The Times of Halcott

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

JACK!

"Everyone thinks they have the best dog. And none of them are wrong." ***W.R. Purche***

A happy advantage of living on a farm is the opportunity to have the space for various kinds of animals. Most farmers, especially those with children, tend to have several species of creatures according to the interests of family members. Special show cattle, equines, poultry, sheep, goats, pigs, dogs and cats are just some of the animals that find room among a farm's regular inhabitants. Sometimes these sideline projects blossom into full-fledged enterprises of their own while others simply serve as fun diversions from the regular day to day routines. Some even become helpful to the main farm business. For us, acquiring our first Border collie over 15 years ago opened our eyes to an enjoyable way of handling livestock that has made grazing an even more rewarding way of managing our dairy. From Corrie, our very first much beloved "Collie dog", a deep appreciation for the amazing breed of canines that originated in the Scottish Highlands was born, paving the way for more Border collies to serve as faithful helpers and companions on our farm. Currently, we have three Border collies: Jack, Dot and Piper. All of our working dogs have come from our dear friend, Elizabeth Phillips, owner of Faraway Farm in Treadwell. Elizabeth is an outstanding breeder of both sheep and sheepdogs. She is a wonderfully gifted trainer who has successfully competed in sheepdog trials and with her extensive knowledge and experience she helps others learn to work with their dogs. While Dot and Piper arrived at our farm as puppies, Jack came to us as a nearly 7 year- old fully trained dog. Elizabeth had trained him for all sorts of sheep work but had another male dog named Moss that she used extensively (and still does!) on her farm. She had downsized her sheep flock so there wasn't enough work for both Jack and Moss. Sadly, we had recently lost Corrie, our main working partner, and Dot and Piper were young and green at the time so Elizabeth invited me to spend some time

working Jack at her place to see how we got on together.

What a joy it was! Jack was not only a capable dog to work but also a fun dog to be around with his jolly disposition and handsome almost tuxedo-like black and white appearance. In short order it was our good fortune that Jack came to Halcott to become, in the words of Elizabeth's granddaughter Anna, a "cowboy".

One thing that remained to be seen was to see how Jack would transition from working sheep to working cattle. Elizabeth thought he would handle it well and she was so right! Although Jack had never worked any cattle before he saw them here, he took to the job as if he was born for it. We started slowly with him, simply letting him hang out in the barn while we milked and did other chores, just to let him get used to being around the bigger animals. It wasn't long before we could see that he was comfortable with his new surroundings so I took him to help bring the cows in for milking. He quickly understood what needed to happen as well as how to go about it with the cows. I clearly remember one night not long after he started regularly bringing the cows in for the evening milking that highlighted his abilities with cattle when several cows stopped to grab a few bites of hay off the wagon that was parked on the ramp to the barn. There was no easy way to get those cows to move except to boldly go to one side and push them off. It was a clever 45- pound dog versus a group of 1400 pound cows sandwiched side by side intent on stealing a tasty snack. I watched as Jack approached the group as if he was sizing up the situation. He then walked calmly but powerfully in to the cows pulling them away from the wagon and down toward the barn without a word of command from me. It was a job well done.

Another incident early on showed us Jack's cattle acumen. The cows were grazing at the far end of the field down below the Grange Hall. We had a few bred heifers that had been moved back here only a few days prior. Somehow, they missed the gate and ended up on the other side of the fence, unable to figure out how to get back with the rest of the herd. I took Jack down to help even though he was, at that time, unfamiliar with the layout of the gates and fence down there. When he saw the little group of animals apart from the main herd, he knew they were not in the right place. Confidently he took off around the heifers and sent them back up through the gate and then down the field to where the other cows were gathered. Jack the cowboy saved the day again! Over the years (Jack is now 11 years old) there have been many such satisfying, memorable events like these that served to make our work easier but also valuable have been the numerous light-hearted, comic relief moments that make our lives richer as well. Often, these deeply refreshing times have taken place during our walks in all sorts of weather. In the warmer months I can count on Jack to wade in the stream to playfully pounce at the water, dredge up branches or give the younger dogs a run for their money by frolicking around in the grass. Even winter's cold and snow doesn't dampen Jack's (or most any Border collie's) enthusiasm for a good romp on a hill or down a field. Without a doubt, some of my most enduring memories of Jack and our other dogs have occurred on really cold, snowy days that turned into a marvelous adventure for all of us. Indeed, we are truly blessed to have been

