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Those Winter Sundays

Robert Hayden (1913-1980)

From Pam Kelly

Sundays too my father got up early
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,
then with cracked hands that ached
from labor in the weekday weather made
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.

When the rooms were warm, he'd call,
and slowly I would rise and dress,
fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,
who had driven out the cold
and polished my good shoes as well.
What did I know, what did I know
of love's austere and lonely offices?

Depression Times

Linda Kelly Armour

Dad (Hilton Kelly) was born in 1929 and grew up in the head of the Red Kill Valley (also known as Bedell) on the family farm with his parents Edith and Carson Kelly, his brother Howard, and sister Helen. They had dairy cows, pigs, chickens, and a vegetable garden. Dad recalls that one year she canned 81 or 82 pots of peas! They had no refrigeration because there was no electric at the head of the valley. Electric only came as far as the Ward Streeter place (later Peg and Lou Viola's farm). Milking was done by hand, and they used kerosene lanterns in the barn, and kerosene lamps in the house.

They bought staples like flour and sugar in Fleischmanns, and even during the Depression in the late 30's it was not as hard to get sugar as it was during WWII. If they were short of sugar they would just boil up some maple syrup to

Note: Our angel (above) is Brynna Asher. Three years ago, The Times of Alcott featured her big sister, Sidney as the Christmas angel. Brynna was born later that night to parents Denise and Travis Asher. How fast time flies! Marilee and John Asher are the proud grandparents.

make maple sugar. They were pretty self-sufficient, and while the rest of the world was experiencing the effects of the Depression, his family never lacked for food because of the farm. They never knew what it was to be hungry, unlike people in the village who went without food because they had no jobs.

Dad attended school at the one-room schoolhouse on Little Red Kill Road, later to become the home of Mike and Ann Hoeko. After 5th grade he attended school in Fleischmanns so he could learn how to read music in music classes there. Every day for lunch his mother would make him a couple of sandwiches. And every day he went to the cafeteria to eat his lunch. One day, another student who did not have a lunch, sat down beside him. Dad had 2 sandwiches. He ate one and left the other in his dinner pail, along with his dessert, which was usually homemade cake or pie, and his milk. The other student didn't say anything until Dad finished.

"Hilton, wait a minute. Are you going to eat that other sandwich?"

"No, I guess not, why?"

"Could I have it? Because I didn't have any breakfast this morning."

So Dad gave him his extra sandwich. And in Dad's words, "I made sure Mother made an extra sandwich for me to pack in my lunch for whoever might not have food. We didn't know what it was like to go hungry, but fathers in town who were out of work didn't have money to buy food, and the family didn't eat!"

In 1947 electric finally came all the way up the valley. *[Ed Note: Wonder what sort of article will be written when high speed internet finally comes all the way up the valley??]* They were, as Dad put it, "tickled right to death" to get electric. President Roosevelt said that "the farmers had to have electric." That fall after the house and barn were wired, Dad wanted to get his mother a refrigerator for Christmas. Up to that time all they had was an ice box. They had to get ice from neighbors who kept it in their ice house.



Most often the neighbors harvested it from a pond on their farm.

So he asked the "girl he was going with then" (now his wife of 63 years and my mother) to go with him to pick out a refrigerator. They went to Maney's Electric in Stamford since it was the only place around that he knew of that had refrigerators. It was right after the war and refrigerators were hard to come by. They got a small one because "Mother would like one not too big." She was tickled

right to death. She used it for a good many years until she was older and unable to live independently on the farm. At that time Dad's

brother and sister suggested that he take the refrigerator and use it as a second refrigerator in his basement. As of this writing, November 2011, it is still running. 64 years and NO repairs! Of course it ices up a bit on the inside, but it still keeps a cool bottle of wine or roasted chicken or package of bagels, or.... It certainly gives meaning to the phrase "they don't make 'em like they used to."



High School Memories of Home Ec

[Editor's Note: Pam Kelly wrote down a few of her junior high school memories from the class of home economics, and then polled others who may have taken home ec as well. Memories jogged memories and the small story turned into a wonderful reminiscence of a by-gone era when parents expected their girls, and, it turns out, some boys, to learn the skills necessary for keeping house and family together. Thank you, Pam for

gathering all these great little pictures of high school back then].

