homestead boarding house. My father, having been raised in a rural region of Germany, had a special affinity for the beautiful rolling mountains and broad valleys that anyone visiting this town will always remember. During the ensuing years they, like many others, vacationed for two or three weeks during the summers at the same boarding house. I remember visiting the Homestead many times with my folks. An early photo of my mother and me taken there

had a 1943 date --- I was two years old at the time. In subsequent years Lorenzo's daughter Katie and her husband Jean DeMott had taken over much of the day-to-day running of the boarding house and Lorenzo (Renny) and Jean did the farming. My parents became very close to Jean and Katie and after my father's death Mom asked them if they would let me stay with them during the summer of 1954. "Aunt" Katie and "Uncle" Jean were to become my "summer parents". I will always remember

Jean for his gentle, easy going personality as well as his countless stories and jokes. He deeply loved his wife and family and was a great role model at a time when I needed one. Many years later I was to learn that my

mother had instructed the DeMotts that I was to be kept busy with no time to get in trouble.

Shortly after getting off the bus Uncle Jean picked me up and indicated he had several errands to run in town. Fleischmanns was a unique town in those days. The road through town was narrow and choked with cars. The sidewalks were jammed with people, the stores crowded and English seemed like a second language. A combination of German, Yiddish and a whole lot of accents I couldn't identify were common. Errands done, we headed out, past Lake Switzerland and the St. Regis Hotel on our way to Halcott. A quick stop to get the mail at the post office, some small talk with Ethel Streeter, then up West Settlement Road until the Homestead came into view on the left. This was to be my home for the next three months.



For the next seven summers I was to repeat this pattern, traveling from the city to Halcott to work “on the farm.” They represent some of the best times of my life and hold memories that to this day are as vivid as when they occurred some fifty years ago. What follows are but a few of the many recollections of those terrific summers.

### ***The farm:***

A good portion of every day during these summers was occupied with the chores familiar to anyone with experience around a dairy farm. Get cows early in the morning, milking, turn cows out, visit the creamery a few times a week, work the hay fields till late afternoon, get cows again, milk and turn cows out to night pasture. In between you stopped three times a day to eat as much as you could because the physical labor exerted each day required it. A similar routine occurred six days a week. On Sundays, once the cows were milked, we had the rest of the day off --- or until four in the afternoon when cows again had to be milked. My mother’s wish that I be kept busy had come true!

I thoroughly enjoyed every day, the hard work, the sweat, the aches and pains. I felt physically strong and at the end of each day I felt I had accomplished something of value. The barn, with its animals, familiar odors and sounds,

along with the ever-present flies and stray cats, was a special place I will never forget.

Getting cows in the afternoon was something I will always remember. The day pasture was located behind the barn and seemed to go straight up over some of the

rockiest paths I had ever walked. The pasture was extensive and by the time one was up on top, the view was spectacular. South Mountain looked imposing and looking across to the opposite hill the perfect stone walls delineated a patchwork of fields. Frequently, while up there alone, I would be struck by how quiet it was; no sound other than your own breathing. When you are young, and not used to it, the total lack of noise can be a bit disconcerting. It also meant that I was in for a very long afternoon trying to find those cows as several of them wore bells!

Coming back down from this pasture one day I looked towards South Mountain and was shocked at the sight. Flames and smoke were coming from the Crosby’s barn. Uncle Jean left immediately to help and the next day we went to look at the damage. Spontaneous combustion of the hay, I believe, was the cause and most of the barn was lost. A new, very modern one was built

shortly thereafter.

Before the widespread use of hay bail-



### ***BIRD FEEDEROLOGY— OH, THOSE PESKY SQUIRRELS!***

*One of the rarest rewards of retirement is to watch birds at the feeder. Life is different when you don’t have to rush away from the breakfast table to work, but can sip another cup of coffee while watching the ever-working birds chipping away at the mountain of seed you have thoughtfully placed in a feeder. Hopefully that feeder is situated in a squirrel-proof location, but even the squirrel problem provides entertainment. My feeder is high up against my kitchen window and the other day I heard a dreadful thumping, bumping and screeching. I finally realized that a squirrel had taken a huge leap at the feeder and had landed on the vinyl siding of the house. Having no purchase, he slid down the house wall.... And tried again! This time he made it, incredibly, but I was ready with the kitchen fork to coax him groundward. He never has returned. If squirrels have dignity, I think his was wounded. IK*





ers, hay was mowed, raked into windrows using a dump rake and finally loaded onto wagons before finding its way to the barns. Once at the barn the hay was unloaded using a hay fork. The fork would be pushed into the hay and locked in place. Horses pulled ropes which lifted the fork until it made contact with a track and a trolley which moved the hay into the loft. A trip rope released the hay from the fork once it reached the part of the hay loft where it was to be placed.