Halcott Recycling Update

Please! Our small facility is limited to household waste and recyclables. No appliances. All else must be taken to Greene County Solid Waste station in Hunter/Tannersville, 518-263-4807. We suggest that when you replace your refrigerator or stove, etc, that you have the merchant take away the old one.

given the privilege of having such a skillful working partner and wonderful companion as Jack on our farm. ***JD***

Tomato, Tomahto

This summer was a sun-soaked one, in spite of the dark days of the pandemic virus we have all been facing and continue to face. Amidst that and other unrest, worldwide and in these seasons of discontent, it has been a huge gift and deep comfort to be sheltered in our beautiful valley, able at least to be together and to be able at least to watch nature play out all its dramatic drama and plain old life—miracles small, medium, and inconceivable; patterns predictable, familiar, and yet awe-inspiring every time.

From the first drips of sap to the dried stems of the last fallen red and gold leaf, the collaboration of air, water, and light all around us produces the very oxygen we breathe, and where we live, we can breathe even deeper. Spruce, fir, and maple trees are near the top of the list for oxygen makers. And in addition to that from all the plant life of the land areas, our oxygen also comes from the phytoplankton in our streams, lakes, reservoirs, and even in the oceans way over yonder. The late-summer ripening outside my window and the nodding seed heads of the plants in my vegetable garden evoke a paradoxical sense of new growth and, same as spring, plant seeds of wonder.

I'm looking at some of those seeds right now. Poppies, nabbed in the nick of time before they bowed down and sowed themselves; I sometimes forget, and it's a heartbeat between on time and too late. I'm sure there's a mote out there who would protest, but these are the littlest guys I know. Not like the ones cultivated for your bagel; these are wild things. Way smaller than a pepper grind, pretty close to a pinhead or (forgive me, but we're talking nature here) bug dung. Amazing to think that this coffee-colored spherical speck will grow fairly quickly into a plant that fills a gallon-size pot for the Halcott Fair. Teeny carrot seeds are next in line, each fleck carrying the potential to produce a sweet, thick orange root you could beat a drum with. Lettuce seeds are a tiny click up in size from those, and while a single freshly seeded row of them is but a light breakfast for the savvy and insatiable early birds marauding in my garden, each surviving one yields a head the size of my head, with the generosity to grow back when I "cut and come again."

And as in coming again, we know all these plants, poppy-like, embody perpetuity. Following the miraculous cycles of nature, for us humans there is heritage, tradition, and discipline behind the wisdom, knowhow, and skill in saving seeds, for survival or agriculture, curiosity or love. And any of us can practice this in our own gardens or yards, whether to save trouble or money, to cultivate consistency, or just for fun.

There are many people in this valley who know more than I do about all this, but I have taken on one habit: for me, the easiest and most exciting seeds to save are tomatoes. Beans, squashes, and cukes seem straightforward enough for saving too, but because of all the heirloom varieties around and because a perfect vine-ripened tomato is to me one of the most heavenly things about summer, I recommend starting there, even if it's the only seed you ever save.

