

The Times of Halcott



The Christmas That Ended the Farm

by Peg DiBenedetto

I think I was about 12. More or less.

First Bad Thing: I missed my class Christmas Party — Secret Santa and all that.

And then, Second Bad Thing, Even Worse: The way I remember it, each of my brothers got sick. My sister got sick. I don't remember if our Mom got sick, but our Dad got sickern a dog, and although at the time I didn't realize it, that was the worst part of all. Not only did we all have the flu for Christmas (no Christmas fun, and not just Christmas Day either), but Dad had a barn full of cows up Hubbard Road that needed to get milked twice a day. Maybe Uncle Odell was able to help out (that's in the back of my mind for some reason, but chances are he got sick too), and anyway poor Dad, complete with fever, chills, and needing to stay close to the bathroom (on account of both ends), had to rouse himself every morning and every night and haul up to the barn and milk the cows. The progression went daily from darn cows to damn cows to goddamn cows, and on the fourth miserable night he wearily stumbled back into the house and declared fervently, "By god, this is never going to happen again!" And so by the time May rolled around Dad had arranged a whole farm auction and off went the baler and off went the tractor and off went every other piece of farm equipment and I remember watching and feeling distraught and crying a little. Once the cows were loaded into trailers and on their way down the road, I'm sure I bawled for a while, not just because of the cows but because my 12-year-old self was realizing that a way of life had just ended for us. But life went on; easier for our Dad and my brothers who'd worked the farm. And my sister got to keep her horse, which benefited us both. Since then, I've always appreciated the amazing and wonderful fact that I spent the most important part of my life growing up on a farm.



Many locals fondly remember Hilt & Stella Kelly serenading both children and adults at the annual Christmas pageant at the Grange. Hilt would sing & play the fiddle, and Stella would accompany him on her keyboard. “Usually, one of their grandchildren would hand out a small bag of goodies,” recalls Jamie Vogler. “It always contained chocolate, a candy cane and a pack of Wrigley’s double mint gum.” The kids, flush with the excitement of the holiday, would join in delightedly on the refrain. The song itself was written by troubadour Tom Paxton in the late 1960’s. Here are the lyrics.

The Marvelous Toy

by Tom Paxton

When I was just a wee little lad full of health and joy,
My father homeward came one night and gave to me a toy.
A wonder to behold, it was, with many colors bright,
And the moment I laid eyes on it, it became my heart’s delight.

It went “zip” when it moved and “bop” when it stopped,
And “whirr” when it stood still.
I never knew just what it was and I guess I never will.

The first time that I picked it up, I had a big surprise,
For right on its bottom were two big buttons that,
Looked like big green eyes.
I first pushed one and then the other, and then I twisted its lid,
And when I set it down again, this is what it did:

It went “zip” when it moved and “bop” when it stopped,
And “whirr” when it stood still.
I never knew just what it was and I guess I never will.

It first marched left and then marched right,
And then marched under a chair.
And when I looked where it had gone, it wasn’t even there.
I started to sob and my daddy laughed, for he knew that I would find,
When I turned around, my marvelous toy, chugging from behind.

It went “zip” when it moved and “bop” when it stopped,
And “whirr” when it stood still.
I never knew just what it was and I guess I never will.

Well, the years have gone by too quickly, it seems,
I have my own little boy.
And yesterday I gave to him my marvelous little toy.
His eyes nearly popped right out of his head,
And he gave a squeal of glee.
Neither one of us knows just what it is,
But he loves it, just like me.

It still goes “zip” when it moves, “bop” when it stops,
And “whirr” when it stands still.
I never knew just what it was, and I guess I never will.
I never knew just what it was, and I guess I never will.



Christmas Tree

By Donald W. Bouton

The annual “Christmas Tree” program was sponsored primarily by the teachers of the district schools and held at the Grange Hall to a full house. It was an event looked forward to with great anticipation.

The hall was decorated appropriately for the season with a fresh-cut Christmas tree adorned primarily with handmade ornaments awaiting the great festival.

The program was well rehearsed in advance of this great night. Recitations by even preschoolers, musical numbers, plays, special talents and always ending with a nativity scene by the Sunday School.

The audience participated in carol singing until the sound of jingle bells and a loud knock was heard announcing the visit of old Saint Nick himself with a pack on his back. A bag of candy plus pencils engraved with your name on them was a real treasured gift from Santa and his “elves”.

