

The Times of



Halcott

Summer 2022

Vol 99 of 100

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New!

The four Johnsons, Teddy, Stacy, Kenny and Kevin excited us greatly at this past Christmas season when they opened a new Christmas store at their home up Bouton Rd. called Half-Fast Farm. How did this happen?

Well, it started last Columbus Day weekend when Don and Heidi Clark from Phenicia, NY closer to Kingston just off Route 28, sent around a postcard to all their customers announcing that they were retiring and closing their very popular Christmas Tree store. The Johnsons were some of their best customers and decided to take over the business. As the holiday drew closer, word among seasoned tree buyers was that the new Half Fast Farm's Christmas store inventory was large and reasonably priced. People happily passed along their recommendations

to others. In a week and a half, over 300 trees were sold and the Johnsons continued to do a brisk business with Christmas items in the store. Their new venture jumped off to great acclaim.

Encouraged by their success, they have plans to offer a "Cut Your Own Tree" experience when their own trees reach maturity. In the meantime, the family will continue to bring in Christmas trees from other providers. Quite an exciting success story for Halcott!

But wait, the story continues. This spring, when we began to see little signs along area roads directing us to Half Fast Farm Nursery for plants, I decided to investigate. Unsure of how to get there, I just kept driving up County Route 3, taking the right fork labeled Turk Hollow Rd, next not taking the second

right which is Turk Hollow Rd, but going straight on Bouton Rd, and continuing up the valley. Pretty soon I saw the telltale roof of a greenhouse off to my left. As an inveterate flower buyer, I could feel my heart begin to beat more quickly. I was on home territory.

The new greenhouse is large, warm and inviting with bursts of vibrant color. Stacy was inside when I arrived, puttering around watering, picking off spent blooms and tending her plants. She looked exceedingly happy and later told me that she felt super blessed working here on the farm. I loved listening to her girlish giggle as she described how the idea came about. It was the same pattern of the loss of a business bringing to birth a new business to replace it.

We in Halcott have always shopped at Todd's Nursery located nearby on Basil Todd Rd. outside of Fleischmanns. News of Todd's closing this past year left a great hole in our ability to get plants for the summer. The Johnsons in particular had had a tradition of buying flowers from Todd's every summer. They felt the loss very keenly, which led to a desire to start their own greenhouse. When you give an idea to that family, it takes off like an airplane. No small venture, a greenhouse is not just a plastic covered building. Looking up at the ceiling, I could see gizmos to let heat out and gizmos to bring heat in. Outside tucked away out of sight were in-ground tanks or machinery of some sort, and inside of course the space was



neatly lined with shelving to hold the plant trays. It was a total pleasure to experience. Stacy told me that she has always loved flowers. She does her own ordering and even

though this is her first year, it seems that she knows what others love, too, because she has had a steady stream of happy customers.

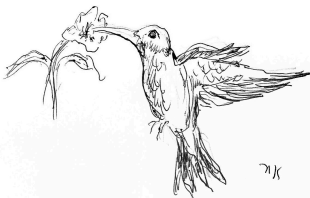
Stepping into the small store next to the greenhouse, I found seeds, potting soil, pots, lawn decorations, gifts – everything associated with growing things. There are also eggs for sale and Chris and Judy milk will also be available. It was such fun to visit. I even got a Hershey Bar as a belated Mother's Day gift.

And it still goes on! The Johnsons are already preparing a field as a pumpkin patch for an autumn "Pick Your Own Pumpkins." There are 150 or more apple trees planted on their slopes for us to have the chance to pick from one day. It is really exciting to think of all the ways that Half Fast Farm will continue to enrich our lives every season of the year. We send a very big thank you to Teddy, Stacy, Kenny and Kevin Johnson, if they ever stop long enough to accept it! **IK**

Know Your Garden

"Know your garden!" he insisted. "Know your garden! What's the point of it, if you don't know what's there?"