First, select a perfect specimen from the most delicious plant you have, or from your favorite farmer at the market. (Heirloom is important, because they are open pollinated, so the seeds will produce fruit nearly identical to the parent.) Cut it in half through the equator (blossom end on one side and stem end on the other); this will expose the seed sacs most effectively, and also will often leave you enough flesh to eat. Scoop the seed sacs into a small bowl or jar. (You can just rinse and dry them, but

setting them up to ferment will break down the gel around them which in nature inhibits early germination when they fall ripe to the ground.) Add a little water to the bowl or jar. You may not need to if you have enough gel and pulp, but you want the seeds to be in just enough liquid to float freely. Don't add too much water or fermentation will be slow or insufficient. I leave mine uncovered so the concoction is easy to watch, but you can cover with a coffee filter or paper towel and secure with a rubber band to avoid odor or fruit flies, if you like. Be sure to label each variety if you are preparing more than one!

Place the bowl (s) or jar(s) in a warm place out of the way and let sit for a few days. The seeds should separate from the gel and sink to the bottom, and a layer of mold should form on the surface of the liquid. It may smell a bit funky. Scoop off the layer of mold and discard. Add water to the bowl and let sit for a minute or two to let the seeds resettle. Remove any gel, pulp, or seeds that rise to the top and discard. Repeat two or three times until the water is clear and all the seeds have sunk to the bottom. Strain in a fine-mesh strainer, removing any last bits of pulp.

Spread the seeds in a single layer on a paper plate or screen, making sure none clump. (Don't use a paper towel; they'll stick to it.) I always use a small window screen. Set aside in a warm, dry place for about a week. When the seeds are dry, they'll look a little furry. A dried seed should snap when bent in half with a tweezers; if they seem damp, they have probably molded. Place the dried seeds in an envelope and label; place the envelope in a canning jar and cover if you like. Store in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place.

In a sun-soaked summer like this one, many of us get a bumper crop of tomatoes and

Carrie Bradley's Tomato Jam

Use this easy-to-make, delicious solution for too many tomatoes in sweet-savory situations, the way you would chutney or salsa—spread on crackers or toasted slices of baguette with a shard of sharp cheese, or pile a spoonful or two on top of grilled chicken or steak. I love the stunning color of Sungold jam, but use any fresh, ripe tomatoes you have. There are infinite variations out there too, including sweeter versions made with fragrant spices like cinnamon and ginger. It's summer in a jar!

3 pounds Sungold cherry tomatoes, red cherry tomatoes, or large tomatoes
2 teaspoons brown sugar
2 teaspoons white wine vinegar
Pinch each of salt and crushed red pepper flakes
2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil, or more as desired

Cut each cherry tomato in half, or cut large tomatoes into 1-inch chunks. In a large pot, combine the chopped tomatoes and any juices with the brown sugar, vinegar, and salt and red pepper flakes and stir gently. Let sit for 1 hour to allow the tomatoes to release their juices.

Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring often. Reduce the heat to low and simmer gently, stirring often to prevent sticking or scorching, until the tomatoes are very soft and the syrup has thickened, 30 to 40 minutes. Depending on how juicy your tomatoes are, it may take a little longer. Remove from the heat and stir in the basil.

Pour the jam into prepared jars, wipe the rims clean, and apply lids and rings. Store the jars in the refrigerator to be used within a few weeks or process them for 10 minutes in a water bath canner so they can be stored for up to a year.

say: salad. And I second the motion, keeping in mind, along with going green, simple compositions like *caprese* (sliced tomatoes stacked with a slice of fresh mozzarella, a basil leaf or two, a pinch of salt, and a drizzle of oil and vinegar). But to that I'd add: gratins, tomato pie, tomato jam, salsas (try a mix with chunks of mango or peach). Slow-roasted with basil and garlic and olive oil for storing in freezer bags = instant pasta sauce in winter. Many, many tomato sandwiches on toast with a swipe of mayo. Classic breaded and fried green tomatoes from windfall—these are a delicious variation for topping a hamburger, too.