One of the biggest changes today in this yearly happening is our means of transportation. Dad owned a Model T Ford truck with a canvas top, no side curtains and an open truck box. The lights on the Model T were poor, so Dad would often hang the kerosene lantern on the radiator cap to help light the way. With Mother and Dad in the front, Carson and I in the back, a thick horse blanket on the floor to sit on and a felt-lined cow hide blanket robe (still in good condition today) to

pull over our heads, we had a fairly warm ride to the party. The blanket was used to cover the radiator to keep it from freezing—no antifreeze in those days. If the night was real cold, Dad would go out a couple of time and crank up the engine so it wouldn't get too cold.

On returning home, it was a must to drain the radiator and usually take out the four coils about the size of bricks and place them on the warming oven of the kitchen stove. With a tea kettle of hot water and warm coils to spar the engine, a few turns of the hand crank and the Model T usually made an attempt to start the next morning—after for its daily trip to the creamery. If the truck was a bit hesitant in starting, he would sometime jack up one of the rear wheels—this made the cranking easier.

(from By The Light of the Kerosene Lantern, 2001, by Donald W. Bouton)



Dad's Guitar

By Jamie Vogler

When I reflect back on Christmas programs at the Grange, I always think of my dad. Each year, a few days before the event, he would dust-off a yellowed booklet of beloved Christmas carols, and strum the chords on his favorite Martin guitar—his giant hands in perfect placement on the strings. He would always accompany our family on the Grange stage, in voice and in melody, as we sang a few select favorites. Next, he'd guide the hymns for the children's Nativity pageant, keeping the kiddos and helpers in tune. And finally, he would encourage the audience in a sing-along, as all anticipated the arrival of Santa. Jingle-bells in hand, Santa would indeed arrive, a pack slung across his back, and my dad would breathe a sigh of relief. He would take his place alongside his family, watching his own kids, and later his grandson, shyly receive their gifts from Santa. Catching up with neighbors and friends, we'd eat way too many cookies, stay behind to clean up, and then head home—a wrap until next year.

Sometimes, when I'm feeling particularly sad and missing him terribly, I will run my hands over the neck of his Martin; the grooves of his fingers, from the many years of playing, have left us a permanent reminder of all the special memories spent around that guitar.



Baby J

by Karen Rauter

While the Times of Halcott has gathered and collected its stories over the last 22 years, I've become aware that many small towns like ours often have one or two or five people who take up the task of recording remembrances and traditions—for public reasons, as well as more private heartfelt reasons. Many of the accounts I've read in these “memory books”, in my travels outside of Halcott, often reveal the related traditions that show up in farm towns all across our country—in places similar to Halcott in the Northeast, Midwest, even up to Eastern Canada. The feeling of nostalgia and longing we have for our mountain town is best described, to me, in the song “Christmas Times A Coming” which ends with the words “...and I'm a goin' home.”

These North American memoirs frequently refer to an event called the annual “Christmas Tree,” which, in leaner times than today, meant that the only decorated tree children would see was set up in a community space like our Grange Hall and feted for one night with song and story and games by all those in attendance. Here, this tradition was called the Christmas Pageant, and was hosted at the Town Grange by the Halcott United Methodist Church and open to all. After a dramatization of the Nativity, children from the very youngest age took the stage to share a song, a poem, or jokes, often in pairs, sometimes siblings or cousins together.

As musicians, my husband Jim and I were invited to bring our dulcimer and guitar to the event, adding to Dennis Bouton's strumming on his beautiful Martin guitar, Mary Bouton's lovely clarion voice and of course, Hilton and Stella Kelly on fiddle and piano. They sang their unique repertoire to the town children who gathered around, dressed in their little holiday outfits, sometimes wide-eyed, often squirming, and always dipping into their bag of holiday treats.

Often, over the years, Baby Jesus was played by a doll. But as our family grew, it became clear that our own infant son Julian would be just the right age, six months after his birth, to take part in his first Nativity—and in a starring role! Jennifer Bouton put us in bathrobes and towels to play Mary and Joseph and sent us out to the manger to take our places with the many sheep and The Three Wise Men. At the appointed moment, she passed Baby J to us, but not before pointing with her finger to the stage-floor a few feet away to alert us to the fact that he'd spit-up during all the jiggling to keep him quiet. This was 25 years ago, so I'm not sure how Jennifer will remember it, but we tried to keep our laughter in check, given the solemnity of the moment, as the littlest cast member made his entrance!

