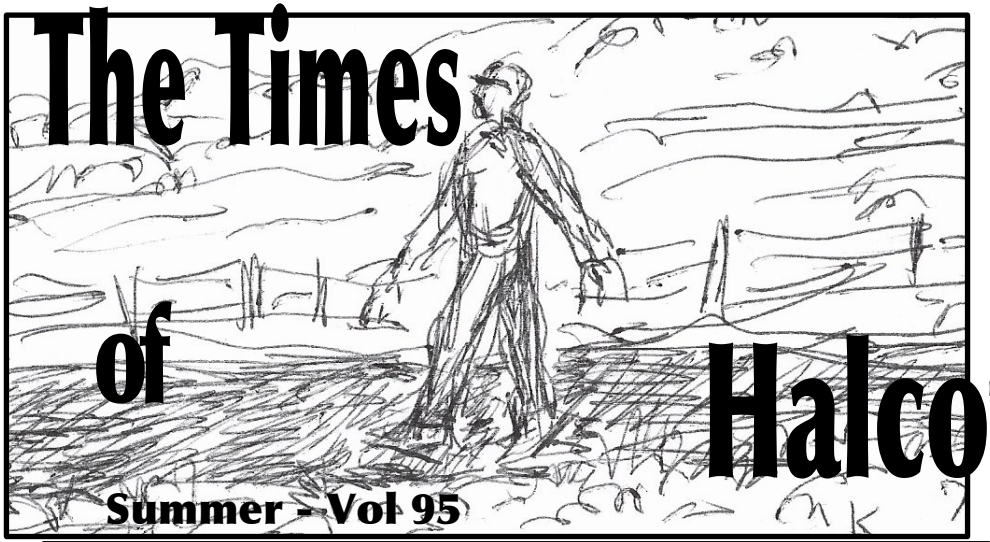

Editors: Innes Kasanof; Peg DiBenedetto; Judy DiBenedetto; Carrie Bradley Neves; Art: Nina Kasanof

Groundhog Day

Dateline: Weed the strawberries

There's not a lot happening in a food garden in the mountains at 2,000 feet in March…or April…or May…thank goodness for the perennials. The chives, sage, mint, and strawberries lead the way, and soon after, the raspberries and asparagus spearing appearings. Still, not much allure for critters. Still, on this day, I got on my knees for the strawberry weeding and came face to face in the grass with a little. And the little was a little, um, weird. Rodent. Didn't run. Challenged me to a staring contest.

Groundhog, I thought, *aka woodchuck, whistle-pig*. Baby? Pound-of-butter sized…maybe pound and a half. Top enemy of vegetable gardeners, by the way. Diggers, fence scofflaws. Lover of beets and carrots.

But: so damn cute. I moved in — honestly, for conversation. Just a "hi," you know…but it chattered its teeth at me (impressively, I have to say, like a trained percussionist). Then it lunged, looking-for-a-headlock style. Or maybe rabid. In a beat, I chucked the idea of friendship. But in spite of my beet-mother hostility, I was worried about this tiny hog's mental and physical health.

I called my friends Michael and Peg, who are animal rescue Samaritans. But by the time I reached them, the critter was gone.

Dateline: Beautiful spring-evening post-work gardening planned, followed by romantic dinner with husband

The next day, Michael of all people himself was mowing our lawn, and he saw what he called "the attack woodchuck" just before he might have mowed over him — the chuck chunk of butter had made its way from the garden at bottom of the road to the top of the driveway by the house. He agreed: weird. Peg comes. Leather gloves, 5-gallon bucket...groundhog grounded, whistle-pig dixied, woodchuck chucked inside.

I thought it *looked* weird too; the Little Prince brown lumpiness and powerful

paws of the groundhogs of highway-side fame were instead silver-tipped fur and soft black kid gloves, with an indefinite tail, not short not long not full not spiky...an aura of mystery and mystified.