Pam Kelly: I learned a lot in Jr. High Home Ec class, learned how much I'd taken for granted. One thing was hot water. One of my fellow students always volunteered to wash dishes after our cooking 'projects'. Once, after sticking my hands in the dish water, I yelped and asked why she had the water so hot. She remarked that they didn't have hot water in the little house she shared with her mom and siblings. To her, the feeling of hot soapy dish water was a luxury.

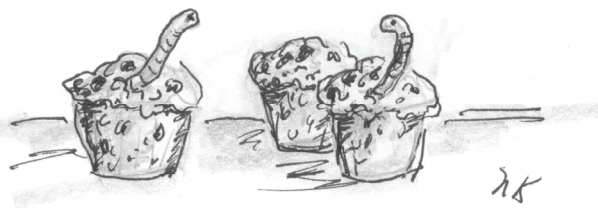
I learned how much work goes into darts, tucks, pleats, zippers, hook and eyes, cuffs, buttons and button holes, collars, hand stitched hems, etc. I'd never appreciated it until I had to sew a garment myself....I learned how much patience my teacher, Mrs. Joan Craft, had. But never appreciated it until I was a mother and home maker myself. ... I learned that the aroma of cooking and baking can cause teenage boys to come to the Home Ec room door begging for food. Ahh, the power of the kitchen.

Walking across the stage in my newly created Home Ec sewing project taught me a small stage can seem the size of an airport runway during the spring "Fashion Show".

Pat Bellows Moran, 1950s FHS grad adds: All I can remember from Home Ec classes were how I hated "cleaning day." Mrs. Martens had us take the stoves apart, the tops, the oven trays & inside and also the refrig and we had to clean it all. Everyone had a job and I seemed to always get that darned stove!!!! ...Also we made skirts. Naturally I am not a seamstress but I remember her telling me how wonderful I did by basting a hem. I was thrilled!!! But I did finish a lopsided "sort of skirt" !!! It was a good experience though. Mrs. Martens was great; she had the patience of a saint. That was way, way back in the early 1950's.

From **Cathy Curran Finch,** 1967 Fleischmanns High grad.: I'll never forget sewing class. Mrs.

Craft thought we were all quite talented(?) and we should make at least one dress to take on our high school 'senior trip' (to Wash., D.C.). The Home Ec class took the school bus to Kingston for patterns & fabric. I got enough for 3 dresses (over confident for sure). Imagine my dismay when my favorite fabric had a sun bleached streak down the entire front. After completing all 3 dresses, our class had a 'fashion show' organized by Mrs. Craft. I wore those dresses with pride for quite some time....My Home Ec class had Marilynn Mayes, Pam Maxim, Mary & Margaret Vermilyea and I think Sue Todd. For our meal preparation lesson the recipe called for raisins. We got them from Solomon's Market (over town, Fleischmanns). When we went to measure them, we saw WORMS in them!! ...The boys kept coming by and trying to beg food from us. (Wonder if the girls ever thought of using those worms to play a trick on the 'begging' boys?? "Here Johnny, have a raisin muffin....")



Joan Morrison Payne writes: My best recollection of the Home Ec Room is that it was our homeroom during our (all 6 of us) Senior year (1959) and I took away some wonderful lasting memories. I'm attaching a photo and as you can see we gave Eugene Finch a really rough go, but it was all in fun. Gene and Esther have both passed away, but I do keep in touch with Sandy and Ginny. . Regarding our Home Ec classes, no boys allowed (not the girls' rule) they were downstairs taking shop. How sexist was the 50's, the girls were not allowed anywhere near a saw or hammer!!! I wasn't in Pat's class, as she was 4 years ahead of me). What wonderful memories of ole FHS. They really were

some of the best years of our lives and we were too young and foolish to realize it, we just wanted to grow up fast and get on with living.