Where are they now—? That's what I and other contributing editors here have become curious about. If you know of a child who “played” Baby Jesus or some other memorable part at the Hal-

cott United Methodist Christmas Pageant, please share your recollections with us so that we can gather their stories together for next year's Christmas issue. We have created a new email address, specifically for The Times of Halcott, **thetimesofhalcott@gmail.com**. Send us any info you have about former blessed infants, where they might be now, what they have done, who they have become.



Kelder Family Christmas Memories

By Pattie Kelder

Christmases Past bring forth memories of Anticipation and Family. Whether you knew my Dad, Amos, personally, or have merely glimpsed him through references in The Times Of Halcott, you probably realize he was a big kid at heart, especially when Christmas was coming. At the start of each season, he would be among the first neighbors to outline the gable and front of the house with outdoor lights. One Christmas in particular, long icicles gave the lights a special glow through the bedroom window as my sister, Jan, and I dropped off to sleep.

Closer to Christmas, Dad made great sport of finding and guessing the contents of his gifts. In their early married years, my Mom, Ruth, exhausted every conceivable hiding place . . . all to no avail. Then she upped the ante by cleverly disguising packages in over-sized boxes, before adding bath towels for padding and pebbles for noisemakers. Despite our best efforts, Dad squeezed and shook his packages annually until each present was identified in advance. Finally, Mom scored one for the home team. That year, Dad's gift fit under the cushions in the shallow false bottom of the couch. Since he didn't know that space existed, he mounted a frustrated search throughout December while sitting on his gift the whole time to watch TV each night!

Another year, when we were little, we noticed our parents exchanging conspiratorial glances over a gift from Santa to the family. Attached to it was a letter from Santa, himself, saying the present had been unfortunately snagged while the sleigh was loaded. In subsequent years, we learned that Santa's sleigh was really the family car!

Packages would also arrive by mail. I remember discovering from the mailing-wrapper that Aunt Betty in Connecticut really spelled her name "Bette". By then I'd already spelled her name incorrectly on cards. Gasp! Packages also arrived from the Albany area. Early one Christmas morning when our parents were still asleep, my sister and I found two of those gifts under the tree that seemed like books. We opened them very carefully and managed to read half a Bobbsey Twins

adventure each before re-wrapping them so we could be properly surprised later. When poodle skirts became fashionable, that aunt sent us full circle red felt skirts that she had made and hand-somely decorated. We didn't wear wool, so after sufficient time to admire them, Mom passed them to good homes.

Then there was the perennial neighborly contest between my sister and Dennis Bouton. A contest wasn't intended by the kids, but our fathers, Amos and Donald, always compared notes over what pre-dawn hour they were awakened by their children on Christmas Morning! The results were probably 50/50 as to which child got up first. I think the earliest rising time was around 4:00 a.m., but I don't remember who "won" that distinction.



Santa Calling

By Pam Kelly

Christmas, 1977.

This is a photo of my daughter, Michelle Myers and my nephew Adam Johnson (who passed away in 2021), taken at the home of my parents, Garold and Lena Johnson.

And this was the plan (which seemed a great idea at the time): Michelle's Dad would call, impersonating Santa, and he would ask to talk to Adam. Well, that part worked really well, as you can see by the look on Adam's face. However, due to lack of foresight on our part, Michelle, at first intrigued, soon grew miffed and finally hurt that Santa didn't want to talk to her. But we knew that that was impossible, since she would have recognized her Dad's voice immediately. Her face says it all as well! I guess we all have to learned the hard way that the best laid plans often go awry, unless one thinks things all the way through.



A Little Straw Owl

by R. Nemo Hill

Nostalgia always comes with an element of sadness, doesn't it?—as well as of joy? And the holidays, a joyful time of communal celebration, can't help but conjure up fond thoughts of days passed, and of much-loved friends and relatives who are no longer with us. When I put out the word that I wanted, for my first issue as editor of the Times of Halcott, to print memories of Halcott Christmases past, I hadn't realized just how clearly those intermingled emotions, of joy and of sadness, would run through them all like a common thread. I guess that's where the contradictory impulses of celebrating the New Year come from: the intoxication and the melancholy, the future and the past, both contributing to the present moment's tears of joy.

My first Christmas in Halcott, in 2018, was no exception. I was thrilled at the prospect of putting up our tree, a hefty seven-footer, which I was delighted to discover cost a lot less than half of what the same tree would've cost me back on Long Island. And I had carted half-a-dozen boxes of inherited ornaments with me when we moved. But my joy was quickly tempered by melancholy once I began unwrapping all these ornaments, some of which have been in my family for over a century. Each one was the center of a swirl of memories, and now here they were, in a new house, in a new town and a new landscape.