Bottom line: gardening and romantic dinner scuttled, 45-minute drive to rescue doctor with crated groundhog in the boot of the station wagon instead. Doctor said, thank you (and yes, this is what they look like when they are babies). The gift of perspective.

Diagnosis: no bones broken. They warmed him and are keeping an eye on him, and hopefully will set him free. So, husband and I had burgers at the diner down the road. And you know what, it was very romantic.

CBN

Bits and Pieces of Our Past

[Editor's Note: This wonderful collection of Halcott historical tidbits has been broken into two parts. In September, we will print the second half. Thank you, Peg!]

"This Booklet is published by The Town of Halcott to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the American Revolution and the 125th Anniversary of the Establishment of The Town of Halcott."

So reads the first page of a thin booklet entitled *Halcott Valley 1851-1976,* published by a group of civic-minded Halcott residents who banded together to preserve historic bits and pieces of this valley. Emerson Kelly wrote about Maple Syrup. Claretta Reynolds on Boarding Houses. Audrey Johnson, the Grange. A dozen others included Ruth Kelder on the Church, and Donald Bouton on Farming.

The scant 16 pages hold an amazing amount of information. We learn of a Native American named Froman, who lived at the county line. The first apple trees were planted in 1816 at the site of Chris and Judy DiBenedetto's farm. There was a potash factory, a gunsmith, and a shoemaker. Horace Peet was a blacksmith; Cyrus Mead was mysteriously and somewhat horrifyingly identified as a "deaf turnkey dentist".

These pages hold the remarkable names of Sniffin Bellows, Buel Maben, Silas Lake, Embree Scudder, and Birdsall Moseman - all some of the dozens of the long line of Town Supervisors that preceded Ward Reynolds, Bob Johnson, Shirley Bouton, Jennifer Bouton, Innes Kasanof, and now, Alan White. ***PD***

"I never found a place I liked better."

Life stories by Virgil Streeter as told to Kurt and Sheila Reynertson

In early May, as the morel mushrooms and spring leeks began to peek through the ground and the tom turkeys could be heard calling for their mates, I had the privilege of taking Virgil Streeter out for an afternoon drive around our beloved valley.

We took the back way up from Margaretville, and when we hit the top of Dimmick Mountain Road, Virgil began to speak. In his distinct dialect, he recounted memories sparked by the surroundings we were driving past, in the place he has called home for over ninety years. Between the upbeat lilt of his voice and his countless

stories set in the beautiful Catskills, I could have listened to him talk all day.

Kurt and I met Virgil in 2007, in front of his uncle's former home on Elk Creek Road shortly after we purchased it. His cousin Shirley Finch, whom he'd grown up with and remained close to, lived next door. Little did we know at the time that we were meeting a local legend, and a man who would become a dear friend over the years.

NO HALCOTT FAIR THIS YEAR

Many of us know Virgil as an avid and skilled hunter. He would typically hunt six times a year for a variety of game, and "most of the time" came home with a deer. He says he used to hunt when there was "not a poster in town" (referring to the *No Trespassing* signs) and said proudly, "I went anywhere I wanted to." A typical hunting day could take him all the way over to the Balsam Mountain on foot. He says he loved to hunt wild turkeys the most, because they are so unpredictable; they're smart birds and have incredible eyesight. He and his hunting partner, Ray German, would go out at night to hear the toms calling and return the next morning to the spot where the calls were coming from. Sometimes he came home with two turkeys.

Reminiscing on his daylong roams reminded him in turn of Mike Todd, whom Virgil called "a real hayseed"—meaning, "a lot didn't mean too much to him." Todd used to log the hills over on Dry Brook and then send them down the Delaware River to be sold. That was back in the day when there was a railroad through Margaretville, but taking a stagecoach all the way to Kingston was not unheard of. Virgil himself drove a horse and buggy as a lad, and he told me that somewhere there's a photograph of his mother as a young bride traveling by horse and buggy on Elk Creek Road.