This summer was a sun-soaked one, but there was a lot of rain, too, and some storms. Along with lots of greenery and the proliferation of fresh things to eat, we have also seen seeds sown of doubt and fear. From our special place full of the spirit of community and cooperation and respect, let's hope that bumpers of tomatoes and beans and squashes and cukes, ample hay harvests and full streams and healthy livestock, will be matched beyond with new growth of compassion and strength and hope for another year and all the years to come. ***CBN***

Native Son

Editor's note: This interview was conducted with Julian Rauter, son of Karen and Jim Rauter (of the southern end of the airstrip). My most vivid picture of Julian growing up in Halcott is of an ever-taller boy walking through the field, always in the company of a Golden Retriever. PD.

TTOH: *You've moved back into the valley! How does it feel to stay put after having had just weeks at a time here over the past several years?* **JR:** I haven't spent more than a month at home since 2015. I was surprised how quickly I forgot the rhythm of country life. Seasons matter in the country far more than they do in the city. The miracles of MTC Wi-Fi and postal delivery let me and Andréa maintain most of the creature comforts of urban millennials, albeit without as many takeout options. We are living in a cottage with one bathroom and three bedrooms, and quite honestly even that seems like more space than we need. The real difference isn't how we live inside, it's the fact that we look out our window onto endless forests and fields. If I'm lucky, I'll rise early enough to see the first sunbeams arrive through the picture window, but usually our cats Scuttlebutt and Sweet Potato have already claimed the warmest spots. Throughout college and grad school, I suffered pretty serious seasonal depression due to the lack of sunlight in my dorms, which made me appreciate how lucky my hometown is to sit high up in the mountains, close to the sun.

TTOH*: What are your fondest memories of growing up in Halcott?* **JR**: I was a barefoot child, born in summer and warm in winter. School was drudgery but vacations were freedom, hindered only by bee stings, bramble scratches, and the occasional penknife accident. Winter weekends were for sledding headfirst into snow drifts and rusted metal chairs. At various turns, I worked as a chicken-catcher, splinter-gripper, parsnip-snipper and firewood-splitter. Like all childhoods, it was at its core an ordeal of confusion and change. The difference was, I went through that ordeal with paradise in my backyard, a woodland sanctuary where the wind in the branches sang of escape.

TTOH: *Did anything specific about living in Halcott and attending MCS prepare you for your time at Harvard and Oxford? Or was it pure culture shock because of living in Halcott and attending MCS?* **JR:** Let me join the ranks of MCS grads past and say that nothing prepared me for college-level writing like Bill Fiedler's middle school history outlines. Since those sweaty weeks of seventh and eighth grade, I have never again had to struggle to produce words on paper. Once I learned the kind of style that Harvard professors expect, I could bang out a 3000-word paper in a few days thanks to the verbal sprints and marathons Mr. Fiedler sent me

on when I was twelve. When it comes to culture, though, there's no sugarcoating how alien the world of Harvard was. Many of my friends were second- or third-generation Harvard legacies, all from the best schools in the world. I quickly realized there would be no more vying for first place if I wanted to stay sane. To be honest, the biggest shock was to my immune system. After living in a small town my whole life, my body was not prepared for the amount of social contact you get in a city like Cambridge, Massachusetts. I got mono freshman year and pretty much got a cold once a semester after that. I got seasonal allergies for the first time in my life! Good thing both Cambridge and Oxford were hippie enough to have specialty honey stores where I could get some local honey for natural antihistamines. Aside from the toll it took on my immune system, Cambridge is a beautiful city, equal parts upscale and gritty, historical and futuristic, progressive but distinctly civilized.