Truth was, I deserved the tirade. He'd merely asked about the birds, and I'd stammered and stuttered and could barely think. Truth really was that I was completely starstruck by this famous birder and could do little more than stand agog and agape; my



brain would not function and there was definitely no pathway from my thoughts to my mouth. I couldn't tell him about the chickadees, the orioles, the

juncos, mourning doves, goldfinches or downy woodpeckers, even if I'd tried.

The birder was British, so the 'garden' he'd referred to wasn't my little patch of lettuce, kale, and tomatoes; he meant my backyard. And he was right. I should know who comes to my yard, who uses the bird feeders, the surrounding shrubs, the grass of my lawn. I had barely a clue beyond the obvious and readily identifiable visitors to my little postage stamp of the world.

I took his admonition to heart and learned more about the birds. I learned more about the mice and the moles and the squirrels (Aargh! The Squirrels!).

Then I turned my attention to the lawn. More accurately, the function of the lawn, in respect to wildlife. The relationship between the growth called 'weeds' and their contribution in a basic and necessary way to the foundation of the wildlife food pyramid. Grass supports insect life. Dandelions, daisies, and other flowers support insects and bees, which in turn support dragonflies, bats, and insect eating birds.

The fireflies! Grass supports fireflies, who live among the blades and lay their eggs under the stems and roots.

Each firefly population is fixed in place,

anchored to its own field, lawn, or patch of scrub. The blinking buggers do not migrate. The fireflies sparkling above your lawn tonight are descended from fireflies who have lived at that site for thousands, if not millions, of years.

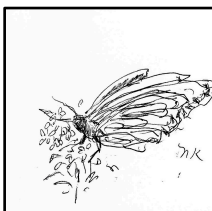
Their sensitive larvae are susceptible to both pesticides and herbicides; entire populations of fireflies disappear daily across the country because of them.

Mosquitos? I've learned to accept them. They are a vital food source for hummingbirds, dragonflies, and the few bats we have left. I remember my parents, so proud of the bug zapper that hung by the cellar door. It didn't zap many mosquitoes, but scattered beneath it each morning were the husks of beneficial bugs, along with many, many fried crane flies, which ironically, *eat* mosquitoes. Ah, technology.

The luna moth is another disappearing treasure. Used to be fairly common in past Junes and Julys to spy on the ground the light green gossamer wings of a luna who had been dinner for a bat or an owl. These days? Maybe one sighting every two years? Three? Five? Hardly ever one that's alive. The culprit in this case is light. Lunas are drawn to light. My friend Leslie T. Sharpe says they have a love affair with light. After hatching, lunas live for about 10 days. They don't eat, have no mouthparts. Their only function is to reproduce. But they are guided by the moon, and are so attracted to porch lights and pole lights and street lights left on all night long that they often spend their short

lifetimes mesmerized by the artificial illumination, rather than yielding to the lesser pull of the opposite sex.

The mind boggles at the billions of



microorganisms in a pound of lawn dirt. I'll settle for the ones I can see, the macro-life I am responsible for by virtue of ownership. I will trust that if I do right by the big ones, the smaller will thrive. My plan: get to know more about my garden, take better care of it, and hope that my brand new granddaughter will get to experience for herself the intricate design of a luna moth. **PD**

What's Doing at Crystal Brook Farm?

Yesterday, Judy DiBenedetto and I sat down together to talk about the farming tasks they are faced with this summer. First up was the subject of farming equipment. It is sobering to reflect on how heavily today's farmers depend on tractors and bailers and mowers and all manner of necessary items. It can be crippling if one develops a problem. Each of these gentle giants needs periodic fresh filters, oil

changes, and a general checkup to prepare for the season. The day before our chat, a new bailer had arrived, a baling maker/wrapper. It is lime green and very snappy-looking, the machine that produces the large white 1200 lb marshmallows that dot the fields here and there up and down the valley. What goes into the marshmallow is "bailage," fresh grasses that have been cut, bruised to release their goodness, and wrapped tightly in plastic which forms a mini-silo, a contained place where the grasses can ferment. The result is loved by cows and men alike in that it apparently tastes delectable to the former and is a Godsend to the

