

THE TIMES OF HALCOTT

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

Hummertime, and the Living is...Breezy?

Well, it can be breezy, if you have any hummers that like to dive bomb you; within a whisker of those wings you can feel the wind they create against your face. And you can hear the buzzing drone of those wingbeats from some distance away. The Ruby-throated hummer is native to New York, and although there are sometimes renegade visitors of other species, the Ruby-throat is most likely the only one you will ever see. Or hear. Because those afore mentioned Ruby-throated wings average about 55 beats per second, the fastest wing beats of all of the hummingbird species. And when involved in courtship fighting, those wings are whizzing at over 200 beats per second! It's therefore no wonder they can make a noise so disproportionate to their body size.

Hummingbirds usually arrive in Halcott by the 1st of May, so we try to have our feeders up and ready before then. (Our resident chickadees and orioles, who have grown fond of sugar water too, are often the first sippers and are very appreciative when we finally get the feeders up.) Like other species, male hummers arrive first, to stake out their territory. At our house, it seems to be the same 3 males, year after year, who chase each other around, keeping us amused for hours. We have strategically placed 3 feeders on

different sides of the house, which keeps the alpha male on constant duty, and allows the two hopeful rubes a chance at some nectar and a little respite. Later on, the female shows up, and somewhere around the perimeter of our lawn, they will build a tiny nest, the size of a large thimble, and deposit 1-3 teeny eggs, about a half-inch long and not quite as wide. After 2 weeks or so, babies hatch out, and before long, we end up with more little moth-sized hummers now vying for the nectar, and it is very handy to have those extra feeders up to accommodate everyone - at least 4 adults, by now 3 chickadees, 3 baby hummers, and thank goodness, the orioles taper off for a more protein-rich diet when their young hatch. Some summers we'll see a second hummer brood, hatched out not long before migration begins.

Preparing sugar water for your hummers is easy. Wash your feeders with hot water before each filling, and clean with a bottle brush regularly to stem the growth of mold and bacteria. Mix one cup of cane sugar to four cups of hot water, stir well, and fill your feeders. You don't need to boil the water, but make sure the sugar has completely dissolved and that the water has cooled before you put the feeders back out. Food coloring can be harmful and is totally unnecessary; the birds don't need it and don't



seem to prefer it. A word about feeders: some designs are more for show than practicality. Get feeders that are easy to clean and that have perches for the dining pleasure of your

entertainers. In addition to feeders, the hummers will of course go to flowers they find tasty, so plant lots of natives such as Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), and Red Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*). These days, it is important to plant only natives when you consider your landscaping, as all pollinators are in decline, and native plants help balance the ecosystem back into their favor. Interestingly, hummers will also take advantage of any tree sap that's available! Hummers are enthusiastic insectivores as well, and get their protein from mosquitoes, gnats, caterpillars, fruit flies, aphids, spiders. So, in exchange for encouraging the little hummers with feeders, they will repay your kindness with pest control. Please note: the use of insecticides is not only unnecessary but is also bad for the birds and bats who are eating your bugs! **PD**

Memories of My Grandfather, Lorenzo VanValkenburgh The Farmer, The Politician, the Good Neighbor, and My First Hero Mary Ball

Childhood recollections: He was the quiet man who sat next to me at the table and put spoonsful of sugar on everything. It seemed a fine idea to me, so I did that too. Pie for breakfast was a good idea too – after all, it must be a major food group. We were such a happy family and my grandpa was the guiding force. He was the Town Supervisor for all of my growing up years and in that capacity had many trips to Catskill for board meetings. He would come back home, wearing this overcoat with enormous pockets, and I just *knew* that there was a surprise there for me.

He would say not a word, but eventually smile at me and I could take a look. Oh, my: hair ribbons or a bit of candy, or something pretty to wear. More smiles for both of us. By the time I was five years old, I was walking to school, and on bad weather days he might give me a ride in his model T, which was the only car he ever drove. Talk about a joy ride! It was hard to think those early Model T Fords could turn on a dime and have a nickel left over.