Virgil's grandparents, Ward and Bertha Streeter, were dairy farmers. Their farm at the end of Elk Creek Road was over three hundred acres of land. Everything in the fields was worked using horsepower and a plow. For a while, Ward planted potatoes —and he was good at it. The horse and plow enabled the planting, and the rewards, Virgil recalls, were twofold: nice big potatoes, and regular bragging rights to a successful harvest on the Fourth of July.

Ward originally built the late Shirley Finch's house on the farm for Virgil's parents, Smith and Ethel Streeter. Virgil, the baby of his family, was born at home on June 4, 1928, and lived in that house throughout his childhood. He remembers sitting with cousin Shirley on the big boulder in front of the house when they were kids, and has told us of sleeping in his grandmother's chicken coop (which stood where our fire pit is now) when the house was too crowded and hot. His uncle, Kenneth Streeter, worked on the family farm for $100 a month. Virgil remembers he was paid $5 a day to work on the farm himself.

Meanwhile, he attended school with up to twenty other children at the top of Elk Creek Road— one of four one-room schoolhouses in Halcott at the time. His teacher was Lenore Kittle, who lived at the corner of Red Kill and Little Red Kill, an area known back then as Bedell. "She was very strict," he commented, with a little fear in his voice.

Virgil moved to "the Post Office" when he was fourteen years old. His mother,

Ethel, was the postmaster for twenty-eight years at the former Halcott Center post office, located in the building which still stands at the corner of Route 3 and West Settlement Road near the town line. (In 1985, the 12437 zip code was retired and mail service was merged with the 12430 post office in Fleischmanns. She also ran a general store in the next room. He remembers the bread distributor saying his mother sold more bread than anyone else on his route. (But he thinks that it was likely because it was the only store around for miles!)

Ethel died in 1983 at the age of eighty-seven, and is buried in the Halcott Cemetery next to his father, Smith, who died nine years earlier at the age of seventy-eight. His grandparents, Ward and Bertha; great-grandfather Andrew; Aunt Albertine; and daughter Wanda are all buried in the Bedell Cemetery on Little Red Kill Road.

As a teenager, Virgil began to learn logging. Using a six-foot-long, two-handled saw, he helped clear some of the fields in Halcott that you still see open today. Some trees were so big, he recalls, they would have to take one handle off the saw to take them down. He got strong really fast. "You'll never find trees that big anymore," he said. He also helped cut the orginal ski trails at Belleayre Mountain.

Virgil was also put to work creating boards, using a new steam engine sawmill his grandfather had bought. While he was a hard worker, he was also a cautious one. When he noticed the conveyor belt starting to fray, he told his Uncle Kenneth that he didn't want to be anywhere near the mill until it was replaced. Kenneth eventually bought a new belt, but before he got around to switching it out, the worn-out belt broke, sending Virgil and his uncle running out of harm's way.

After he got married, Virgil built a house in Margaretville on Route 3 (close to his current residence), where his three children, Wanda, Wilma, and Wendy, were raised. Farther up the road in Franklin, his brother Winton ran two huge dairy farms of his own, until his untimely death at the age of forty-two, when he was killed by a drunk driver on Oneonta Mountain while driving home from a social visit.

Virgil became a member of the Newburgh Local labor union, and worked with them for decades. With the union, he built roads and buildings, installed asbestos, laid sewer lines, and worked on the development of the reservoirs. In preparation for the Pepacton Reservoir, he assisted in the burning down of countless homes and buildings left empty after whole communities were relocated, including his own brother's first dairy farm in

Margaretville. “We would punch holes into the sides to get a good air flow, then throw in a few torches. Boy, they burned up fast,” he recalled.

Perhaps most famously, Virgil worked as a rock driller during the building of the drinking water conduits that run from the Catskills to New York City. He told me that up to a ton of dynamite per day was used to drill open those tunnels. Pumps were employed to decrease the risk of flooding, as the tunnels were two hundred feet underground, where water continuously runs. In some spots, they would drill right under ponds or lakes. “It wasn't the safest place to work,” he said. “We lost a couple guys down there.“The teams would drill four miles in each direction simultaneously, and when two tunnel segments met, “they were on grade,” he marveled.