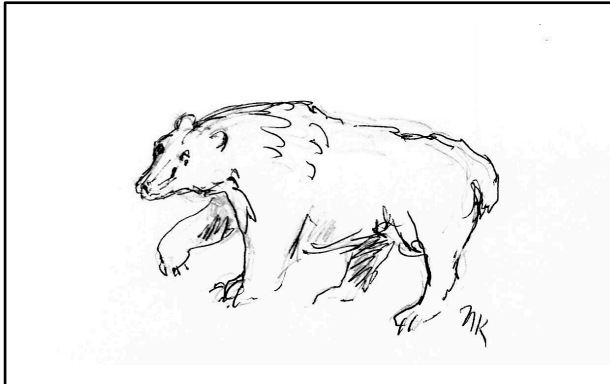
latter. Imagine a day when fresh grass cuttings were deposited high up in those huge round silos connected to barns. If I am correct, as the pile sank down, it fermented and 'silage' was forked out at the bottom for cows to eat. My husband Tony used to love the smell of silage, claiming that it was intoxicating, like beer and molasses together.

Cornell Cooperative Extension was established in 1914 by Congress to help rural people learn the latest developments in agriculture, home economics, economic development and many other related subjects. They have been responsible for keeping New York farmers up to speed on the most recent

techniques available to help them put produce on our table. Judy explains that Cooperative Extension takes periodic 'scissor cuts' of our hay fields in spring to let the farmers know when to cut to get the best feed value.

Crystal Brook Farm also sells "creamline"

milk, pasteurized but not homogenized. It is delicious. And quite popular. The milk is bottled and sold here at their farm and also at several grocery stores in the area. To deliver their milk, Judy drives as far as The Big Cheese, a Mediterranean restaurant on Main St. in Rosendale, NY. As well as to Woodstock, Andes, Jefferson and more. She admits softly that it takes quite a while to deliver the few hundred half-gallons a week that the DiBenedettos sell. Sales from the small barn store here in Halcott are brisk, owing perhaps to Air BnB traffic as much as to locals loyal to the old-fashioned real milk taste. **IK**



**Life Along the Five Roads Over the
Mountains, continued**
Pattie Kelder

Note from the author: This series of articles is nearing its conclusion. Meanwhile, reader feedback is invited. If you remember something differently, know the rest of a story or have an interesting anecdote that has yet to be told, please contact the author soon. Copies of most books referenced in this series are still available from the Halcott Community Fund, c/o Jamie Vogler.

Additional information on life in West Settlement (see Part 5) has come to light. Another side of Harold Wileman was brought out by Mary Ball. Her family knew him as a capable, sober winter worker at the Homestead, a family friend, and someone who gave thoughtful gifts to all at Christmastime. Alan Reynolds reminded me to mention Morris and Mary Slavin, who owned a big chunk of land at the far end of West Settlement on Silas Lake Road close to the edge of town. When Morris later subdivided, he planned to name a road after each of their five children, but only got as far as two: Joanne Road and Betty Mountain Road. Morris and his brother, Sam, were in the construction business together. Alan says they did a lot of work for Greene County in the '40s and '50s, maneuvering their equipment through the unimproved dug way on Route 3 and over the mountain to Hunter and Windham. They also assisted with widening and rebuilding the dug way for Halcott. Alan clarified a story from the late Bob Johnson about snow removal: At one time, Audrey had a picture of a Linn that was stuck between parallel stone walls in Crosby's field on its way to clear Turkey Ridge. (This field is on the right hand side, below the Route 1 intersection with Turkey Ridge Road.)