He made a serious effort to teach me to go fishing. Unfortunately, not successfully. Election time was great fun for me. It was the holiday just before Thanksgiving. Our house was the destination for a good many city dwellers who had summer houses in Halcott, who would come up to vote for "Pa Van." Before the election, my dad would drive my grandpa around town with cigars for the men and candy for the ladies. (Big fat pink and green and white mints. *So good*. No longer on the market.) Politics was really an indoor sport and very exciting.

On the serious side, there were frequent meetings in our living room where he and Marshall Bouton (town clerk) and Bill Scudder (commissioner of roads [*ed note: Highway Superintendent today*]) would get together, share a pan of apples, and plan the business of the town. They were men of honesty and integrity, qualities sadly lacking in the national politics of today. Bill Scudder, a widower, would marry my dad's mother (a widow, Grandma Jess) and become my Grandpa Bill.

Back to the beginning: Lorenzo was one of four children born to Lorenzo and Mary Meisner VanValkenburgh. What was a Dutchman doing with a Spanish name? Actually, he was to be named "Samuel" for Sam Tilden, the Democratic candidate for President in 1876. Rutherford B. Hayes won that election and so my grandpa was named for his father. The name came from a horseback preacher named Lorenzo Dow who rode through the mountain towns and was very popular. Some of my

grandfather's old friends called him "Sam." Brother George died at an early age from an infection and baby sister Katie died on her fourth birthday. Sister Frances ("Aunt Fanny") would marry Jim Edwards and live in Hunter. They had a son named Lorenzo and called "Renzo."

Unable to attend school on a regular basis due to the demands of the farm, my grandfather's dreams of becoming a veterinarian were not fulfilled. So much of life in those times was harsh. The designation of "teenager" did not exist. Childhood to adult responsibility was a short span. Grandpa would marry Mary Emily Moseman. She had been the teacher in the West Settlement School. They were "Rennie and Mate," an inseparable duo for many years. The household consisted of a pretty large family: the VanValkenburgh parents and the Moseman parents, a number of other relatives who were there in time of need. My mother, their only child, was stricken with polio at age 4. She would grow into a woman of incredible abilities who conquered adversity and was never considered to be handicapped. She was a paraplegic depending on braces and a cane but is only remembered for her kindness and tolerance and amazing contributions. She had very nice memories of her grandparents.

The household would continue to be quite diverse. My "nannie" was a good Christian woman who was never far from her Bible and had very serious ideas about what could be done on Sunday. My dad's mom, Grandma Jess, was a city woman (from New Jersey) who liked a good time – any time – always had flowers in her hats and kept a bottle of whiskey under her bed "in case I feel a cold coming on at night." The two of them were chalk and cheese but very fond of each other. My dad was the best and most loving father one could have and became the son that my grandparents had not had. It was a mutual love and admiration. My mother, like her

father, was a quiet force that worked.

In addition to family, and a revolving door of relatives, there were summer visitors who, over generations, became extended family. They were my "aunts and uncles." Our kitchen had a virtual welcome sign on the door, and a kitchen table that always had room for more. We were a box of crayons: very different but very close. This was such a blessed childhood.

More about Lorenzo: He was a multi-talented man. In addition to family, he was an accomplished fisherman and hunter and had a work shop across the street from the house which was well-equipped for whatever the need would be. He knew how to graft trees, and there still may be a tree in the orchard with four kinds of apples. He could hunt bees and come home with honey. What his eyes could see, his hands could do.

The quality I remember most is his love of animals. His dog Jack and his cat named Tucker slept with him and there were other assorted cats and dogs. In the barn, there were the Holstein cattle and in the stable the horses. My favorite was Queenie, a New York City milk horse who had been walked up from the City and was in terrible condition. Grandpa bought her, cared for her, and she became the rake horse for a few months a year. I can still picture him driving the rake, and wearing his year-round long-sleeved shirt, black vest with pockets full of tobacco and wooden matches, pipe in his mouth and a straw hat on his head.

The only time I ever heard my grandfather use profanity was when, as a very young child, I heard his response to the fact that a farmer was abusing his horses. I tried those words out at the supper table and was promptly sent away from the table. I didn't mind too much. I knew Pa must have been right, whatever it was that he said.