Though the culture of success and corporate excellence at Harvard can be alienating, I was blessed to receive a crazy amount of free money while a student there. Tuition is steep, even on financial aid, but the benefit of a huge and wealthy university is that you can get a lot of funding for your own interests if you're strategic about where you apply. I managed to get a fully-funded summer scholarship allowing me to study abroad for two months in Senegal, as well as a generous stipend to support an unpaid summer internship with the Lakota People's Law Project. During my winter breaks, I got the chance to visit the Navajo Nation, learn the basics of woodturning, visit the museums of our nation's capital, and study conservation policy at the Harvard Forest, all without further draining my student bank account. The crowning example of this was when I received a fellowship to study for an entire year at Oxford University in the School of Geography and the Environment. I was also offered a scholarship to study in France for a year, which I was clearly not qualified for but which had very few applicants. The lesson there was that even though Harvard is competitive, a lot more people are vying for positions at Goldman Sachs than a free year of French grad school. The only reason I had more scholarships than I could accept was that I could identify more esoteric experiences. My parents always taught me to value experiences over wealth, and that served me well in college.

Though I only ended up spending about six months there due to COVID-19, I have only good things to say about Oxford. The city and university are both lovely, with a lot of beautiful farmland and parks right next door. There's even a public meadow owned by Christ Church College where they graze English Longhorns. However, I would say it was the students and staff in my program who made Oxford a home for me. My cohort was the most diverse and intelligent group I've ever been a part of, and the staff were all incredibly helpful and attentive to our academic and personal needs. I especially felt at home because our course director, Dr. Ariell Ahearn Ligham, is also from upstate New York. She grew up on a goat farm in Schenectady County and went to Hartwick before completing her work at Oxford on pastoral nomads in Mongolia.

TTOH: *What are you doing these days, and can you mention a bit about your partner and how she likes living here?* **JR**: As of this morning, August 25th, I have submitted my master's thesis on the politics of biocontrol in efforts to contain the spread of hemlock woolly adelgid. For the first time since I entered kindergarten in an outbuilding beside Margaretville Central School in 2002, I will be free of school. From now on, I will read whatever I want for the rest of my life. I'm keeping busy milking goats and brushing cheese at Two Stones Farm, along with the occasional water delivery with Vly Mountain Spring Water. I'll be doing some volunteer monitoring of old-growth hemlock stands for the Catskill Center this autumn. Alan White says he's even fixing to teach

me to milk the new Brown Swiss, Heidi, who just delivered a healthy female calf a few days ago. We're already good friends, Heidi and I, so I'm optimistic. I'm learning to make ice cream and gelato now, and maybe someday I'll get my own cows and start making sweet treats straight from the teat. We'll see.

Some nights, when I'm not working the next day, I actually get sad I'm not going to wake up at 6 AM and do barn chores. Don't ask me how that works, but it does. I've never felt more free than when I'm tossing hay bales and shoveling manure. There's an old Zen expression that goes, "Before enlightenment, chop wood and carry water. After enlightenment, chop wood and carry water." Frankly, I don't really care which side of that equation I'm on. That's kind of the point. Seek peace in good work.

My partner, Andréa, was a year below me at Harvard, so she had to finish up her degree under lockdown. We had a fun little graduation ceremony in our yard and her parents came all the way from Illinois to celebrate. She's really enjoyed living here because of the beautiful landscapes and privacy, not to mention the fact that Scuttlebutt finally gets a little space to roam after being cooped up indoors in Illinois for years. She's currently working remotely on a very important archive project concerning the Dakota Access Pipeline protests and will even be helping teach a college class on the topic remotely this fall. On the side, she's been knitting all kinds of amazing hats, some of which you'll be able to find at the Two Stones Farm store in Fleischmanns.

Peet's Boarding House, The Maples

[Ed Note: During her conversation with Pam, (see TTOH June issue) Ellen Ballard Todd was able to provide quite a few details about what it was like to work at Peet's Boarding House]
She [Ellen] worked there more than one summer. The summer of 1957, she was 17 years old. She and her mother Bessie both worked there all summer and lived there as well. They slept in the top of the garage across the road from the main house. She said it was just roughed in, and they had two cots. She recalls the little room had two windows. The sound of the creek at night was relaxing.