Virgil stopped working in June 1993, and has been enjoying retirement for the last three decades. He also received settlement money from a class action lawsuit against asbestos manufacturers; the industry famously hid evidence of the dangerous health effects of the toxic mineral. Virgil was told by his doctor that his aversion to smoking likely saved him from contracting lung cancer.

Virgil was also an avid maple syrup maker. At one point, he had 1,500 taps in place behind his grandparents' house. Most of the hillside is hard maple (also called sugar maple, which makes for better syrup than soft, or silver, maple). He ran the syrup lines down the hill, across the road, and into the barn that they used for a sap house. One year the sap ran so fast that even with a 1.25-inch pipe, "it ran like a firehose for four hours straight!" They had to start boiling immediately because they would frequently get so much sap they ran out of room to hold it all. He did all the work, but split the product fifty-fifty with his aunt Willa Bell.

As most of our townsfolk know well, honey was another longtime passion of Virgil’s (see ***The Times of Halcott*** Summer 2008 issue). He learned the ropes from Paul Ballard of Roxbury, who put Virgil to work prepping countless frames and moving bee boxes, which weigh up to eighty pounds. For forty years, Virgil kept bees on his property on Elk Creek Road, and sold jars of the golden elixir at his home, the Post Office, where his honey sign still hangs today. Then, once the bears got to be too much of a nuisance and the heavy boxes became too bothersome for Virgil’s knees, he called it quits.

As fate would have it, soon after that, Kurt and I moved into his uncle’s home – and brought along our bee hives, as we too are beekeepers. When Virgil spotted the familiar boxes, he stopped his truck and struck up a conversation with us, his new neighbors. He warned us about the bears who would likely sniff out the goods. Alas, he was right. Despite being shocked by an electric fence, one visitor was one too many, and we retired the hives to New Jersey, where they are happy today.

The great tradition continues, though, with Halcott’s newest and talented beekeeper Sydney Asher, daughter of Travis and Denise Asher and great-granddaughter of the late Dorothy Todd.

Life Along the Five Roads Over the Mountains

Pattie Kelder

Author’s note: Information for this article has been drawn from interviews, from Donald Bouton’s ***By the Light of the Kerosene Lantern,(BTL****) and from various maps and articles. It may be skewed and incomplete. Reasons include the loss of historical records from the collection of Town Historian Audrey Johnson, dwindling numbers of Halcott residents age 80 and older, limited*

opportunities (so far) to interview long time Halcott residents, and loss of Greene County maps from Hurricane Irene flooding. Research quirks included misspellings on maps, dwellings that didn't yet exist on maps, and other curious anomalies. If you remember details, please help TTOH fill in the blanks and make corrections.

Part 1: The Roads

Impetus for this article was a piece of information former resident, Sylvia Dymond, spotted in the inaugural issue of ***The Times of Halcott*** (p.4, the first bound volume of **TTOH**). A 1972 report written by Audrey Johnson about town roads dating back to the 1820's stated, in part, "(The) Vly Road [*now Bouton Road*] . . . area was the center of town. Most of the people lived in that section and there were five roads over the mountains that led to Vly Road." Sylvia remembers a lot about her childhood in Johnson Hollow, including the whereabouts of some of those mountain roads. The others, however, posed a challenge. The quest was on!

According to retired officials and former snowmobilers from the other side of these mountains, Halcott seems to have had four direct routes to Lexington by way of routes wholly within Greene County. Maps clearly show three outlets on the other side. These were Beech Ridge Road South (formerly BRR #2), which intersects State Route 42 at the bottom of Deep Notch by Westkill; Beech Ridge Road North (formerly BRR #1), which intersects State Route 42 at a bridge two miles closer to the Lexington village; and Mosquito Point, which intersects State Route 23A just north of Lexington. (Note: North and South Beech Ridge Roads connect to form a loop.) Additionally, side roads from these routes provided far less direct access to Vly Road by way of Townsend Hollow from Pine Hill, Silas Lake Road from Vega, and so on.