A few years earlier, caring for my aging mother in the home I grew up in in Massapequa, I realized that many of these ornaments had been fast asleep in their boxes for years. With the children gone off to their own worlds, my parents had done the inevitable downsizing, leaving more and more decorations tucked away in the attic on holidays. They had even stopped buying a live tree, settling for an artificial, pint-sized, tabletop version. That year, with my Mom in swift decline, I decided on a live tree, and I swore to open every box, to unwrap every ornament, to show all our historic holiday paraphernalia the light of a cold crisp Christmas Day! My mother resisted all the fuss at first, but she soon got captured by her own memories as, one by one, the ornaments emerged from their faded tissue and newspaper.

I guess I got a little carried away as the new head-of-the-household, because in my reorganization of the attic boxes I ended up discarding the cardboard carton that the first family wreath had been stored in since before I was born. It wasn't until I saw the expression on my mother's face, her eyes fixed ruefully on the crushed carton, that I realized I had blithely obliterated one of those landmarks of sentimental history which, though apparently insignificant, can come to mean so much. My mother said nothing, but I could read the private loss on her face. Nor did I say anything. But I'd learned an important lesson about ordinary objects—that they are often more valuable than their distant precious relations. It is what we invest them with that counts.



There was one other tragic mishap: the fate of a little straw owl that my mother told me had been one of my Dad's first ornaments. It was a clever piece of workmanship, and we ooh-ed and ahh-ed over it, and left it on the top of a dresser overnight. The fact that my father had so recently passed made it seem all the more special. I suppose it became a parable about the dangers of attachment, painfully comical, when in the morning we found that a mouse had appreciated—neither the craftsmanship, nor the fond associations it aroused—but rather the fact that it was made of an edible organic material (as opposed to plastic). Alas, by the time we woke up a good portion of it had been devoured. We still have it, of course, and it still hangs on the tree every year, a bit bewildered, but still full of a family of echoes.



My mother's first ornament, has, against all odds, endured until this day. Every year I wrap its blown-glass with extra care, and every year I gasp with delight when I peel the wrapping away and discover that it has once again survived. The paint has been growing thinner for years, and the stare in the eyes seems to have gotten a bit harsher. But after all the Christmas-es it has gazed upon, and with this new view of Halcott's South Mountain to study through the window against which put up our tree, well, no wonder its eyes are stretched open so wide.



Those Happy Christmas Traditions

by Judy DiBenedetto

My parents heavily influenced my love for the Christmas season. Especially during the holidays, they liked making people happy. Whether it was Dad's meticulous attention to detail in hanging the lights outside our house or Mom's tireless baking of the most amazing fruitcake and German cookies, along with decorating inside the house and finding those much hoped-for gifts for everyone on the list, I remember Christmas as a special, almost magical time—and I suppose, like many other people who enjoyed their childhood Christmases, I always hoped to carry many of those joy-filled traditions kindled by my folks forward to my own family and friends.

Our family has enjoyed many wonderful Christmases while living here in Halcott. Regardless of what kind of year we may have just had, Christmas has always been a day to treasure, and over the years we have grown comfortable with a blend of traditions from both sides of our families as well as developing a few of our own. From Chris' Italian heritage, I have attempted to include some seafood in our Christmas Eve meal. And, thanks to the good, talented people at the frozen seafood places, it is possible to include some each year! Luckily for my family, the Italian desserts we like and the simple menu fare from my relatives is more in line with my limited culinary skills, so those recipes have become tried and true for us every year. Although caring for our herd of dairy cattle can sometimes alter the best-laid plans for a relatively quiet, restful holiday, we've generally managed (sometimes with surprise Christmas help from dear friends or family) to get some down time to enjoy this good food and seasonal festivities with one another.