The mornings started with breakfast, followed by clearing the tables and washing all the dishes. Then they cleaned the rooms, halls, bathrooms, etc. There was a large game room which had a piano and games, cards, etc, and possibly a TV. There was a bathroom upstairs and one downstairs. The building next to the main house sported two showers separate from the bathroom. Linens from the bathrooms and bedrooms were laundered, washed and hung and folded and ironed.

Lunch, or as it was called by local people, "dinner" was served at noon time. After which there were all the dishes to be gathered and washed. They would start at 7:30 a.m. and get about a two-hour break after "dinner." The later afternoon meal was called "supper." This was served and of course dishes were again washed. Ellen thinks they finished the day about 7:30 p.m.

She remembered a funny memory of a little boy of one of the guests who came to the kitchen at noon time. He asked Jim (Peet) what they were having for lunch. Jim said, "Lunch? You mean dinner? We have dinner now and we have "supper" later."

Ellen said the little boy was quite confused by the difference in how the meals were referred to. (Pam adds: "I too, as an adult was confused when I moved out of the area and realized people were referring to 'dinner' as their last meal of the day, not as their noon meal. So, I changed my own wording. 'When in Rome....' as the saying goes.")

Jim and Blanche bought local fruits and vegetables from a man who periodically drove his pick-up truck into the door yard of the Maples.

She said some families boarded just a week or two, going back to the city to work. Some stayed longer. She remembers one guest

who was an avid fly fisherman. She still vividly remembers him dressed in his fly-fishing regalia, big rubber boots, etc. He would get up very early every day of his stay to go fishing. The local kids cashed in on the tourist too by selling freshly dug fish worms to him.

I asked Ellen if they got tips and she said no. The one couple she worked with for the summer owned a women's dress shop in N.Y.C. They gave her a blouse at the end of the summer, as a tip.

And Again: The Maples

Sybil Peet Margaritis

Pam Kelly and Ellen Ballard, thank you, for reminding me about summers at The Maples and to Innes Kasanof for the nudge to write about it. My grandparents, Jim & Blanche Peet bought the house in 1926 from the Scudders, with the dream of having 'summer people' and raising their son Vic in Halcott. In 1926 there were five buildings, including the original town hall, The Annex, (totally destroyed by fire). We have a ring of skeleton keys for all of these outbuildings, tags in place. The house was renamed The Maples and the sign on the porch was carved by Jim, restored by Vic and then Paul. As Pam writes it was busy during the summers. The first time I visited it was either 1957 or 1958. I would have met both Pam and Ellen. I remember meeting Bessie Ballard, Neva Johnson, Shirley Bouton, Emma Johnson, Helen Kelly who all worked at the house that summer. The main house had 12 bedrooms, and The Annex had an additional 8. My mother and I slept on the third floor in the south bedroom. There was a shower stall and full bath on that floor and so we were not in the way of 'the boarders'.

As Ellen remembers the girls slept in a sweet spot on the second floor of the carriage house in essentially a camp. Yes, carriage house, not a barn, since there was a stall for one horse and space for a carriage. Cousin Shirley Bouton educated Paul & Sybil in the nuances of farm building nomenclature. The meals were definitely a feature. Breakfast a marvel by any standard: hot cereals, cold cereals, eggs any style, bacon, sausage, pancakes, toast, hot tea, coffee, whole milk, skim milk, half & half, usual jams and jellies and lox and cream cheese. Jim took great pride in pancakes and had a dedicated gas griddle for their exclusive preparation. The syrup came from Bouton's sap house. After this feast the boarders would adjourn to the lawn and collapse in Adirondack chairs built by Jim and later by Vic. Card games and leisurely strolls kept folks busy until dinner. There was a swimming hole, too, in the brook, for the brave. Vic, when he was in residence, conducted a summer camp for the kids and there were hikes, trout fishing, and a lawn tennis court at the south end of the lawn. Uncle Irwin Kasanof referred to the matches as Peet and Re-Peet! Dinner was another tour de force from the kitchens: roasts, vegetables, yeast rolls and Blanche's favorite course: desserts. There were pies, cakes of all flavors and combinations. Ice cream was always available and so was jello. Remember when jello was a part of everyday life?