Ordinarily the Linn would have approached Turkey Ridge from Art Gordon's place situated at the other end of Turkey Ridge just above its intersection with Silas Lake Road. On this occasion, the drifts were so deep they had to make an attempt from the West Settlement end, hence the approach uphill across the field. The problem was that stone walls in close proximity to each other often funneled drifts. Adding to the difficulty was the fact that Linns tended to be snow catchers (i.e. their tracks filled with snow and had to be cleared by hand). Before long there was so much snow in front of the Linn that it couldn't push any more, and it couldn't back up either! Bob said it took about six men with shovels to dig it out. He also said Linns were used in Halcott until sometime after World War II when the county paved the roads and outlawed their further use. Alan recalls Linns still being used to plow snow and pull the tow grader well into the '50s. Their track pads were flat, and did not harm pavement. On the other hand, machinery with lugs really *did* present a problem. Alan recalls seeing county signs outlawing such machinery because lugs projecting from the wheels chewed up pavement. Notes: Alan got his only ride in a Linn from his grandfather, Garfield Reynolds, around the age of three. It lasted all of a few hundred feet! Some folks in the '50s and later called the West Settlement end of Turkey Ridge Road the Mountain Star Road (after the hotel). The initial hill section of Silas Lake Road between Route 3 and the upper end of Turkey Ridge Road was often called Trav (or Travis) Faulkner Hill Road back then, too.

Part 6: Life on Johnson Hollow, "Halcott Mountain", Hubbard and Steinfeld Roads

A 1960 map that belonged to the late Town Historian, Audrey Johnson, is more detailed than Al Doubrava's 1960 topographical

map referenced in Part 1. It shows Johnson Hollow Road as starting at the Y by the Turk Hollow Bridge. Maps aren't necessarily accurate, however. At some point near the turn of the millennium, the Johnson Hollow sign at the Y was moved on up to the left fork in the road by the District # 4 schoolhouse bridge where Johnson Hollow *really* starts. It was replaced with a Route 3 sign down at the Y. The other fork at the schoolhouse, which continues more or less straight as Route 3 on its way toward Mosquito Point, was known to some as Halcott Mountain Road, even though it is nowhere near Halcott Mountain at the head of Elk Creek. At one time, Gloria Sadowski (Audrey's daughter) says Johnson Hollow was solely inhabited by Johnsons, many of whom descended from Sylvester and Polly Johnson who had a house on the other side of the stream beyond Constantine Boscu's house (now Steinfeld property). See related story in TTOH Volume 29, p. 12.

The first place beyond the dug way on present day Route 3 is the Reynolds farm. It extends to the intersection with Hubbard Road which also bounds the Johnson farm. Alan says his parents, Ward and Ruth Reynolds, bought it from an electrician named Kopetz. He ran the town steam roller on roads whenever needed. The farmhouse, which dates back to the 1800's, may have been used for lodging on the stage

route at one time. It sits at the intersection of Route 3 and Mead Road, but the dairy barn was at a smaller farm on Hubbard Road owned by Garfield. He had built it (where the first driveway on the left side of the road is today) for the purpose of raising pigs. Next to the

stream in that same field is the foundation to a farmhouse, long gone. It may have been the house where Dorothy Bouton's forebear, Luther Earl, was born. Since pigs were fed food garbage from the hotels in the '50s, jars, cans and monogrammed silverware from the St. Regis, Grand Hotel and others turned up near that foundation for a number of years. The farm's other two barns were perpendicular to each other across Mead Road from the Reynolds farmhouse. The barn closer to the stream was perpendicular to Mead Road and old enough to have hand hewn beams. "JBS Halcott" was neatly painted on one wall

in that barn (significance unknown). The other barn, parallel to and along the edge of Mead Road, had been dragged there from the other side of Route 3 before Ward owned the farm. Not only did farmers buy and sell farms as they moved around town, they often moved and repurposed buildings as well. Ward used these two barns to house chickens and young cattle, and to store hay. At one time a small cemetery was on the edge of Mead Road near the barn that was moved. The cemetery was there when

To the Drivers of Vehicles on Our Roads:

Thank you for sharing the road with us!

But can we ask a little favor?
We love your support, but when you want to say hi, could you please wait until you are past us to beep hello?
And just a little, tiny beep, please?
Just to avoid heart attacks...

In appreciation,

the Unorganized Halcott Bikers
and probably
the Unorganized Halcott Walkers
as well as
the Unorganized Halcott Tractor
Drivers

Fred and Martha Bouton lived in the farmhouse as newlyweds before Kopetz bought it. Unfortunately small family cemeteries often disappear with time. When Fred's brother, Marshall Bouton, wanted the field behind the barns, Fred sold it to him. A couple of generations later, Russell Bouton sold it back to Alan Reynolds!