A newer tradition that I have taken on since residing in our lovely valley is that of a Christmas walk. This much enjoyed part of the holiday season started when we got our first Border collie, Corrie, many years ago and was probably born out of necessity as much as anything because we simply needed to get out for a walk regardless of the day. However, it became obvious that there was (and still is) so much that is extra-special about the walk during the Christmas season. For one, it's a great way to relax and move about with my canine companion(s) away from the hustle and bustle of whatever might be going on that day. It is a perfect opportunity to clear the mind and ready it for the next activity. A beautiful part of the actual Christmas Day walk, though, is the utter quiet except for the occasional car going by on the main road. I like to imagine that on that holy, happy day, everyone in the valley is warm and safe at home or with friends or loved ones—hence the vast peace and quiet not experienced on any other day. Second, my dogs, currently Dot and Gael, enjoy it no matter the time of day or night or what the weather. Indeed, some of our most memorable jaunts have been on frigid, crystal-clear nights full of twinkling stars overhead or on

days when the snow was softly falling creating a truly beautiful holiday scene. Finally, these walks are a great excuse to enjoy the neighborhood decorations, especially as night falls and the lights really begin to show up. Over the years, because of the routes we take, we have been treated to several beautiful Christmas light displays on nearby neighbors' homes, each almost acting as a beacon if we happen to be out later than usual.

Truly, Halcott is a wonderful place to enjoy family, friends, and traditions old and new!



In Deep Snow

by Carrie Bradley

My first Christmas in Halcott was a year of many firsts. I grew up outside of Albany and had moved back to the region for the first time in twenty-nine years—sixteen of those years were spent in California, so when the technicolor tassel-and-lace of fall foliage gave way to heaps of snow, every crunchy step, every blue hole in the powder on the mountain, every red cardinal on evergreen against white—and the smell of snow, which is somehow both a scent and a touch—was a tiny homecoming.

We decided to cut our own tree at Warren Reynolds' little tree farm down the road. The snow was very deep and the light was fading fast. We had to size up every tree to make sure we found ours, of course, using the circumference of a hug as a basic unit of measure and eyeballing for the imagined ceiling height plus room for the tree-topper, of which we had three heirlooms between us.

We ended up wandering to the back of the second lot. There was our tree, sure enough. I have a dim childhood maybe-memory, but I'd never lived in real country before, so I'm pretty sure I'd never sat for a felling—the scrape of the saw ringing out razor sharp in the near dark, the smells of warmed wood and pine.

Next came the comedy of geometry. The triangle of skirts, boughs, swooshing needles, and the tippy-top finally toppled to horizontal: the first Christmas present of the year. We drove the station wagon treeside through the drifts and hoisted it up, dousing ourselves in powder. It was a Christmas card image: of small triangle strapped festively atop large triangle, aerodynamically readied for the short trip home, where, with any luck, the darn tree-stand would work and the tree gracefully resurrected to its isoscelesian majesty.

We began our turnaround, but then quicker than you can say “*on Dasher on Dancer on Prancer and Vixen on Comet on Cupid on Donner and Blitzen to the top of the porch to the top of the wall now dash away dash away dash away all as dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly when they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,*” we and the wagon ensemble flumped into a snowy sinkhole.

It was the first time Michael DiBenedetto came to our rescue, the start of a long tradition in itself. He hitched to our life-sized sleigh (sans reindeer) and dragged us to *terra firma snowa*, and, in the spirit of the season, didn’t tease us too hard about the rookie blunder.

A brief bow to the balsam fir: there are many reasons this beloved native of our hills is a blessing to the Christmas rooms and hearths. The rich dark green color, the smooth waxy needles that stand up longer than those of spruce and other kin and exude that heady perfume. In the wild, balsams provide a soft shelter for birds and small mammals, and the twigs and needles are edible, providing a food source during winter. The needles are used to make therapeutic teas, the sap and oils used for cuts, burns, and muscle pain. But it’s that unique, powerful smell that carries the essence of the medicine and magic of this Christmas conifer . . . a mingling of camphor, eucalyptus, cedar, mint, vanilla, earth, thyme.

And time. There the tree stands, a beautiful pyramid of life, cut off from its past, its foundation—but with a destiny of festivity, family, tradition, timelessness. The roots remain in the woods and run deep in a new story, and seedlings will grow from its heart. We bring the outdoors indoors to tell a story of time, its symbol of cycle standing sentry, a steeple raised like the pinnacle of our hands in prayer, or like the hands of the clock at midnight.

The night we cut our tree on my first Christmas in Halcott, I felt a childlike faith and joy for the first time in a long time, and began a life of gratitude, for being a child of all my homes—the mountains, the sea, in the spiritual, at the tables of my friends, and in the special feeling of wading and floundering in deep snow and feeling safe, at the same time.



Making Mountains: New York City and the Catskills

David Stradling (University of Washington Press)

by Karen Rauter

In 2007, an environmental historian from Cincinnati published a small, 250-page history of the Catskills called *Making Mountains: New York City and the Catskills*. He says his motivation was personal—the only chance of his career to spend a summer where his grandparents took him as a child—and he takes the reader through the last two centuries and six generations of his own family's story as a framework for the book.