Nanna died in 1951, after being confined to her chair and her bed for some time. Pa settled down in his chair, dog at his side, his newspaper, and his visits from friends, and handed the reins to my dad. He was waiting to join her. He did not attend church but was a man of great faith and gave to others generously.

After he died in his sleep in 1957, we found a trunk in the closet filled with books on veterinary medicine. It explained why he had often been called by neighbors to help with a sick animal. This was the strength born of necessity. He had not lost his dream.

My grandfather lived to enjoy his great grandchildren and they have nice memories of him. We should be in awe of the generations of Americans who wrote our history. The pioneers who settled the west, the whaling crews that went to sea in primitive boats, the migrants who crowded the tenements of New York and wrote our songbook, and certainly the farmers who went into the mountains and forged a relationship with the land and left footprints where, without their efforts, there would have been none.

Halcott Native Alan Reynolds

The longer we live here in Halcott the more amazed I am with this unique place. The valley itself is, of course, a magnificently beautiful landscape that shows off its splendor season by season. So many times, I have heard both residents and visitors alike comment on how especially stunning this little town appears to them. First time visitors, in particular, will often exclaim, "Gosh, I didn't know this was here!" As lovely as our physical surroundings are, those of us fortunate enough to spend much time here know that the people here are very special as well. Recently I had the happy opportunity to visit with lifelong Halcott resident and local business owner Alan Reynolds to learn more about his fascinating years spent working as a trucker. During our visit it was easy to see Alan's enthusiasm for his former occupation and why he has so successfully

dovetailed that passion into the country music/ all night truckers radio show he currently hosts at the local WIOX station in Roxbury. (You may hear Alan's Pure Country show Saturdays from 4-6 pm and Radio Truck Stop show Sundays 10-12 pm on radio channel 91.3 FM and streaming at wioxradio.org)

JD: What drew you to trucking and how did you learn the trade?

AR: As with most farm kids, I grew up driving large equipment from an early age. When I went to college I had a job trucking for Slavin's. After college I briefly taught high school English in Wappingers Falls and Margaretville but worked part time for Trailways. Trailways liked to employ teachers as drivers for the summers and I enjoyed the work, even getting to do some fun long-distance trips. When some of the senior drivers retired, I was invited to go full time and I accepted the job. I drove for Trailways for 8 years. Later, Jimmy Woolheater wanted to go in the trucking business with me and we purchased a new truck with a loan secured through the bank in Roxbury. It wasn't too long before Jimmy decided that the long days of being out on the road away from home wasn't for him and he quit the business, but I stayed with it.

JD: How long were you involved with trucking?

AR: 1978-2003

JD: Did you own your own your own truck and did you work for yourself or for a trucking company?

AR: I did own my own truck. I was a "Leased Operator" which meant I owned the truck, but a company was responsible for the loads I was carrying. Early on I hauled for a company, Avery International, but as I learned more about the trucking business as a whole, I did more of my own work. I did some work with Mountain Transport, based out of Delancey, NY.

JD: What types of items did you haul?

AR: Avery International made sticky label paper so I hauled rolls of paper that were 6-7

feet high and 4 feet thick to plants that made the smaller labels. With Mountain Transport, I hauled ice cream mix for Carvel out to Los Angeles. On the return trip, I picked up produce from the Salinas Valley in California and/or from the Yuma area of Arizona to bring back to produce wholesalers in the east. Often, I brought the produce to a place in Danville, Pennsylvania that was run by a gentleman named Delvin Whiteknight and his family. It was a real mom and pop kind of place and usually after the produce was unloaded I was invited into the house to have breakfast with the family.

JD: Did you have favorite routes or places to go?

AR: I liked to get as far south as quick as I could to get to the warm weather!

JD: How long were you out at a time?

AR: I was out for about 6-8 weeks then home for 1 week.

JD: Any favorite truck stops?