From *Ginger Kelly, aka Virginia Jacobs*. (Pam

Meyers got the Betty Crocker award. I was really mad because the Betty Crocker award was better known (of course). Years later at a reunion, the teacher asked me if I was still upset about the

award. She explained that the Crisco award was a better award as it was given to the student who had the best all around scores in all aspects of Home Ec whereas the Betty Crocker award was given just for cooking. (By that time, my father had given me the nickname of "Crisco" because as we all know that Crisco is fat in the can.) I still have that award.



Left to Right: Esther Kelly, Virginia Todd, Eugene Finch and Carolyn Craft, sitting on Gene's lap, Joan Morrison and Sandra Vermilyea. Thanks to Joan Morrison Payne for this photo!

explains, "She's one of the 'kelly kids' from Elk Creek. Carole Myers is daughter of the late Ralph Myers, Sr., who just passed early this year.") Ginger writes: Yes I do remember a lot about Home Ec class, mostly since I was in 4H and Grange and had sewn a lot in the past. I got to help all the other girls put in their darts, pleats, zippers and show them how to rip out their mistakes. We did have 2 boys in our class but I don't remember who they were - Stanley Cable and Steve Valk come to mind. Anywho, we girls had to show them how to boil water!!!! I can remember us gathering around the stoves and laughing when the boys tried to do what the teacher asked. I know I took Home Ec because I had all my credits and I figured this was one class I could ace. In my senior year I received the Crisco award and Carole

classroom, their pockets were full of pecans!! Their teacher was Miss Maude Schmidt, later to be Mrs. Richard Finch, mother of Richard, Herb, Ward and Paul, also to become alumni of FHS....Bob remembers the class making a Tomato soup cake, as well as soaking pots of dried beans overnight. Miss Schmidt rinsed the soaked beans under the faucet, to eliminate 'excess gas'. Bob recalls they ate their cooking projects from Chef's Class.

More from *Joan Morrison Payne*: One of our yearly Fashion Shows in Home Ec. included the girls creating attire of a whimsical nature. I was given the task of fashioning a "Tea Gown." My creation consisted of a dress made out of tea bags (actually sewn on an existing dress); the hat was

the container the bags came in and of course all well dressed ladies must carry a handbag - - - mine being a teapot. As I was modeling my exquisite creation I was accompanied by the music of "I'm a Little Teapot" "I'm a little teapot, short and stout, Here is my handle (one hand on hip) here is my spout (other arm out straight) Just tip me over and pour me out!" (As song ends, lean over and tip arm out like a spout.) At the time, I was dating Ezra Todd's son and lo and behold who should be in the audience but Ezra. All I could hear over everyone's "applause" was Ezra just roaring with laughter. Needless to say from then on whenever I was in his presence I was serenaded with "I'm a Little Teapot." Anyone who knew Ezra knows he was one of the kindest men to walk this planet.

Pete Ballard through Nancy: Pete said he, Bob Rosendorf and Jim VanValkenburgh took the class more as a joke. They thought they would be able to cook and eat. As it turned out, they had to sew! Pete made a green shirt that had everyone talking and he got quite a kidding over it. The teacher was Norma Terwilliger and she married Chris Martens. She passed away last year.

Kathleen Meck: We have many fond memories of our Home Economics class at Fleischmanns

High School. My sister, Marilyn Bouton Gallant, received the Greene Valley Grange #881, Best Homemaking Student Award in 1959. I received the Greene Valley Grange #881, Best Homemaking Student Award in 1962, 1963, & 1964. We have memories of making cakes, fudge and cookies in Home Economics class. Karol Mech, my husband,



Left to right: Ellen Ballard; Ann Todd; Janet Beland; Sandra Vermilyea; Joan Morrison & Betty Gill seek the approval of their homemaking teacher, Miss Clara Goslee, as they prepare to model their dresses. Thirty-five Fleischmanns high school girls will take part in a fashion show at the Parent-Teachers association meeting Tuesday evening, displaying fashions they have made during homemaking classes this year.

recalls making peanut butter cookies with the boys every time they met for Home Economics class. Marilyn and I are still using our Betty Crocker Cookbooks that we purchased in Home Economics class on 2/26/1963. We also recall sewing lined suits in Home Economics class. Marilyn's was blue and mine was tan. The jacket had three-quarter sleeves with bound button holes and the fitted skirt had a zipper. Marilyn also made a yellow dress with a little cloverleaf white design gathered at the waist with a zipper. I also made a dress

for my graduation on 6/24/1964. My dress was made from white brocade fabric, cording at the waist and a zipper.