We had a terrible scare one day while unloading a wagon full of hay. Several other teenagers (Eric Small, Richey Yeager and Peter Gilbert) were staying at the boarding house and frequently helped out with the field work. Uncle Jean was on the wagon setting the hay fork along with Rickey who was to trip the fork once the load was in the loft. Lorenzo had the team of horses hooked to the ropes running from the fork while Eric and I were in the hay loft waiting to spread the hay once it was dropped. On command the horses started to pull, the hay started to lift from the wagon but so did Rickey—his hand somehow caught in the rope and now dangling only a foot away from the trolley some ten feet above the wagon. It seemed like he hung there for an eternity but in fact could not have been more than a few minutes. After much yelling and with the team of horses stopped and slowly backing up, the fork and Rickey were finally brought back down. With only a badly bruised hand we were again reminded just how dangerous this type of work could be.

Renny did almost all the dump raking in those days. He was rarely seen without his

pipe and so a pouch of tobacco was not far away. Frequently, while raking, the pouch fell out of his pocket and landed on the ground which we retrieved but didn't always return. We knew it was our opportunity to try smoking. The tobacco came with some papers to roll cigarettes so all we needed were some matches and a place not to be seen and we were in business. Invariably we got sick or at the very least turned green but we kept trying anyway. Big deal when one is thirteen or so!

Renny was a quiet, unpretentious man who dressed like many older men of the day. Always in a long sleeve shirt, a narrow brim straw hat, long pants, light weight wool vest,

black work shoes and long johns was the order of the day, summer or winter. The temperatures in July and August could be stifling but the clothing never changed. The vest had pockets for a watch and also the stick matches he used to light the ever-present pipe. When a match was struck and the pipe lit, the match was often thrust into one of the vest pockets. Most of the time the match

went out but frequently the vest would catch fire and start to smoke. What a kick we got at watching his reaction and then listening to him grumble about ruining another vest.

There was an old International pickup truck on the farm (in really bad shape) so one summer Eric decided it needed painting. Uncle Jean said to go ahead and Eric came up with a can of red paint. By the time he was done we had the only pickup truck in Halcott with red flames painted across the hood and extended to the doors. The rest of the truck never got



painted. Uncle Jean took a lot of ribbing from the locals about his “fancy new paint job”. As always he took the remarks with a smile or simply would reply that to him the “old truck had never looked better”.

The same old pickup was used to make the runs to the creamery. We all went; it was a short respite between the morning milking and breakfast. Many of the children of boarders frequently rode to the creamery and it was not unusual to have many more kids on the truck than milk cans. One day on the way back from the creamery three kids were sitting across the tailgate of the old truck. An 11 year old girl was sitting in the middle of the tailgate. The truck started up West Settlement Road and required a downshift to clear the hill. We were going very slow; Uncle Jean shifted back to second gear and let out the clutch. The truck lurched forward and the girl on the tailgate, not paying attention, went from the tailgate to the middle of the road, landing on the ground in a perfect sitting position. Very embarrassed, she climbed back onto the truck but had little interest in riding on the tailgate after that.



#### ***The boarding house:***

The boarding house was run by Aunt Katie. To watch her was to marvel at the will and fortitude of this diminutive woman who had overcome such great odds. As a young child she had survived polio only to wear braces on both legs and required a cane for assistance. The braces, with the attached shoes, accounted for 10-12 lbs. of steel and leather that were worn every day during her life. Hot in summer, cold

in winter, no one ever heard her complain about her condition or the pain which was there. Every step was accentuated by the familiar clicking noise made by the metal joints and locks of the braces. For anyone to suggest that she was physically challenged simply meant that they had not tried to keep up with the pace she set for herself each day. She, along with Libby Kelder, worked tirelessly to fix meals for the boarders, staff and anyone working on the farm. Like most of the boarding houses the food was terrific, portions were large and the desserts were to die for. Food was prepared in an “upper kitchen,” a two-story building a few steps from the main house. The lower floor was strictly used for cooking and food storage. Upstairs there was a bath and three bedrooms for Renny, Uncle Jean and Aunt Katie, and Libby. With no heat or insulation, it was only used during boarding season and shut down for the winter. Frequently I would come into this kitchen where Libby and Aunt Katie would be doubled over laughing about something that had happened in the boarding house. Their laughter was contagious and masked the pressure they were under every day to get meals prepared on time. Then food was carried from this kitchen to the one in the boarding house where Aunt Katie did the serving.