AR: I mostly liked the smaller, independent truck stops, the kind that had creaky floors, the old ripped vinyl chairs and great food with a regional flair depending on which part of the country I was in. Sadly, there are fewer than 500 of these independent truck stops left in the U.S. today. Some of my favorites were: Sweet Pea's in Wheatley, Arkansas (great BBQ); Uncle Pete's in Lebanon, Tennessee (just a great stop); North 40 in Halladay, Tennessee; Kline's Truck Stop in Fresno, California; the Running W in Lindale, Texas; and Mark's Asphalt Cowboy A.K.A. "The Red Barn" in Toya, Texas (another great BBQ joint). Another stop, the Triple T near Tucson, Arizona, features a restaurant called "Omar's Highway Chef" named after the chef who has cooked up meals for hungry travelers for 40 years and still stops in from time to time to lend a hand at the grill. Interestingly, the Triple T is located not too far from famous cowboy humorist Baxter Black's place. You can see pictures of some of these truck stops on the website for my radio show,

radiotruckstop.wordpress.com.

JD: Would you meet up with some of the same truckers at some of your stops?

AR: It wasn't uncommon to see some of the same drivers occasionally. Some truckers might run along together for a bit and then pull off to share a meal at one of the stops but that isn't always easy to do given the different schedules and destinations.

JD: Did you ever have time to explore local sites while you were out?

AR: It was rare because you had to be on time with the loads. You also secured more work by being prompt so there wasn't much free time. There was a time in California when I went with a few friends to see an old gold mine. We dug down into the mine and went until there was too much water in there for us to continue. Another time I visited the La Brea Tar Pits. Mostly, though, I just saw what was along the roads traveled.

JD: How many states have you been to/through?

AR: I have been to all the lower 48 states except for North Dakota. I did carry a load of organic milk bound for Hawaii as far as the dock in California.

JD: Any especially memorable stops or trips?

AR: I remember one stormy winter night near Tucumcari, New Mexico I pulled into the truck stop and ran into Bill Miles, a guy who had also worked for Trailways. Another time, I stopped at a place along I-20 and ran into Mickey Kelder. We had worked together at Slavin's back in the day. As far as driving incidents, one time I was going along during the winter and a car pulling a U-Haul passed me at the top of the hill. The road was slick and as I crested the hill I could



see they were sliding sideways across the highway further on down. Thankfully I had just enough time and space to go around them safely. I always had to be aware of the weather. I had a thermometer where I could watch the temperature. For truckers, the key temperatures are 28 and 100 degrees. At 28 degrees, the road starts freezing and at 100 degrees tire damage becomes more possible at high speeds.

JD: Many breakdowns or anything like that?

AR: I always purchased new trucks (Kenworth) so that I had reliable transportation for the loads I carried. However, one time near Nashville I realized the heat wasn't working so I stopped to check the truck. Well, I found that the oil was gray, and the radiator was empty, so I filled the radiator and went to Kenworth of Nashville where I had done business previously. No one had time to fix the truck quickly, so I bought a new truck off the lot because I had a load to deliver. While I was doing business with the dealer, a man named Ken Greff, I learned that he had a brother called Ray Griff (his stage name) who is a singer/song writer in Nashville. Being a big country music fan, I was interested to learn that Ray had written "Baby" for Wilma Burgess and he also wrote the song "Canadian Pacific".

JD: Did you have a CB handle?

AR: You don't so much choose a handle as you are given one. Mine were "Hop-Along" or "Hoppy" because of the way I walk. Later, I was called "AJ", the name of my business.

JD: What are the challenges and joys of trucking?

AR: The challenges were finding good loads—ones that were good paying, had items you wanted to haul that were not multiple stop loads or ones you had to handle, and didn't go into big cities. Legally, it's also different today with the number of hours and when you can drive. The joys of trucking include seeing other parts of the country, the camaraderie, great old country music at night, delicious food, and the chance to go to

warm weather. Really, long-distance trucking is a lifestyle as much as it is a job.

JD: After trucking, what about your business here at the shop?

AR: My current business is rebuilding alternators, generators, and starters. Hours are 10-4:30 Mondays and 8:30-4:30 Tuesday-Friday, more or less. (Note: Alan is very well known by farmers and others all over the area for his outstanding service!)