SWOOSH!

One thing I've learned over 30 plus years of working with livestock is that few days are a "typical day on the farm." True enough, many days hum along rather uneventfully and farmers are most grateful for those days when there are no equipment malfunctions, the animals stay where they belong, the weather cooperates and chores get done in a timely manner. Every now and then, however, there are the eventful days that try our patience, stretch our limits and even cause us to question our choice of vocation and/or our sanity. Typically, these days occur when we had other plans, the equipment dealer is closed, it's really cold, inclement weather, we are late getting back from somewhere, or we just sat down to eat or relax a bit. Despite the aggravations, these occasional "detours" come with silver linings: they often provide for amusing, memorable stories. Last night was one such time for us...

December 1st, 2011 was a busy but mostly routine day. After the morning round of chores we spent the afternoon cleaning out both the middle hay manger in the main barn and a stock trailer we borrowed to move some heifers back from Dr. John and Sally Fairbairn's farm in

Dry Brook. With those jobs completed, we came to the house to have a snack and coffee before milking. Chris headed out to the barn first but he was back a few minutes later saying: "Hey guys, I need a hand..." before disappearing back out the door. Needless to say, this wasn't a good sign and those words set the wheels of the mind in motion: a cow is calving and needs help, the milk pump is on the fritz, the cows or heifers are out or stuck somewhere, and so on.

In short order, Elena, Greg, Coby, the delightful young man who helps us out, and I arrived at the barn to help. Chris led us to the scene of the problem in the milking parlor. Usually, the parlor is empty of cattle until we let them in, but not on this night. Swoosh, one of our newly milking first calf heifers had managed to sneak her way in. Now, that isn't too big a deal; it has happened before that the cows got in before the proper time. This cow, however, didn't stop at just snacking on leftover grain. No, she went the long way around and ended up falling down into the sunken pit area usually reserved for the people doing the milking, not for the bovines giving the milk. (Elena posted pictures of this on her Facebook page.) Thankfully, she was not injured by the fall and was just standing there, completely unperturbed by the incident, looking around, "So, this is what it looks like from this vantage point."

Though Swoosh was unfazed, we were left to figure out how to not only get her out of



there without hurting her or any of us, but also how to avoid damaging any of the equipment in the parlor. (Remember, this happened in the evening, after, you guessed it, the equipment place was closed for the day and before we had the evening milking done.) Though it would seem a simple matter to walk her up out of there we had a few obstacles, besides those just mentioned, to overcome. First, the steps into the pit are slippery steel, narrow ones made for humans. A cow couldn't go up them. Second, we couldn't take her out the far end because the vacuum line goes through there. Damage to that line would be a disaster. Third, she was going to have to take a very sharp turn at the top of the only way out or else she would end up down the concrete steps into the milk house. Finally, in order to do this carefully, Swoosh would have to be led out on a halter, something she really doesn't care for. Hmm...a few things to factor in here!

Necessity is the father of invention and in a few moments we concocted a plan to bring hay bales, the wooden ramps that we use to load the lawn mower into the truck, a couple of rubber mats from the parlor floor, two metal gates, assorted baler twine, sawdust and sure foot (non-slip material) into the pit to build a makeshift ramp big enough and strong enough for Swoosh to walk up. As we worked to put everything together, Swoosh "helped" by pulling out mouthfuls of hay from the bales we were trying to carefully stack into place. She clearly was not concerned about anything yet.