The Homestead, throughout the summer, had thirty plus boarders. The boarders were a collection of characters that had fun, enjoyed each other’s company, and tolerated each other’s differences. I could look at them from afar and be impressed with their zest for life and how appreciative they were of the little things they had. They were all special. Many came for a few weeks while others (the regulars) were there for the entire summer. Traditions were established over the years. Mrs. Gilbert and her dog Ginny were there for the

summer. She always had the same bedroom, the same table in the dining room, and her food preferences were always catered to. With such individual attention who wouldn't want to spend time in a place like that. Such attention is what made a boarding house a special place. Helen Kurzman was another regular, whose company I always enjoyed. It was hard to forget her somewhat raspy voice, very outgoing personality and infectious laugh. After the Homestead closed, the Kurzmans continued as full-time residents in Halcott.

Boarding houses were typically large old houses that seemed to be in constant need of attention. Lamps seemed to always need of a new cord or switch, door knobs and locks were finicky, faucets would drip, bathtub drains stopped, windows stuck, beds became rickety and a myriad of other problems were reported by the boarders. "Arnie, see what you can do to fix that" seemed to be the first response from management. Further, there was the constant routine maintenance of equipment around the farm. By trial and error, I slowly learned how to fix things --- a much appreciated set of skills called upon many times over the years.

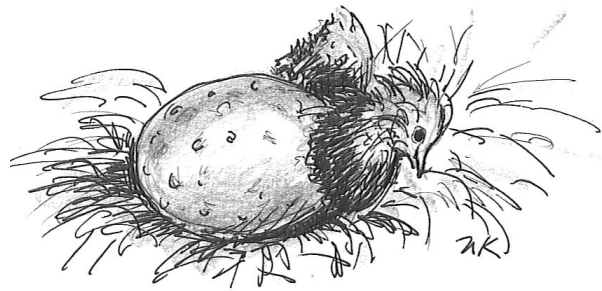
One evening, I think in 1960, I had a phone call at my home from Uncle Jean and Aunt Katie that they had decided to stop farming and close the boarding house. A very special time in my life was to end with that call. The following two summers I returned to work for Louie Crosby while attending college at Delhi. But summers were never the same; no longer a kid, it was time to move on with the next phase of my life.

After graduate school at The University of Maryland, I accepted a teaching position at Prince George's Community College in suburban Maryland teaching Biology and Ecology. After 39 years of teaching I retired in 2006. I

married Charlotte in 1968; we have two married sons and four grandsons. Currently we live in Centreville on Maryland's Eastern Shore at the following address: 111 Heritage Way, Centreville MD 21617, email:

[weisshaar@msn.com](mailto:weisshaar@msn.com)

Frequently I will listen to people reminisce



about their experiences as teenagers: going to summer camp, hanging out with friends, traveling, or spending time at the pool. Then I think back to what I did, smile and know that my summers in Halcott had them all beat.

## ROAD ISSUES

### *Extra-terrestrials in Halcott?*

Has anyone else sensed an alien presence in Halcott this winter? At New Year's, Sybil and Paul Margaritis brought a friend from Texas to stay with them at the Maples. You may remember it was a very snowy, cold holiday period. The Texas friend woke before dawn one morning, and was lying on his back in bed, waiting for sounds of stirring from his hosts. All of a sudden he heard a heavy engine sound, and whirling lights circled his room. The sounds and lights were strange to him, but he realized they were coming from a flying saucer that had zeroed in on him. He gestured as he recounted the story, raising arms and legs toward the ceiling, as he called out: "They're



coming to get me! I'm ready, I'm ready!"

Of course, the ET was Russell Bouton or Greg Finch, plowing the Halcott roads. I don't know what you readers think when you hear or see them passing. If it's still dark, I lie in bed and think "it must be snowing." As the sky lightens, and I hear them going back and forth, I am reassured that we have the most efficient and hard-working road crew imaginable on the job, and that we are not really sealed off from the world. Thank you, Russell and Greg, for the great job you do. *Nina Kasanof*

#### *And More...*

When we asked Highway Superintendent Russell Bouton how we could help to make road crew's job easier, he said first and foremost that parking on the roads is not allowed. He explained that especially during a snow storm, vehicles parked along the side of the road sometimes cannot even be seen and are in danger of being hit by the plow. Also, of course, cars parked along the side of our narrow roads make it impossible for the plow to get by and to do its job. Second, dirt roads react differently to sand and salt than paved ones. If sanded too much, they quickly deteriorate and become too mushy to pass. So if you live on a dirt road in town, have patience with your road crew. They are trying to strike that delicate balance between too much sanding and not enough. Finally, as spring and summer approach, we are reminded to watch out for and give courtesy to the slow-moving vehicles like the Town mower along the side of the road and the occasional hay wagon or manure spreader making its way to the next field.