In the early '50s, Ward's uncle, Willie Griffin (further down Route 3), acquired one of the first field choppers in town. It blew corn directly on the wagon. From there, the chopped corn could be dumped on an elevator that carried it up into the silo. Since farmers often shared or rented their machinery, young Alan watched the guys set up the elevator at his dad's barn when it was their turn to use it. After they left, he climbed up the elevator to look in the silo and fell, breaking both legs. For the next five years he went in and out of Albany Medical Center for bone and skin graft surgeries every few weeks – 15 surgeries in all. He lived on crutches much of that time and could only attend school irregularly until he was 10 years old. Dorothy Bouton provided most of his schooling at home during those years.

The Reynolds farm was a popular gathering spot in summer. Ruth's brother-in-law, a well driller, had acquired a huge sheet of plastic. Discussion about how to use it led to the installation of an in ground pool above the house. The Sunday School children, among others, were invited on an outing to the pool in the '60s.

A few years later, when Vic Peet, Ward and the family dog, Saddle, were out hunting, they had a hair raising experience. Somewhere up Vly Mountain past Westlake's, Saddle saw a bear and took off after her,

evidently getting between mama and her cubs. According to one account, the bear picked up Saddle by the back of the neck and shook the dog; another version is that the bear grabbed Saddle in a bear hug. Either way, Vic (foolishly, by his own account) shouted at the bear until she dropped Saddle and took off. Remarkably, all three lived unscathed to tell the tale.

Just past the Reynolds farm, the Johnson farm is still in operation. There used to be an old farmhouse across the barn driveway where Bob Johnson's parents, Jim and Deborah, lived. The 1867 map shows the owner at that time as Ros Miller, who was Roswell Bouton's uncle. On one occasion in the early '50s when the 4-H girls were at the house with Deborah, Virgil Streeter recalls visiting the attic with Bernie Bouton and, perhaps, Bob. They found some hornets, cut the stingers out of them and ran downstairs to release them among the girls. Needless to say, the room cleared out in a hurry!

A few decades later, Jim's granddaughter, Gloria raised her family in the same house. One summer day, she and her daughters embarked up Hubbard Road on a blueberry picking expedition. Their

destination was the Hubbard farm near the end of the road where Garfield and Claretta Reynolds' granddaughter, Loni Hill, was living at the time. Having warned the girls that bears like blueberries, too, the little band was wired to beat feet if necessary. Soon enough, a commotion arose in the bushes nearby. Gloria hollered, "**Run**, girls!" whereupon they dashed pell mell down the road as fast as their little



legs could carry them. When Gloria finally dared risk a backwards glance, she saw . . . Loni's ducks chasing them!

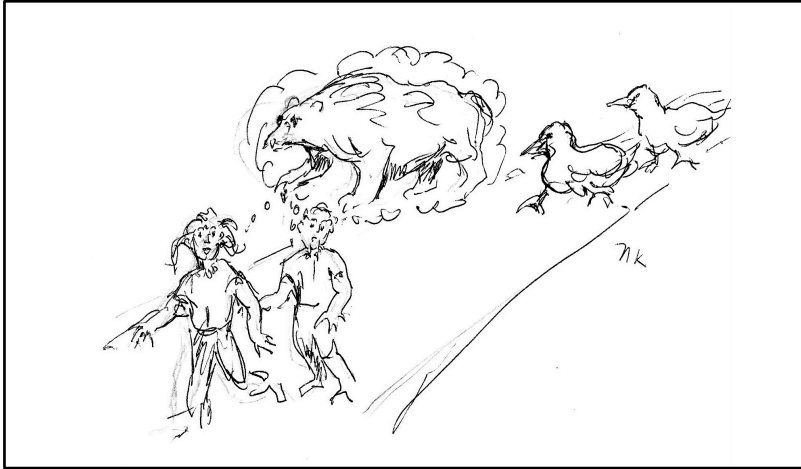
In the early '50s, when Jack and Harriet Lucas were living on the Hubbard farm, their little son, Scott, got into a jam on the way home from school. Louis Crosby's big bus always stopped at the store to *rendezvous* with the feeder bus for West

Settlement. While waiting, Louis allowed the kids to go inside to buy a candy bar. One day Scott got a candy bar without benefit of money. When his parents asked how he got it, he told them he took it. For this misdeed, his parents made him walk all the way down to the store with a nickel to pay Smith, a jaunt of some three miles each way!