Once everything was in place, it was time to halter the wayward cow and attempt to bring her up the ramp. Perhaps it was the different environment but Swoosh didn't mind the halter much so with a hopeful pull Chris led her to the start of the ramp. It took a couple of tries but before long she was going up and we held our collective breath as she took each wobbly step. We couldn't rush her or scare her because doing so might have put her over the edge of the ramp thereby hurting herself or some of the crucial milking components just inches away from her hooves. Awkwardly, Swoosh rounded the top, made the tight turn and went through the exit alley

into the barn. Whew!

Later that night, she came into the parlor to be milked-(in the correct place this time)-seemingly oblivious to what happened earlier, not knowing that she would be the subject of an amusing, memorable story that occurred on that "typical day on the farm".
JD.

Irene's Ire

Judy Diaz

I could not believe what I saw, starting with the devastation on the NY Thruway, the bridges, Route 28, Fleischmanns and all the surrounding towns that I have come to love over the past twenty years that were hit by Irene's wrath in one way or another. We were so worried about our home in New Jersey, we left right before the storm did its horrible deed. As it turned out, our home in NJ was just fine and we were very grateful.

While our little hamlet was being pummeled by Irene, we were kept apprised of the situation by our wonderful neighbors, friends, and volunteer fire fighters, Bob and Jacki Van Valkenburgh. Before Irene, I never realized that a volunteer fire department not only put out fires, they are also there to rescue and reassure people. The Van Valkenburghs called us every few hours to give us a rundown on the storm situation and our house in particular. They told us that another wonderful neighbor, Jack Croce, used his heavy-duty machinery to fill in the gaping hole at the front of our driveway so we were able to drive in. It's so important to have good friends, in good times and bad.

Fleischmanns Volunteer Fire Department did an outstanding job and they are to be commended for their hard work and dedication. We are very confident that everyone who was affected by this terrible storm has the willpower and strength to re-build. It may take some time, but it will get done.

Irene's Aftermath

Judy Diaz's article reminds us all again of the disruption and destruction that Irene brought. On Monday, August 29th, 2011, we all awoke with a feeling of dread that has only gradually begun to sub-

side. Are we through it? Russell Bouton, our highway superintendent has worked tirelessly over the ensuing months to get the town roads back to where they were pre-Irene. There are still tasks to be done, but the roads are mostly passable for winter. The Greene County bridges that were washed away were swiftly replaced and work continues to put on their finishing touches before we see the serious S word.

The Highway Garage took a big hit and the climb back to normal has been slow. To start with, the muck was everywhere, the huge doors were mangled and inoperative, and the office was unusable. Very soon, however, the Town bounced back and was able to get 5 Job Corps volunteers to come from Oneonta to start the cleaning process. We are so thankful for their help!

The twisted concrete and metal that had been the recycling center was shored up by concrete contractors, the Norwick Brothers and very soon people could again deposit their recyclables. It was impressive to see from all the phone calls we got, how many depend on that service. Next, thanks to a grant from the NYS Department of Labor, two temporary workers were hired to continue the cleaning, and the complete gutting of all walls and ceilings that had been affected by first the water and then the mold that had set in. Mike Armstrong and Bill Bourdon have been working to help get things back together.

Even before the storm, through a grant from the O'Connor Foundation and a loan from Community Bank, the Town had been planning a new roof for the garage. Irene put a stall on those plans. The paperwork to complete the loan had been in the office of Attorney for the Town, Carey Wagner. The whole office was washed away.

However, we got back on track, and in October, Howard VanLoan, the winning bidder, began stripping old shingles off the roof. He was amazed at the rugged condition of the roof and only had to make a few repairs. He will continue to work with our temp workers to rebuild the office. Drop by and say hello and see all the progress that is being made. **IK**

JOB CORPS!

The Town is so grateful for the help we got from Oneonta Job Corps. In the picture below, their team leader Ken Sharky Loiacono receives a certificate of appreciation from the Town. The others pictured are Guillermo Villado, Harland Morgan, Chad Ericson and Jonathan Esson.