#### *And More ...*

The Town Board wishes to remind everyone that no ATVs are allowed on Town and County roads in Halcott.

#### **ZONING FOR HALCOTT?**

The Halcott Town Board recently appointed nine volunteer residents to a Zoning Commission for the purpose of making recommendations for a town law. The primary reasons for a zoning law in Halcott are to provide additional support for our current subdivision and site plan review laws and to address potential land uses that would be incompatible with our Comprehensive Plan. The zoning commission seeks to find a way to protect the town from adverse impacts of large development without jeopardizing traditional uses. As Chairman Alan White states it: "We have to have a vision for the future that strikes a balance." Members of the Commission, who come from many Halcott "neighborhoods," are: Alan White, Chair (Bruce Scudder Road), Alan Reynolds (Main Road at Uncle Sam mailbox), Karl Von Hassel, Karen Rauter and Marc Neves (Main Road), Walter Miller (Uptown Halcott), Planning Board Chair Pete Ballard, Ted Randazzo and Al Doubrava (all from Turk Hollow Road). Alternates include Nan Reynolds, MaryLou Pagano and Gloria German (Way Uptown).

The purpose of zoning in a town our size would be to create a practical permitting system to prevent new development from harming existing residents or businesses. Generally, towns have zoning to oversee acceptable land uses, density of uses, and other practical matters such as the height of buildings. For example, according to Code Enforcement Officer, Karl Von Hassel, the Fleischmanns Fire Department's equipment can only reach fires up to 35 feet. In the United States, zoning systems must have a procedure for granting variances (in other words, exceptions to the zoning rules), usually because of a hardship caused by



the particular nature of the property in question.

The Town Board applied for two grants to help us with this project and to pay for the services of planner Nan Stolzenberg who facilitated Halcott's Comprehensive Plan. On February 27th, New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets announced an award for Halcott of \$25,000. So, as Alan White says, "Now we can roll up our sleeves and get to work!" Sessions for public input will be scheduled during the warmer months. Braver souls are welcome to join the Commission at its meeting which is held every FIRST and THIRD THURSDAY of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Halcott Town Grange Hall. So far, over a dozen different residents and landowners have attended the meetings to learn more, observe the process, and give input to the discussion. If you would like to receive copies of the meeting minutes, please send an email to: [jjkrauter@yahoo.com](mailto:jjkrauter@yahoo.com). The Town has offered to

post the meeting dates and minutes on the Halcott home page, [www.townofhalcott.com](http://www.townofhalcott.com) **KR**

## PASSAGES

**McKaya Rose** arrived on October 17th, 2007. Proud mother is Sonya Finch and proud grandparents are Penny and Greg Finch and proud GREAT-grandmother is Wanetta Finch. McKaya is blessed to have around her a strong family to help her get started. Help she has needed, as she weighed only 3 pounds 14 oz at birth, but the word is that today she's growing like a weed!

And proud grandmother Gloria German reports that her Selena and Selena's husband Rob have produced **Theodore Dennis** on February 7th, 2008. Teddy, Dennis the Menace, as Gloria calls him started life with serious colic, which the latest pediatric knowledge diagnosed as **acid reflux**. (Why are we mothers not surprised??). After non-stop and loud discomfort from 4PM to 4AM, Teddy has been prescribed infant doses of liquid, strawberry-flavored Prevacid. Now, much to everyone's relief, he sleeps through the night. Modern medicine wins again. **IK**



In this issue of *The Times of Halcott*, we are inserting a small envelope which we hope you will consider using to make a donation\* to the Halcott Community Fund, which provides the money to publish this newsletter. The Fund also runs the Halcott Fair, and contributes to many community projects.

We will have our annual meeting on JUNE 7TH at the Town Grange Hall, at 10:00AM.

**PLEASE JOIN US!**

*\*Please make checks out to Halcott Community Fund*





## The Times of the Halcott Methodist Church Spring, 2008 *Pattie Kelder, Correspondent*

### Events

This year's chicken barbecue was a joint effort with the Fleischmanns Fire Department. We thank Karl VonHassel and helpers for cooking plus all who bought and delivered the "taste of summer."

This year's Lenten Luncheon was held at the Grange Hall on March 5th. Thank you to all who prepared and to all who attended. Watch for news of next year's lunch.