Using 20th century road names, Audrey's five routes stemming from Vly Road may have been: (1)the end of Turk Hollow, to Condon Hollow (Lexington, now closed), to Beech Ridge Road South, to State Route 42; (2a) a point above the mouth of Mead Road, to its left fork at the top, to Brown Street (Lexington), and (2b) likewise to the right fork at the top of Mead Road, to Minew Road (Lexington),with both forks converging on Beech Ridge Road North, then to State Route 42; (3) the full length of Vly Road through the fields to the top of Mead Road, to Minew Road (Lexington), to Beech Ridge Road North, to State Route 42; (4) the end of Greene County Route 3 (formerly known as Halcott Mountain Road, not to be confused with Halcott Mountain itself, which overlooks upper Elk Creek from the south), to Greene County Route 2 (Lexington), to State Route 23A at Mosquito Point.

By the way, the road connecting Mead Road by Ward (now Alan) Reynolds' house to Vly Road by the elder Marshall (now Russell) Bouton house originally went across the fields as the crow flies, not along the other side of the creek from the Halcott cemetery as it does now. Road Superintendent, Russell Bouton, had to open the fields again to travel in 2011 when Hurricane Irene closed the newer paved portion of Route 3 behind the cemetery. That paved section extending from Reynolds to the Y below Turk Hollow Bridge constructed in 1900 (***BTL*** p. 96) was built by hand and known as "the dug way".

Unless (2a) and (2b) above were considered two separate routes, or unless similar converging roads near Mosquito Point were counted as multiple routes, the matter of identifying the fifth road over the mountains involves considerable guesswork. There have

been reports of one or more additional routes leading from Hubbard Road and/or Johnson Hollow Road over Bear Pen Mountain to the head of Vega (Delaware County) and then on to Windham (Greene County). Yet neither a 1960 topographical map (courtesy Al Doubrava) nor an 1867 map (courtesy Christl Johnson) nor 1959 aerial photos (courtesy of Tim Johnson) give any indication of such a road. Still others have questioned whether the road leading to the head of Elk Creek could have continued over the mountain. Maps show a very short distance from there to Condon Hollow (Lexington), but it would have involved a steep ascent and descent topping out at an elevation of 3,320 feet.

Part 2: Life on Turk Hollow

By1950, more than a century had passed. Vly Road and its surrounds had become the upper end of town. Turk Hollow no longer had anyone named Turk living there. Libby Kelder gave my parents her adjacent building lot in 1955. Neighbors, Charlie and Gert Kratochvil, had built their home further up the road, diagonally opposite, where they had been given about an acre of the Bill Scudder farm alongside the road before reaching the farmhouse. Charlie who had left home in Manhattan as a teenager, ended up in Halcott after being discharged from the Army at the start of WWI due to his age. The Scudder farm, where he was the farm hand and Gert was the cook, was one of five farms on Turk Hollow at the time. While building their house, the Kratochvil's lived in a tiny building next to Libby Kelder at the mouth of the hollow, most likely Thee Mabey's shoe maker shop (photo, ***BTL*** p. 57,). Water was carried daily to both locations from a spring belonging to the elder Marshall Bouton up by the Scudder farm. (Note: Leighton Scudder was the 4th generation owner of a different farm on a different road.)

In 1960, a US Geological Survey map belonging to Al Doubrava lists the following structures beginning at the head of Turk Hollow:

. . . . Lean To; G. Pagano J. Gulyas (L. Ackerman + guest house A. Temmer) Hunting Cabin W. Scudder C. Kratochvil; Hunting Cabin, V.Pagano (T.Randazzo); F.Warnetz W.Ballard S.Kratochvil A.Kelder E.Kelder

By then, the Scudder farm had been turned over to Donny Ballard who lived across the road from the farmhouse. The farmer's daughter, Ethel, had already married Smith Streeter and moved down the valley where their home housed the most recent Post Office, a little store and a gas station. Son, Virgil, tells me their courting days included travels by horse and buggy over the mountain at the end of Turk Hollow to dances in Westkill!