Daniel and Sadie Bucko sold their old farm to Phil Hubbard in 1956. Gloria and Alan say there was another old house way up the mountain beyond that farm at one time. Audrey always believed that there must have been a road above the farm that went around the flat, relatively wide basin of the mountain toward Johnson Hollow and possibly even on toward Mosquito Point and Prattsville. Marilyn Gallant, Dot Bouton's daughter, had a similar thought, but no one could figure out where it would have continued on the upper end. Alan is aware of old logging roads around the basin that made it easier to build. Tom Maglaras

confirms that a road did, indeed, exist but that the outlet was really in the *other* direction over by Slavin's (i.e. beyond the sharp bend at Parker's above the Thyme Hill Road intersection with Silas Lake Road). As an

aside, Tom says the Slavin end provided access for the state land timber theft (estimated value of \$250,000) that occurred in the summer of 1997.



Tom and Stephanie, who own the upper part of the Hubbard farm, say their family always referred to the foundations further up the mountain as "the Indian homes". There, they found fruit trees, farm implements, cast iron items, a wagon wheel hub, specially arranged stone piles and more. Others, too, have mentioned that some settlers in this vicinity were descended from Indians.

Bob and Audrey Johnson lived up the road from the Johnson dairy barn in the former District #4 schoolhouse where they raised Gloria, Kip, Dan and Tim. Several accounts of the family's mountain lion sightings appear in "No Cats in the Catskills", TTOH, Volume 70. A few years later, Alan saw a mountain lion jump off the bank at the county line on Route 3 and proceed across George Crosby's flat to the stream. The late Keith Johnson once told Gloria of a mountain lion that visited one of his logging operations on several occasions.

Audrey had been injured in an accident

around the time she and Bob were married, so rather than work in the barn, she tended the house and kids. When old enough, the kids helped out around the farm. Gloria remembers driving the hay wagon, tending cows and minding her brothers whenever accompanying their mother on local history treks to various Halcott cemeteries and landmarks. When she subsequently became a double amputee, she kept her sense of humor and allowed Gloria's small daughters to draw varicose veins on her prostheses!

On up Route 3, past the schoolhouse, is the location where teams of oxen moved Abner Bouton's house across the road from the left side to the right side just ahead of foreclosure. See page 13 in Donald Bouton's first book, By the Light of the Kerosene Lantern. Marilyn tells me the house was papered with newspapers, which was sometimes used for wallpaper and insulation. Closer to the top was an old log cabin, one of the town's first structures, which is no longer standing. Virgil Streeter used to take shelter in its while hunting. On one of those occasions he was caught in a heavy snowstorm. As the old timber started cracking under the weight of the snow, he decided he had better not hunker down there in another storm! He remembers the late Ray German, who lived on the Johnson farm at one time, as an expert turkey caller. They scouted out turkey roosts in the evening so they would know precisely where to hunt the next day.

Over the bridge from the schoolhouse into Johnson Hollow is a large farmhouse on the left on property that was known as the Deemer Place. Bob Johnson bought the Deemer farm, probably in the '60s. On the other side of Steinfeld Road from it was the Ward Jenkins farm, eventually purchased by Bob, as well. That farm had several owners. In

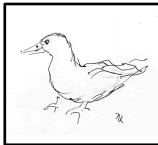
1952, it was purchased by Frank Beers from Max Kass when Frank's daughter, Sylvia, was 9 years old. The farmhouse (no longer standing) had 17 rooms. The barn, diagonally across the road on the right, still stands. Sylvia remembers working hard on the farm. She helped mow hay, and picked berries and currants in four different locations, including the night pasture. She had to rise early, help with the milking, and then hot-foot-it to Bob's and Audrey's in time to catch the school bus. This was never fun in the winter. Big snowstorms were common in the '50s. See photo in TTOH, Volume