The entire rear of the house accommodated a huge chest freezer, lockers filled with canned goods, and any comestible you might imagine. Deliveries were frequent from all the merchants in Fleischmanns: Liptons, Solomons, and the A&P. There was a farm on Route 30 where we would go for eggs and also fresh corn in season. Supper was a more relaxed meal. Sunday supper in particular showcased the resourcefulness of my grandmother. Mashed potatoes became potato cakes and the odd nubs of cheese reinvented into mac & cheese casseroles. Evenings were spent in the game room. Bingo, card games and piano playing and singing were popular.

Bobolinks

by Em Bennett

Thank you for the bobolinks

To know the song, the noise they bring

To hear them in the misty shrub, the flower fields
To see them lift and bounce and play

In their day they only know this thing:
To dance in joy, to live, and sing.

Ruth Reynolds, WWII Pilot

Wanda Dorpfeld

Ed Note: This article was featured in the "Greene County's Good News Letter," which was first published by George Bagley and the staff of the Mutual Insurance Co at Catskill, New York from 1942-1945. It has resumed printing in the Spring of 2020 by the staff of the Greene County Historical Society at Coxsackie. In their words: "Enjoy!"

This week we're featuring an article written by GCHS Trustee Wanda Dorpfeld. As we highlighted in Edition 2 of this newsletter, Wanda and her husband, Greene County Historian David Dorpfeld, wrote the book Legendary Locals of Greene County. One of the women Wanda researched for the book was Ruth Franckling Reynolds. Her story inspired Wanda to further research the period of history during WWII when a superb group of young women pilots became trailblazers and heroes.

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

In the summer of 1941, Jacqueline Cochran submitted a proposal to use female pilots for noncombat missions during WWII. This would free up the male pilots for combat missions overseas. Another similar proposal was submitted by Nancy Harkness Love. Initially, the ideas were dismissed. Eventually, two separate schools were set up. This idea was supported by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt who was quoted in her syndicated column, "My Day", at an annual Roosevelt Home Club party in 1942 as saying: "This is not a time when women should be patient. We are in a war and we need to fight it with all our ability and every weapon possible. Women pilots, in this particular case, are a weapon waiting to be used."

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

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

On a memorial site titled *Wasps on the Web*, Reynolds daughter, Nancy, posted the

following: "A typical week for her was to gas up a P-51 Mustang, fly 10 hours to Newark, NJ —hop a flight to Niagara Falls, pick up a P-39 at Bell Aircraft Factory and fly eight and one-half hours to great Falls, Montana, hitch a ride to Long Beach or Palm Springs, and start all over again." However, not every flight was typical for Reynolds. Twice she experienced trouble. "Once after having her flight of several P-51 Mustangs mysteriously grounded for two days at Tulsa, Oklahoma, the women were finally given the green light for take-off. Ruth was one of the first to line up on the 2500-foot runway and pushed the throttle forward. The plane lifted and she was about to lift her gear when the engine quit. Heading at over 150 miles an hour toward an administration building, gas trucks and a crowd at the end of the runway, Ruth set the plane back down and wore the tires down to the wheel hubs, finally stopping short of the dispersing crowd. The aborted flight solved the mystery of why the flights were held for two days. It confirmed there was water mixed with the gas in the field's underground gas tanks.

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

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

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

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

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

The Times of the Halcott United Methodist Church

Autumn 2020 ***Pattie Kelder, Correspondent***

Ministry and Events Update

We are sorry to say there can be no bake sales or dinners in 2020. We miss seeing folks and catching up on how everyone is doing.