TOWN TOPICS

Every year, the Town of Halcott holds an Organizational Meeting, which according to Town Law should be held "as soon as possible after the new year begins." The meeting lists elected and appointed officials of the town with their annual

salaries, their hours, etc. Fees for different services are listed, and reimbursement for mileage is stated. The information set down at the organizational meeting is useful for the entire year and if you are on the town's email list, you will get a copy. We will also put it on our website. If you are not on our email list and would like to receive it electronically, as well as agendas for upcoming meetings, please email us at:

supervisor@townofhalcott.org.

This year, the town clerk and the town tax collector positions are both being taken by new people. Robin White will take over for Ruth Kelder, who has been a treasure to the town for many years in her dedicated service as tax collector. Robin plans to hold office hours in January at the Grange Hall, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 5:30PM to 8:30PM, and Saturdays, 10AM to 4PM. All other times can be by appointment, 845-701-1364. Robin has a day job and so will be free only in the evenings. She also has a bunch of chores around their farm and so we are very blessed to have her helping out the town as well. She will be closed all legal holidays.

Elena Dibenedetto will be our new town clerk, replacing Stacey Johnson who worked hard for the town and will now be able to devote more attention to her wonderful family. We thank Stacey again for her service. Elena is planning to have her Clerk's hours from 4 to 6PM on Wednesdays, with other times by appointment. We will list them in the Organizational Meeting minutes.

CORRESPONDENCE:

From Paul and Lillian Steinfeld: "We wanted to express our thankfulness for the numerous acts of loving and practical concern for our safety and comfort from so many neighbors while the hurricane visited its damage. Halcott is uniquely wonderful."

From Joe Steinfeld: "Dear People of Halcott: On behalf of my entire family, I would like to express our deep appreciation of the care shown to my parents during and after Irene. The resourcefulness and compassion of your commu-

nity is never a surprise, but I want you to know that neither is it taken for granted! Once again, many thanks!"

PASSAGES

Kevin and Sarah (Mech) Zablocky of Pleasant Mount, PA are the proud parents of a son, **Carson John**, born April 1, 2011 at Lehigh Valley Hospital, Allentown, PA at 12:07 p.m. Carson John weighed 3 lbs., 2 oz. and was 17 inches long. Carson John is named after his two great-grandfathers, the late Carson Bouton and John Doherty. The maternal grandparents are Karol and Kathleen (Bouton) Mech of Hancock, NY. The paternal grandparents are George Zablocky of Thompson, PA and Linda Doherty of Pleasant Mount, PA. The maternal great-grandparents are the late Carson and Dorothy (Earl) Bouton and the late Karol and Antonina (Figurski) Mech. The paternal great-grandparents are John and the late Lois (Snyder) Doherty of Honesdale, PA and the late George and Geraldine (Buckley) Zablocky.



Landon Theodore Wilfred Vogler, born to Jamie and Mark Vogler, September 18, 2011, weighting 6 pounds 18 oz and 19 inches long! Grandparents include Dennis and Jennifer Bouton. He joins the "SIX Club:" those Sanford descendants who were born at around 6 pounds. The other members of the Club have all grown over 6 feet tall, so Landon has some big shoes to fill. He seems to be very courteous. When he thought it was time to be born, he knocked at his mommy's stomach hard enough to wake up his daddy; he was a perfectly well-behaved baby Jesus for the Grange Community Christmas Program, and he allows everyone in his family to adore him. Oh, did I

mention? Cute as a button! *IK*

Halcott Community Christmas Program

Kids in Halcott are a joyful assurance of the future, and nothing is more reassuring than seeing so many of them at the Christmas Program. Pattie Kelder has been doing a heroic job over the years herding the tiny energy bundles into a respectable semblance of order for the traditional pageant. She told us that the Christmas Program has been running for at least ninety years. (Of course, Pattie hasn't been in charge all of those years!) This year she was helped by Claire DiBenedetto, Adina Johnson, and Sheila Reynertson. And many more willing workers! Jim Rauter and Willie Baer donated the wood for new sheep, cows and donkeys. Willie cut out the shapes by hand. Painter-volunteers included Lucy Baer, Judy DiBenedetto and Elena who did sheep, Adina did a donkey, and Peg and Suzannah

DiBenedetto helped, too. Marc and Carrie Neves helped with decorating, as did Sheila Reynertson's family. Mommies Denise Asher and Erica Suyama were backstage helpers, and Elena worked tirelessly all through the performance.