Thanks, Alan, for sharing some of your adventures with us! **JD**

Taking Stock

Year round, I keep our family supplied with homemade chicken stock (and sometimes beef, veggie, mushroom, and fish stocks), and ladling out the delicately colored and flavored elixir is rewarding every single time, every single (or rather, 10-pint) batch. The long, cozy simmering of the stockpot is of course especially pleasing during the long winter months, and perhaps the very most so in mud season, when the warm kitchen and fragrant steam combine to create an antidote for wet, sloppy, gray days; I found myself mulling over stock once again during our recent (and startling) late-April snowstorm.

But as this issue of the *Times* approached, I realized the beauties of homemade stock lose absolutely no luster in the golden days of summer. Brewed on cool mornings or evenings from spring chickens or emerging from your freezer, stock is in season for easy soups made with fresh vegetables from your garden or the farmers' market, served hot or chilled; braises and barbecue bastings; or summer chowders and casseroles.

If you are a home cook to any degree, you probably have your go-to stock. From lunch to leftovers, soups to sauces, and beans to bourguignon, cooks often have to think about and select stock—whether in terms of how it sets the foundation of flavor for so many dishes, or how

just a cup or a quart or two of that simple infusion of water with proteins and aromatics gets a meal going or makes the finished dish special.

Store-bought stock arrived in the vanguard of other prepared foods decades ago, and because stock is time-consuming to make, it quickly became a pantry essential, ready to use in cans or in concentrated powders or cubes. But, as with most factory-made convenience replacements for homemade traditions, the products were (and often still are) full of sodium or MSG, artificial flavors and dyes, and preservatives.

Now, while you still need to check the labels, better and better quality products fill the grocery-store shelves with stock options. But as the products in supermarkets have evolved in the attempt to attract more and more discriminating and health-conscious cooks, the number of choices may often only serve to bewilder. Tetrapak boxes alongside the cans and bouillon cubes ...low sodium, free range, organic....what to choose?

For me, following the wisdom of this wonderful era in “food for thought” that focuses on and takes advantage of top-quality, least-processed, and most-local products, the exciting and liberating answer is that the best, freshest, and most deeply flavorful stock comes from your own kitchen. While it’s always handy to have a couple of shelf-stable boxes or cans of different flavored stocks for last-minute grabs, the happy truth is, if you can stay close(ish) to the kitchen for a day—or even half a day—you can fill your fridge and freezer with delicious homemade stock.

Truly, before I get into the how-to of making your own chicken stock, let me emphasize: any stock you make yourself will be at least twice as yummy (probably more) as your favorite store-bought stock—and you will notice the difference in ease of making the dishes you cook delicious; with homemade stock, the dish is often practically done before you begin. One cup with pureed fresh tomatoes, minced parsley and/or basil, and a pinch of salt is all you need for a delicious fresh pasta sauce (scrape some Parmesan on top). A couple of chopped zucchini, kernels from two or three ears of fresh corn, and a handful of herbs simmered in two cups of stock plus two cups of water (I always dilute my stock with equal parts water for soups as well as some sauces) and seasoned with salt and pepper makes for a 15-minute soup (add a big splash of cream and a small splash of sherry for

chowder). Three or four seeded and chopped cukes simmered for 5 to 8 minutes in the 1:1 soup base and then blended, seasoned, and chilled is a light, fresh, and refreshing supper for a hot night (top with minced dill and a spoonful of plain yogurt).

Making stock is also incredibly easy. It pretty much cooks itself: after the pot is set up, all you need to do over the course of a few hours is occasionally peek to monitor the simmer and water levels and skim fat or foam off the surface two or three times. Ten minutes at the outset for filling the pot and about twenty minutes at the end for straining the stock, removing fat, and transferring to storage containers is the extent of the labor. Also, while I like to use fresh chicken parts, if you save bones and carcasses from other meals in the freezer for your stockpot, the stock is pretty much free (and it ain’t cheap at the store).