We are happy to say our prayer chain is active and cards still go out. Please let us know who needs prayer or a note of cheer. We are also happy to say our 9:00 a.m. church services have resumed. We worship outdoors when weather permits so bring a chair. Masks must be worn, alternate pews remain vacant, and we cannot sing yet, but at least we can gather. All are welcome, as always.

Peace, Precious Peace

Talk about a broad topic! Narrow it down to inner peace within the Judeo-Christian tradition, and still, volumes have been written on the subject. Everyone wants peace; not so many know where to look for it (try the Author of Peace); and fewer know how to attain it.

The verb, let, was mentioned earlier in TTOH UMC. We must let peace enter our hectic lives (Colossians 3:15). Yet there is so much more to the quest. If we only look at our side of the equation, it's easy to feel guilt and anxiety over a lack of peace. What a vicious circle!

Therefore we must consider another little verb, will, which represents the other side of the equation, God's side (see Philippians 4: 4-8). Not only does this essential passage describe what we need to do, it reveals a promise. ". . . The peace of God . . . will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7). True and lasting peace of mind stems from a form of partnership with God. We make the preparations and God supplies the peace.

So, according to Philippians 4: 4-8, what must we do to attain inner peace? There are at least six things on the "to do" list.

First, rejoice in the Lord (v.4). God is our maker and sustainer. *He* is love, and *we* are the love of His life. Since He cares *for* us, He will also take care *of* us. He is faithful and trustworthy. No wonder we have reason to rejoice always! Yet we are quick to forget.

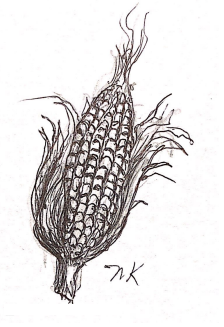
Next, be gentle (v. 5). A gentle spirit and a gentle manner will smother many a contentious flare up. Remember the old adage? "You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar." Well, guess what? Gentleness serves to sooth one's own spirit, too.

Then comes, do not be anxious (v. 6). Easier said than done! Yet we don't have to surrender to anxiety. God knows it is part of the human condition, but He also knows it can be backed into a corner. He wants to help us quell the swell by giving us tools that can whittle it down to size. Remember this: 90 percent of our worries never come to pass (research source unknown). God wants to help us manage the other 10 percent.

Instead, pray and give thanks (v.6). One way of helping involves a broadened focus. Praying keeps us from trying to shoulder life's burdens by ourselves. The very act of prayer

acknowledges that there is Someone better equipped to handle burdens than we are. A lighter load naturally leads to a sense of relief, and hopefully, to thanksgiving.

Similarly, make your requests known to God (v.6). God is our loving Father. He wants good things for His children. It is important to identify the things which steal joy from our lives. Putting a finger on a problem removes some of its power and signals God that we are serious about doing something other than wring our hands or spin our wheels over it. Identifying problems can help us make specific prayer requests. Specific requests make it easier to recognize answers to those prayers. The benefits go on and on.



Finally, focus your thoughts on wholesome things (v.8). Training the mind not to wander is a big challenge. If we really analyze what we see and what we hear, it becomes evident the only way to focus on what is pure, lovely, gracious, excellent and praiseworthy is to consciously remove what is not. This hearkens to the story of the town drunk of yesteryear who kept falling off the wagon. One day a resident, who had noticed he always tied up his horse outside the saloon, suggested he find himself a new hitching post! So it is with our thoughts. We need to steer them in new directions.

These remarks outline what Lillian Steinfeld might have called a "purple passage", one that is highly significant, in this case Philippians 4:4-8. There is much more to the nuts and bolts of inner peace to explore, though. We look forward to reading the blueprint of useful suggestions set forth by Max Lucado in his book Anxious for Nothing. This bestselling author has a knack for illuminating ancient scripture with practical applications for modern life. Pastor LeRoy of the Upper Catskills Larger Parish will lead a study of this book at 10:00 a.m. each Wednesday morning in September at the Margaretville United Methodist Church. All are welcome.

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