A warm invitation is extended to attend Holy Week Services in Halcott. They will be held in the evenings as follows:

Palm Sunday on March 16 at 7:30 p.m.

Good Friday on March 21 at 7:30 p.m.

Easter on March 23 at 7:30 p.m.

Winter services will be held in the evening until April 6th when morning worship will resume at 10:30 a.m.

**Advance notice:** Be sure to set aside **Wednesday, June 18th at 6:30 p.m. for a dish to pass supper** at the Grange Hall. Howard Killion will be stopping by on his way to attend a conference. He will share slides of his recent trip to the Holy Land as well as update us on his work with International Students, Inc. Some of you may remember that Howard is a nephew-by-marriage to the late Dorothy Bouton. His family lived in China, Hong Kong, Colorado and Oregon before moving to California. There will be something for everyone to enjoy. The whole community is welcome to attend.

### Lenten Meditation

In June, this column introduced you to the poetry of Rosaline Constable of Clovesville. Most of her poems were written in the 1950s although she later penned a poetic eulogy for Claretta Reynolds. This poem is especially appropriate for Holy Week.

#### ***If You Beheld the Master's Face***

If you beheld the Master's face, would you Him deny

As your personal Savior? Would you crucify?  
Would you send Him to the Cross in sorrow and in shame?

Or would you take Him for your own & bless His Holy Name?

In exchange for wickedness, by His Most Holy Grace

Forgiveness He would give you, though you'd not seen His face.

Unseeing but believing - is that what you would be?  
If so, He is your Savior, your soul He has set free.

Would you take His Cross for Him - bear it to Calvary's brow?

Would you wear His Crown of Thorns - if He should ask you now?

This He does not ask of you, to take you as His Own.

Believe He is your Savior and you'll share His Kingly Throne.

Would you nail Him to the Cross and leave Him there to die?

Do you know each time you sin, your soul shouts, "**Crucify!**"?

He your Savior wants to be. The Master's face you'll know

If you free your heart and your soul from sin and keep them so.

***Rosaline R. Constable, Fleischmanns, N.Y.  
11 p.m. July 5, 1958***

### Guest Presentation

It was a pleasure to attend another of Bryan Widbin's lectures in January - this one sponsored by the Interfaith Council. Someone asked me to share my notes in this column:

World of the Hebrew Scriptures, by Bryan Widbin, Professor of the Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Nyack College, [www.biblesettings.com](http://www.biblesettings.com)

To better understand Old Testament writings, it is helpful to try to enter the world of that



time. There are:

\***6 significant differences** between the world and peoples of the Old Testament and ours,

\***5 regions of the country** (an area the size of the state of Delaware), There are actually 5 regions from east to west and 5 regions from north to south. Therefore there were many peoples. For example, a story which takes place on the coast will usually be about the Gentiles, who controlled the low land. Hebrews controlled the coast for only around 100 years of the 1,950 years of Bible history. There is only one story in the Old Testament about the sea (Jonah), but it's a Gentile story about the Ninevites receiving the salvation of the Hebrews, similar to Peter going to Joppa in the New Testament. There is a joke in the Jonah story - Ninevah means fish!

\***4 seas**- the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea, the Sea of Galilee ("harp sea" in Hebrew because it is shaped like a lyre) and the Dead Sea (the setting for many earthquake and judgment stories),

\***3 continents** - Europe, Asia and Africa, Therefore both Asian and African animals appear together in some of the OT stories. This area is along a migratory path for 30 – 40 species of birds. There is a lot of seismic activity where these continents meet – two earthquakes occur every three days in the Holy Land but most are not felt.

\***2 economies** - the land of milk and honey, The land, then as now, supported both a herding economy (milk) and a farming economy (honey). A region needs 11 inches of rain per year to raise wheat, so part of the land supported agriculture. The drier areas could support herding. There were two kinds of honey. Bee honey required pollen from ripening grain, and date honey was the reduced syrup of dates or grapes. (There are only two places in the world today that are geographically suited for both herders and farmers to peacefully coexist - Israel and Afghanistan.) The story of the noisy storm experienced by Elijah in Chapters 17 - 18 occurred on Mt. Carmel in honey producing geography. In Chapter 19, Elijah ran south to the land of milk.

\***1 God** - In the midst of polytheism among neighboring peoples existed the covenantal monotheism of the Hebrews. Polytheism, or the worship of many gods, disappeared from the region millennia ago. Today's cultures, whether Hebrew, Christian or Muslim, all worship one God.

*To be continued in the next issue with a description of the 6 cultural differences*

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