A word about those chicken parts: If you purchase fresh parts, get the boniest parts you can find. Adams Fairacre Farms often packages the necks and backs leftover from cutting up birds into serving parts and sells them for next to nothing; these are ideal. (Any butcher may be willing to produce those parts from behind their counters; it never hurts to ask.) If those aren't available, go for legs and wings, also very inexpensive (although all that skin will produce more fat to remove later). Bone-in thighs, slightly more expensive, are perfectly great if nothing else is available. The magic released by the bones is the same as that in currently trendy "bone broths"—essentially just stocks made with joints like knuckles and necks and other boney bits and slow-cooked for an extra-long time. The more meat and bone and cartilage plus time that melts into your stock or broth, the more flavorful it will be, as well as getting a boost in the benefits derived from collagen—good for your skin, hair, nails, and intestinal health. So stock up!

Chicken Stock

Makes about 10 pints

10 pounds bone-in chicken parts, preferably necks and backs

2 yellow onions, quartered (leave skins on if you like a richer-colored stock)

2 or 3 large carrots, peeled and cut into big chunks

2 or 3 celery stalks

1 head garlic

2 large bay leaves

1 bunch fresh parsley, with stems

1 small bunch fresh thyme, with stems (optional)

10 to 20 whole black peppercorns (I tie mine up in a small piece of cheesecloth)

Put the chicken in a large (12-quart) stockpot and add cold water up to 2 or 3 inches from the top of the pot. Place over high heat and

add the onions, carrots, and celery.

Gently smash the garlic head with the flat side of a meat pounder to crack the cloves and toss it into the pot. (No need to remove the papery outer skins.) Add the bay leaves, parsley, thyme (if using), and peppercorns.

Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to maintain a low to medium simmer. Cover partially or leave uncovered (leaving the top off will allow your stock to reduce more quickly, but you may lose some flavor and your kitchen windows will get very steamy) and simmer until the level of the liquid has reduced by about half and the stock is flavorful, 4 to 8 hours. (The time varies depending on the size of your pot, the chicken you use, how many veggies and aromatics you added, how slowly or rapidly you simmer, and other mysterious factors.) Skim the fat off the top with a large spoon once in a while.

Taste the stock often as it nears the halfway point in the pot; it may be ready before the liquid is half gone, which is great when it happens—more stock for your buck!—but sometimes needs to reduce even further. It will still be very liquidy, not viscous—that is, "watery" in consistency—when it is done, but it should not *taste* watery, as it reaches a point of infusion of delicate but deep flavors and the steam has a savory scent. You can't overcook it, so wait for that magical point when the flavor is full. But remember, this is stock, not soup, so the flavor will remain subtle but with a fragrant and rich essence at the same time. Do NOT add salt.

When the stock is done, remove from the heat and let cool. Strain through a colander (line the colander with cheesecloth for a clearer stock) into a smaller pot that will fit in your fridge. Discard all the solids. Cover the pot and refrigerate the stock until the fat rises and congeals on top; overnight is easiest, but 4 hours may do. Carefully remove and discard the layer of fat (don't try to be perfect; little bits will escape and that's totally fine).

Ladle the stock into airtight containers. I

use straight-sided freezer-safe glass 1-pint canning jars (a case is about ten bucks at Wadler's). I find the pint size is perfect for a 4-serving pot of soup, using equal parts stock and water. You can also use 1-quart containers, 1-cup containers (a common amount in recipes), or pour the stock into ice-cube trays, freeze, and then empty the frozen stock cubes into zippered freezer bags for storage; these are handy for little amounts called for in sauce recipes and the like (stir a stock cube into hot water in a mug for a sippable snack).

Store the stock in the fridge for up to 3 days or in the freezer for up to 6 months (be sure to label and date). **CBN**

PASSAGES:

Our faithful correspondent Pattie Kelder writes the following:

Hal Brand

Harold (Hal) Brand, 97, was one of those quiet neighbors many in town never met. Nevertheless, fellow residents may have known his sister-in-law, Shirley Finch, and may be familiar with his generosity.

The newspaper tells us Hal had been a decorated Air Force Lieutenant Colonel (WWII and Korea) as well as a Social Security Office Operations Supervisor, and that he was predeceased by his Elk Creek born-and-raised wife, Albertine Streeter. Yet those of us privileged to call him friend knew him to be so much more.