Al Doubrava recalls boyhood summers with his Aunt Gert and Uncle Charlie. He and his cousins played in the farm ice house. The ice was harvested from Lake Switzerland and stored in sawdust. Virgil recalls something else about Al's cousins. At some point, Charlie acquired some dynamite. When his sons discovered it, they hung it in a tree and shot at it to see if it would detonate. You, along with half of Halcott at the time, know what happened. Virgil Streeter remembers that it put out the window lights on Gert's and Bessie Ballard's houses. Bill Ballard was asleep on the couch at Bessie's at the time and landed on the floor. And Gert's dog hid under the trees at the edge of the property for a week.

One summer night, probably in 1956, lightning turned our kitchen blue while Mom was washing dishes. She hurried to the cellar and told Dad to turn off the vacuum cleaner. Dad didn't fully grasp all the fuss and bother until the next day when he heard a cow had

perished at the Warnetz farm and a dog was hit on a porch over toward Mead Road. That may be why Dad never cut the big ash tree by the garage. Fortunately, his belief that it was a natural lightning rod did not require further testing.

Dad, who worked at the creamery where the Highway Department is currently housed, knew of 33 (or maybe 35) farms in Halcott in the 1950's. Gradually they went out of business. Farms at higher elevations, such as the one owned by Donald Bouton's great, great Uncle Jacob Miller (***BTL*** p. 83) seemed to disappear first. Marylou Pagano recalls Donald showing her the farmhouse foundation and telling her Jacob's daughter walked from there to teach at the schoolhouse on Silas Lake Road (***BTL*** p. 82). One can still see the site of the farm marked by the partially cleared fields on Vly Mountain. Earlier farms, like Jacob's, included more hogs. Al has seen the ruins of Jacob's pig sty as well as those of a very large one formed by a stone wall triangle shortly after the paved road ends.

Turk Hollow geography posed occasional confusion. As a hunter, Al had heard references to Sleeping Lion Mountain, but couldn't locate it. Finally, hiker neighbor Peter Temmer solved the mystery. A publication of The Adirondack Mountain Club listing Sleeping Lion (3408') and South Vly (3360') Mountains showed Sleeping Lion right behind their houses! Other confusion involved the elder Victor Pagano, who purchased the Amos Avery farm (previously owned by L. Turk) at the end of Turk Hollow in 1956. Believing the dirt road beyond his house was part of his private property, he invited the elder Darwin Faulkner to hunt elsewhere in the fall. Darwin, a local resident, knew the road to be public because he had built it! Further up the mountain was a privately owned hunting cabin right in the middle of state land and beyond that was a lean to, built by Grangers and one of the projects that won the Grange a national award in the late 1950's.

In time, the road to the top of Turk Hollow became overgrown. This may have played into the hands of the bank robbers a decade later. The robbers hid a getaway motorcycle on Condon Hollow before the heist, then hid it again before emerging on this side. Rumor has it that the loot did not emerge with them. Claretta Reynolds, seeing people on foot, offered them a ride to Fleischmanns, as people did in those days. How embarrassing to her son, Greene County Undersheriff Ward Reynolds, who was tracking down the crooks!

In 1965, President Johnson signed the Highway Beautification Act. Lady Bird Johnson used this project to identify routes for scenic highways to help make America beautiful. Believe it or not, one of those highways was supposed to meander around the ridges on the upper end of Turk Hollow and on over to Westkill. A proposed road over the ridge on the north side of Turk Hollow was on county maps that were ruined by flooding in 2011. It is not certain whether that proposal was the federal route or an unrelated county route. Either way, Russell Bouton reports flags being placed throughout the fields on his end as markers. According to scuttlebutt, no road was ever built because local politics interfered with the plan, a modern day David and Goliath scenario. Other theories, however, have suggested our turn for a road occurred at the close of the Johnson Administration when the project was running out of funding.