Stradling's history takes a common route that, as the first great American city, New Yorkers shaped the surrounding countryside as they pushed out from its center, all the while extracting from the wilderness what they needed: timber, water, bluestone. Then, as urban life became increasingly unpleasant, the same rural towns (marginal as they were) provided a treasured, idyllic retreat for millions of urbanites: the Great Escape that still goes on today every weekend and holiday throughout the year.

Making Mountains is not an easy book to find, though Skene Library has a copy and I was also able to order one from Stone Ridge through the Morton Library in Pine Hill. But don't be discouraged if you can't find a copy right away – it's worth the search and there are used copies available for purchase online. After making the Catskills my home for 35 years, I believe Stradling nails the story of the Catskills in a way that holds meaning for every person who loves Halcott and all our mountain towns.

He shows that because we have been made in relation to each other, our community of upstate and downstate families living together is a unique blend of rural and urban cultures—a kind of ongoing collaboration for generations. As a result, Halcott is a special world where this “making” impacts us every day in the best possible way: we have more in common than we may think.

P.S. Originally from the Dry Brook Valley, the author's grandparents lived in Highmount during his childhood. A number of his maternal relatives have lived on our main road for generations. If you read the book, email TTOH to answer this question: Who is a relative of the author living among us today?





Sunday worship hour at Halcott Community Methodist Church is at 9AM, and all are welcome. The Sundays in December are in the season of advent, so the lighting of the Advent wreath will happen during worship on those Sundays. The Christmas candlelight service will take place on Friday, December 23rd at 6:00 PM instead of on Sunday, December 25th. It is a traditional service of carols, scripture readings, and special music. There will not be a worship service in this church on Christmas Day. (However, there will be a non-traditional Christmas Day service available at Andes United Methodist Church at 10:30.)

The Halcott Community Methodist Church is seeking private and grant funding for a capital project expected to exceed \$60,000. Urgent issues to be addressed include side drainage, securing the building on its foundation, ramp revision, driveway repair, and more. We need suggestions of contractors in order to get bids this winter. An engineer's report is available for the asking. The church is a charming and historic structure, and preserving it should be a priority for the whole town, regardless of their faith orientation. There are only two building in town of such historic interest—perhaps there are readers who might consider a significant year-end charitable donation to the church for this project.



"A Little Out of the Way, but Worth the Trip!"

115 Bouton Road, Halcott Center, NY

Stacey Johnson 845-417-6956

Half Fast Farm is open for Christmas business! Located at 115 Bouton Road in Halcott Center, past the Methodist Church and the cemetery, it's a convenient place for town residents to pick out the perfect Christmas tree this year. The prices are right, the setting is beautiful, the atmosphere is friendly, and there's a wide selection of ornaments, wreaths, and poinsettias as well. Don't put

your visit off, you can get your tree early and keep it fresh in the outdoor chill, just giving the trunk a fresh cut before setting it up inside.

“Please have your kids bring their letters to Santa with return addresses on them that they can mail in our letters to Santa mailbox,” says owner Stacey Johnson. “We have beautiful Fraser Firs and Blue Spruce trees, and we are open Saturdays and Sundays 10AM to 7PM, and Mondays through Fridays 11AM to 7PM.”

And tell Stacey you saw this recommendation in The Times of Halcott!



There's a great new Greek restaurant in Fleischmann's in case you didn't know already. Aegean Flavor is located at 932 Main Street, and features Gyros, Souvlaki, and more. There's no indoor seating, but there are tables outside in the warmer weather. But try take-out during the winter, and you won't be disappointed. Highly recommended: the half-pound container of Greek olives, the plumpest and most delicious olives we've ever encountered. Stay tuned for the next issue of The Times Of Halcott, in which we will sit down and chat with the owners, Peter and Demetra, who are residents of Halcott!

PLEASE NOTE that The Times of Halcott now has its own EMAIL ADDRESS for any inquiries or correspondence. If you wanted to be added or taken off the mailing list, if you have any comments on the contents of an issue, or if you want to send in a contribution for future publication, just drop us a line here: **thetimesofhalcott@gmail.com**

AND HAVE A GREAT HOLIDAY!

The Oxen

By Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.
“Now they are all on their knees,”
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
“Come; see the oxen kneel,

“In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,”
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.



Winter 2022

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Halcott, NY 12430