As with many who move into Halcott from downstate, Hal adopted his new community and became part of it. He shared homegrown apples with the Food Pantry and enjoyed socializing at various local events. He even donated his late wife's piano to the Grange Hall and loaned out his narrated videotape of the twirling, candle lit Christmas tree that he had made.

After Tina's death, Hal took comfort in

attending the Halcott United Methodist Church in the town of her youth. He felt close to her there. He honored his Catholic roots, yet made cheesecakes for church bake sales and donated to Methodist missions. When shopping for others became difficult, Hal combined his love of Christmas and his soft spot for children with the needs of those suffering from natural disasters by picking up the tab so Halcott area children could fill shoe box packages with toys on his behalf.

Hal was a cheerful soul, always singing, even for nursing home attendants in his last days. He once put off an ER visit (diagnosis: pneumonia!) in order to be audience to a hymn sing, so it's hard to know who was more disappointed when bad weather kept Christmas carolers away before he moved into assisted living quarters in Florida.

Hal was kind and generous; dignified and genuine; intelligent and humorous. Halcott is poorer for his parting.

Stella Kelly

Stella Kelly, 89, had a shirt tail connection to Halcott Center through her sister, Anna, who lived on the farm at the intersection of Route 3 and Elk Creek Road in the '50s. Yet Stella had many other fun filled ties to Halcott. Some of us still remember the beautiful cakes she decorated for special events in town, or the gum she and Hilton shared with the children when performing The Marvelous Toy at Community Christmas Programs in the Grange Hall, or even her last Christmas as part of that audience in 2017. Others will remember that Stella accompanied Hilt Kelly and the Sidekicks at many square dances held in the Grange Hall during the 80's and 90's.

One of those square dances was on the eve of Bob and Norma Johnson's wedding. Both had been previously widowed. Stella knew of their plan to tie the knot, but I didn't. Therefore I had no context for the very serious discussion which took place on the stage during the break. Referring to Bob and Norma, Stella said to me, "I

don't know what I would do if something were to happen to Hilton. I just don't know." She waited for my response. Startled, I stated the obvious, "You would grieve." I paused while she held my gaze. "And you would go on." She accepted these comments and the evening continued.

Many years later, at the end of almost 60 years of marriage, that is exactly what Stella did. By then, she had moved with Hilton from their home in Red Kill to assisted living in Stamford and then on to Mountainside in Margaretville. Grief, for Stella, was a faith journey. Her existing faith was strengthened as she kept Hilton's memory alive while living each of her remaining days to the fullest. This she did until they met again when it was her turn to go to heaven. What a blessing.

And finally:

On April 23rd of this year, we lost Tony Kasanof. He did love his Halcott. He was brought here the first time when he was very little to Griffin's boarding house and then every summer after that until he was about fourteen. One Christmas at age nine, he received a telegram from Ma and Pa Griffin: "Hired hand needed. Can you come?" And that was his life-time invitation.



Tony Kasanof with Irwin Kasanof, Griffins, c.1935

His boy-days in Halcott were peppered with stories of running through Alena's freshly baked pies that cooled on the cellar steps; sitting in apple trees with Toadie (Jimmy) Griffin eating too many apples; smoking a cigarette at a hopelessly early age from Odell Reynolds out behind the barn; lured by Ward Reynolds into touching the electric fence; collecting garbage with Garfield Reynolds that would be fed to pigs. He loved it all.

He brought me and the boys back to Halcott in 1988, after we purchased that same

Griffins boarding house he had summered up in. His early retirement from the foreign service was a true gift to his family. Soccer, basketball games, school plays, spelling bees – he attended them all and clucked and glowed over his kids. He and I worked to maintain the old house, gardened in summer, plowed and shoveled in winter. They were simple rural chores that give one sweaty brows and a hearty night's sleep.