Land Use Code Update

We are in the process of revisiting the zoning ordinance that governs Halcott's land use. A committee has been formed and meetings will start this summer to be held at the Grange Hall. We hope to be able to offer the meetings via Zoom to people who cannot attend in person. Our form of communication to town members is primarily by email, secondarily our Halcott website (www.halcottcenter.wordpress.com). If you are not getting emails from the Town yet, and wish to do so, please email your request to be added to the list to: inneskas70@gmail.com and you will be added. We have found that email is our best method of quick and efficient communication for all Town events (including emergencies, etc) and encourage you to be a part of it. *Thanks!*

45. As noted earlier, several spots in town were prone to drifting. The stone wall lined downhill dip between Steinfeld Road and the Beers barn was one of them. In 1959, when Sylvia was 16, she and her father had to shovel that section of road wide enough for their jeep because no snow removal machinery could get through. Photos show her standing on their freshly

shoveled snowbank by a telephone pole. The snowbank was higher than she was tall, perhaps seven or eight feet high by appearances. She doesn't know how they did it in time, but they were able to get their milk to the creamery without having to dump it. Quite a feat!



Alan recalls V plows, manned by a driver and a wing man, being used in the '50s to clear the roads. On some occasions back then, there was so much snow that it came off the top of the plow onto the hood of the plow truck. Fortunately there was never quite enough snow on the hood to be a problem. The more likely problem was getting stuck. One time Leonard VanValkenburgh and (probably) Garold Johnson got stuck with the plow truck in that devilish stretch Sylvia and her father had to shovel. When Leonard tried to extricate it with another plow, he got that one stuck, too!

Leo and Edith Deemer were Sylvia's neighbors. When they reached old age, Dannie Miller worked the farm single handedly. He and his mother lived in a little house (now gone) across the driveway from the farmhouse. Sylvia remembers visiting Dannie's mother once near supper time. As soon as the woman announced it was time to get out the spider, Sylvia made a hasty departure. She thought the spider was a creepy-crawly, rather than a cast iron frying pan on legs! Sylvia also remembers walking further up Johnson Hollow one winter in the late '50s to take care of Alfred Block's ailing, home bound mother. It was quite a responsibility for a teenager.

Dick and Clara Wachtel later owned part of the Ward Jenkins farm beyond the barn. Sylvia says the very day Dick put lightning rods on the house it caught fire in a thunderstorm and burned to the ground. Go figure! Virgil says Elmer Kelly owned the

Jenkins farm before Max Kass did. It had an old sap bush up behind the barn near the Brunner property which was due to be logged off again. Virgil was part of the crew which included Paul and Keith Johnson. Virgil's brother, Winton, had logged it off the first time when some of the mammoth trees had yielded 1000 board feet of lumber apiece. (Think of maple trees big enough for six taps.) Elmer had a horse, so he hired Leonard to drive the horse when it was time to bunch the cut logs together and draw them down the hill. Virgil cut logs throughout Johnson Hollow, and says some of the trees were so big they had to take one handle off a six foot long saw and cut with one man at the saw instead of two. *(Part 6 to be continued)*

PASSAGES

Welcome to a New Halcott Neighbor

There is another addition to the DiBenedetto family! On April 27th, Kane and Katy welcomed a daughter, Koa Skye. Kai and Ari are thrilled with their little sister. The three are destined to become a formidable female trio of blonde and boundless energy, following the example of their mom and two aunts. Needless to say, Michael and Peg are thrilled, as well.



4 yr old Kai with new Koi

Goodbye to Mary

Mary Chesire passed away this spring, leaving husband Dan and their kids. The wife of one son is Christine Chesire who has contributed some very enjoyable poems to this newsletter. We will miss Mary's chuckling smile and loving manner.