Julian Rauter was the Master of Ceremonies, breaking once to play guitar with his dad and mom, Jim and Karen, whose music added just the proper touch to the night's excitement. Carrie Neves's fiddle wove its harmonies through the music with expert artistry.

Ruby Reynertson narrated the Christmas story carefully and slowly – perfect for others to understand, and baby Jesus was wonderful, no crying he made. A real crowd-pleaser was the arrival of Mary in a donkey cart, pulled by Joseph. The angels twinkled in their flowing robes and gold crowns and the shepherds bristled in their burly shirts. I apologize if I've forgotten to mention others who helped make the evening such a success. All should be proud. It was a festive beginning to this favorite season. *IK*



**HALCOTT'S
CHRISTMAS ANGELS, 2011**



The Times of the Halcott Methodist Church

Winter, 2011

Pattie Kelder, Correspondent

Hurricane Irene Benefit Update : The Administrative Council of the Halcott UMC decided to use the proceeds of this fall's crock pot supper for local flood relief. The total reached a record \$670.00. Another \$150.00 in donations also arrived after the flood. It is encouraging to see what can be done by working together. Thanks to all who cooked, contributed and attended the dinner.

In other flood related news, the District Superintendent of all the UM churches in the Catskill Hudson District sent word that his office has been receiving monies for the repair of churches and parsonages damaged or ruined by the flooding. It was especially moving to hear of a \$50,000.00 check from the Mississippi Conference. The people there had received an outpouring of help from New York in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and wanted to give back. This is one of the strengths of United Methodism. We have been blessed to be a blessing (Genesis 12:2).

Time Capsule: Hurry! Get your memories and mementos to us for the time

capsule. Last call! Maybe you remember little snippets about Christmas caroling, work bees, Ladies Aid, Sunday School or a former pastor. Whether serious or humorous, even the smallest "snapshots" of the past will be enjoyed. Please share!

Special Worship Services: Note:

Regular Sunday worship services are being held at 7:00 in the evening during the winter. All are welcome. **Christmas Candlelight Service** – Friday, December 23rd at 7:30 p.m. – a beautiful candlelit service of carols and scripture readings in the company of neighbors and friends; **Christmas Day Service** – Sunday, December 25th at 7:00 p.m. – fellowship to end your Christmas Day; **Ash Wednesday Service** – Wednesday, February 22nd at 7:00 p.m. – to introduce the season of Lent.

Christmas: We have just concluded four weeks of Advent, a time of expectation, hope and preparation for the coming of our Lord. We have not been waiting for His coming at Christmas alone. Christians around the world have all been searching for ways to meet and serve Christ this season. Most of us did so in our daily circum-

stances and in ordinary places. This year, the circumstances may have included illness or difficulty paying bills. The places may have been forever changed by flood waters. Still, He comes. Especially in the hard times, He comes. Not even threat of death or death itself caused Him to turn aside from human needs.

Now Christmas is here. Jesus arrives as He always does – when the time is right. Turns out the time is always right. After all, He’s been with us all along. (“I am with you always ...” Mt.28:20) We just need to remember to look for Him and listen to Him. Awareness of His presence may not change our circumstances, but it sure does wonders for a person’s perspective! So, Christmas joy to all, regardless of circumstances or location!

St. Valentines Day For many years, possibly 25, the Sunday School students made Valentines for “older” residents

in and around Halcott. Some of you may have even saved one or two. The older students would hunt for Bible verses about love to put in the cards. Here’s a sampling of their findings.

“...God is love.” 1 Jn. 4:8

“This I command you, to love one another. (Jn. 15:17)

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” Jn. 3:16

“...perfect love casts out fear.” Jn. 4:18

“(Not) anything...in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Rom. 8:39. By now you may have concluded that you are loved! Unconditionally! That is why we can all say, “We love because He first loved us.” (Jn. 4:19).