Meet Your Neighbors

R. Nemo Hill and Julio M. Perea

Three years ago April 13, Nemo and Julio bought the beautiful old Crosby house on

the soft curve in the road south of the Grange Hall, surrounded by cows on all sides, and became full-time Halcott residents. Built in 1824 by Wallace Crosby for his family, "the stone house" has a two-feet-thick foundation the footprint of which was used to create likewise ample windowsills (or seats) from top to bottom. The sprawling front porch is the perfect perch for sunrise, sun, shade, and breezes all day, and a view of the ups and downs of our valley's movements; Nemo and Julio say that the porch is what sold them on the house. They bought it from Carol Okon, who lived there for many years with her husband, Mike; Mike ran a trophy-making business in the building out back for a long time, and his roadside shingle was a familiar and beloved sight to all of Halcott.

(We think the house is the second oldest in Halcott, after the now-gone 1809 Van Valkenburgh house on the site of Ben and Judy Patrusky's house, and is thus the oldest standing house in town.)

Nemo grew up in Massapequa, Long Island. After high school, he went to San Francisco for a span in the seventies. First and foremost a poet, he experienced the explosive peak of that city and era's art and culture; for work, he was a baker (I happen to know he's also an excellent cook). Next, he moved back to New York, where he lived for thirty-five years on the famous Indian restaurant block of 6th Street in the East Village. There in the hood and on the art scene he met Halcott's own Willy Baer of Elk Creek and became lifelong friends with him and his wife, Alex Brock. He started working in the import/export field, specializing in Balinese crafts. That led to a focus on fabric sales and more extensive travel to Burma, Thailand, and other parts of Southeast Asia.

Meanwhile, Julio, who grew up in Silver City, New Mexico, completed a degree in photography at Parsons School of Design. Some of his early post-grad work was in fashion photography, including for big-brand companies like Estée Lauder, and that led to management (men's suits division) in the high-end company Paul Smith. Next was another pivot to graphic design and a new high-powered career working for more big names, including Crème de la Mer and Aveda. Corporate life loved him, but he didn't love it, and after he put in his time, he left the field and embarked on a year of world travel. He had stints living in Florence, Italy, and in Belgium; cashmere connections from Paul Smith brought stays in Nepal (and ongoing vending for their current business).

Fate finally crossed Nemo and Julio's paths fifteen years ago, when they met at a local bar in the East Village. (I didn't ask and could have followed up, but I prefer wondering how long in that conversation it took for them to realize that they had textiles in common.) Four years ago to the day as I write, they got married (happy anniversary!). They soon left the city and moved to the house Nemo grew up in to be caregivers for his mother in her final years. A few years after her death, they started looking for a house upstate. Many visits to Alex and Willy had put Halcott on their radar, and they started working in the area with local realtor hero Erik Johanson, but weren't seeing anything in Halcott; they realized that was their dream. Eventually, Erik connected them with their historic, wide-porched stone house.

By then the couple had been combining their expertise in fabric import/export, but straight trading of the high-end goods was a tough market. Nemo's sister, Jude Hill, a well-known and very successful designer (check out

her Instagram site, Spirit Cloth—special attention, quilters!) recommended they learn the special art of indigo-dyeing, and make their own pieces. And so they did. Their company is called Exot Blue Dyers (exotblue.com) and they have brought life and art back to Mike's former trophy-making space out back. There they mix indigo dye and create beautiful one-of-kind pieces, including extra-fine, extra-soft Thai silk scarves with gorgeous patterns, as well as hats and T-shirts and upcycled, "overdyed" shirts starting with cool old T-shirts from thrift stores.