The Times of the Halcott United Methodist Church

Summer 2022 *Pattie Kelder, Correspondent*



"Lord, teach us to pray ..." (Luke 11:1)

When His disciples asked this of Jesus, He taught them what we know as The Lord's Prayer, which is the gold standard of prayer for Christians. However, this is not the only way to pray. Prayers, some as short as "Lord, help!" in an emergency, are personal and should be ongoing throughout the day.

Bible writers mention several components of prayer. One helpful device is the acronym, ACTS, where A = Adoration and Praise, C = Confession, T = Thanksgiving, and S = Supplication (also known as Petition or Request). Over the course of the day, prayers should cover all of these areas.

There are also ways to start and end prayers. It is always important to address God by name at the beginning with something as simple as, "Dear God", and it is important to finish prayers of request with, "In Jesus' Name". This ending is not necessary, however, for prayers of praise and thanksgiving, such as "Thank you, God!" or "Praise you, Lord!"

It is important to develop a daily prayer routine. God wants to hear what is on our minds in our own words. He is our best listener and he will respond. Examples of answers are, "Yes", "Yes, but wait awhile", "No", and "No, I have something better for you".

A Mouse in the House - Oh, No!

In recent years there seem to be more little rodents around than usual. Attics, cellars, cars, outbuildings, RVs, you name it - they're there.

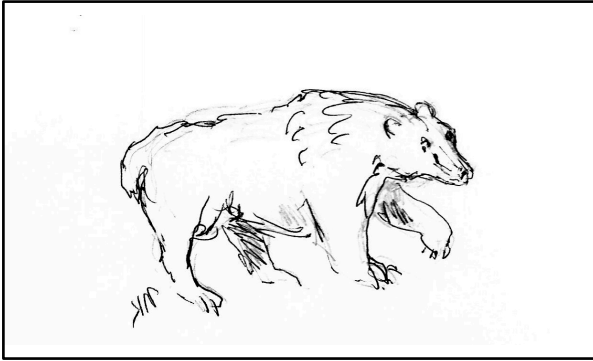
They are only cute or amusing in children's books where generations of authors have personified the perennial pest.

"There's no such thing as a house without a mouse," my brother tells me. "If you don't believe me, keep a hair trigger trap freshly baited, and you'll see. People who think they never have a mouse just don't see them." Mom advised, "Where there is one mouse, there are two," which I paraphrased, "Where there is one mouse, there is a family."

A new house occupied by a young family is fairly tight. It's filled with lots of activity and commotion. Household spaces and contents are in constant use. In time, though, that house accumulates seldom used goods and eventually becomes a quiet empty nest that may be vacated for part of the year - all ideal conditions for unwelcome guests! Mice move in quickly. By the time we see their calling cards, they're attending baby showers for the grand kids. Try a successful eviction, *then!*

Much the same is true in our spiritual houses. When we are young in our faith - actively learning, worshipping and fellowshiping with others - there is less opportunity for "mice" to move in. Not that a life of faith is easy, it's just that faith helps us handle things better. When the pace of life picks up, though, and our faith routines start to slip, nature quickly fills the vacuum. Before we know it, "rodents" have replaced the fruits of the spirit (Gal. 5: 22-23).

Instead of *kindness*, we dish up rudeness.



Instead of experiencing *joy*, we become frustrated.

Instead of acting out of *love*, we become thoughtless.

As with physical houses, there is some good news, especially with summer right around the corner. A vigorous spring cleaning, applied with plenty of elbow grease, can work wonders. Think about how three simple acts can help:

- 1) Dust off the Bible.
- 2) Exercise (i.e. bend) the knees.
- 3) Head on out the door for Sunday worship.

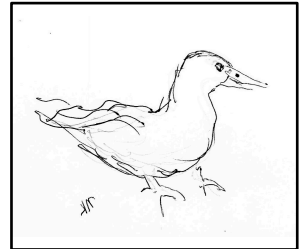
Instead of being at *peace*, we lose trust and feel anxious.

Instead of being *gentle*, we find our fuses getting shorter.

Instead of practicing *patience*, we brush people off.

Instead of exercising *self control*, we become brusque, or worse.

What a good start! After that, only maintenance is needed.



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