Until and even during his decline, Tony was good company with his stories and his jokes, detaining the oil-delivery man in the freezing cold, or charming the FEMA team when they met in our kitchen after Hurricane Irene. Tony taught me so much about what in life was really important. He could drive his family crazy with his certainty that he was right at times, but was an enormously practical man with a broad streak of the romantic. When I asked him why he was spending so much money on a barn that we would

never use for livestock or hay, he shrugged and said, "Because I love it." He was so very right. I am thankful for that beautiful barn every time I crest the little knoll coming up the hill to home.

It is interesting to contemplate lineage and to understand in a way, why the Bible has such endless and tedious lists of who begat whom. Like many old Halcott families, Tony

came from a line of fine folk. His parents, Sybil and Irwin were strong characters in their own right. He and sister Nina (who continues to do so!) carried the tradition forward, adding their own flourishes of individuality. And now there is another generation raising its own fine Kasanofs. A family name is like a passport: it gives you legitimacy when you meet new people, and it gives them an idea of what to expect. Anton Noel Kasanof carried his passport with great pride. Goodbye, dear heart. **IK**

The Times of the Halcott United Methodist Church

Summer 2018 *Pattie Kelder, Correspondent*



Please and Thank You

Once again we invite you to supply and patronize the church bake sale at the Halcott Fair in July. Your help with the Super Salad supper earlier in June was much appreciated. We hope all who attended had a good visit with old friends. Do watch for Crock Pot Supper info early this fall.

Celebrate!

There is one MCS graduate from Halcott this year, Mackenzie Day. It is a pleasure to give her a graduation award in memory of Janet Kelder Riss. We congratulate all who have graduated from high school and college this year.

Calendar

Pastor Debb will hold a book study on He Chose the Nails by Max Lucado at 7:00 pm on Wednesdays June 27 and July 11, 18, and 25 in the dining room of the Fleischmanns Community United Methodist Church (where it's nice and cool). Anyone who is interested is welcome. Please call ahead for a copy of the book.

Point to Ponder

"You can't take it with you." Or can you? We all know there are no pockets in

shrouds. We enter life with nothing and we leave with nothing.

This may be true of tangible goods, but is there more to the story? We never know who is observing us in life and following our footsteps. Others might be following our paths right into eternity.

Time is Money

One of my fears, after writing this column for many years, has been that I might repeat myself. I now know that it doesn't really matter. If I, the writer, need to relearn well known truths, then probably the reader does, too. It might not be so much that we forget. The problem may be more about finding ways to apply these truths to life's changing pace and circumstances.

Take the matter of budgeting time, for instance. Just in May alone, several postponed tasks resurfaced in company with even more things to do, all with firm deadlines. Some, like spring planting in between frosts and rain drops, are to be expected. Others, like this spring's bumper crop of funerals, simply appear out of the blue.

Recently some of us studied ten steps to spiritual renewal that were followed in Nehemiah 8 – 13. The setting for Nehemiah

is the dawn of the Persian Empire, when descendants of Jews exiled by the Babylonian Captivity were allowed to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and learn to live according to God's ways. One of the steps was about giving. We saw how much God blessed them (and us) when giving Him a tithe *first*, and then trusting Him to meet needs in the future.

This made me think about other commodities in short supply. What about time? (Surprise, surprise!) I remember being pressed to the limit in college and asking God to provide me with more time. Imagine asking God that! Yet it never even occurred to me to skip church or Bible study or prayer meetings in order to save time on my own. God honored that. It was amazing to see the variety of cancellations that would pop up. God literally gave me more time, and He did it without reducing my time with Him!

So why does Scripture seem to emphasize money over time? A search of "time" yields many references to *points* in time but very few on *use* of time. I fared better with a money related search. In Matthew 6:19 -24, Jesus instructs us to store up heavenly treasure (souls for God) rather than earthly treasure (money for pleasure). Amassing, or storing, treasure takes time. No wonder we say, "Time is money". Yet money is of limited use. Perhaps God might have us expand our thinking to, "Time is treasure", for treasure can be had both here and in the hereafter.

It follows, then, that time, like money, is to be invested and used wisely for a greater good. We can invest it long term (in people for God's kingdom) or short term (for earthly pursuits only). Perhaps we should take a look at how well our time investments are doing.

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