Indigo-dyeing (the overall method is called *shibori* in Japanese, and is actually a kind of tie-dying) has a fascinating history. Made from a tropical plant, its famous blues come in tones and tunes and moods of every imaginable shade. There are various recipes; Nemo and Julio start with reduced indigo crystals and mix them with the chemical compounds thiox and soda ash, plus hot water. This mix develops a greenish fuzz called the "flower," and a dip of white fabric into the dye at this point will in fact come out chartreuse; oxidation is what brings out the blues. Color-stopping chemicals and other techniques are used to create the patterns. Forms cut from Plexiglas or wood are clamped to carefully folded and pressed squares of fabric to prevent oxidation and produce the patterns. Something as simple as a triangle form can turn into repeated diamonds – and each one, because of the action of the air from outer to inner layers, is full of nuance.

In the pre-Covid-19 world, the business revolved around travel to trade shows; currently it's mostly an online life, and they have added a new company especially for unique (and I have to say, dazzling) indigo quilting squares; visit https://threadcrumbs.bigcartel.com. They also have a poetry publishing imprint called Exot Books.

Nemo and Julio have also been a wonderful asset to our community garden, shaping the landscape with flowers and veggies and working tirelessly, there as in the beautiful gardens at their home. I caught them foraging last fall for local specimens that they are using in dye experiments, including goldenrod, sumac, and the currently ubiquitous poppy member, greater celandine. Their passion for the natural beauty, serenity, and special qualities of our town are vivid and inspiring.

If you see them on their porch, give a wave, and meet your neighbors! ***CBN***

SUMMER PASSAGES

Pattie Kelder writes: Adam Johnson, (grandson of Garold and Lena Johnson, who lived in the house that is today owned by Karen and Jim Rauter) is a gifted artisan who also loves to bake. He has a farm stand this side of Oakley's in the building which says DeBari Floors and More. The hours are generally 9 - 3 daily. Deliveries come on Thursdays. Many of the wares are made by him. He sells fresh veggies, a few fruits, home baked goods (rolls, pies, cookies, fudge), home made snacks (flavored popcorn, kettle potato chips), herbed butter, frozen local meats, honey, maple syrup, leather crafts (purses, pouches, wallets), some small wooden and ceramic bowls, and more. Drop by to shop locally.

And don't forget the Two Stones Farm Store located at 1060 Main St, Fleischmanns and operated by Alan and Robin White. They feature local goat, sheep and cow cheeses, local meats, ice cream, milk from Chris and Judy, hand woven scarves and other wonderful stuff. Open Saturdays and Sundays, 1PM to 4PM.

The Times of the Halcott United Methodist Church

Summer 2021 ***Pattie Kelder, Correspondent***

The Times of the Halcott United Methodist Church

Updates Galore!

Local children were given **Easter in a Box** gifts to ease confinement. We **worship** at 9:00 a.m. with a Lay Servant while awaiting a new pastor. We can **sing** again in worship (still masked and socially distanced at press time). We have permission to hold **church dinners** again (take-out only at press time). We can enjoy **geraniums** at the church and Grange Hall one last year before Todd's Greenhouse closes. We have a new **Cookbook** for sale for a modest $11 each. **Prayer requests** have been going out by email. **Cards** have been sent, just not signed by everyone. How may we be of assistance to you and yours?

Good Neighbors

I can still hear Bob Johnson, as Master of Greene Valley Grange, asking if anyone was "sick or in distress". It was a standing order of business to know just enough about your neighbors to be able to offer help in times of need. The United Methodist Church of that generation had a similar function known as Membership Care. Keeping in touch with each other created awareness. Looking out for others was cultivated into a way of life.

I clearly remember our family needing help. At 2 ½ years old, I had spiked a high fever and was lying on a towel on the kitchen table for an ice bath while my hungry baby sister howled in the high chair. Mom couldn't tend both of us. Neighbor, Gert Kratochvil, came to the back door asking, "What can I do?" and Mom said, "Feed the baby." Gert later said she was walking home from visiting my grandmother on the corner and just had the feeling she should stop in. How did she know?

A few months earlier, my grandmother, Libby Kelder, had been the one in need. A spark had flown from her burn barrel, setting the surrounding area ablaze. Shirley Bouton, about to deliver Dennis, came down one road with a broom while Mom, about to deliver Janet, likewise came down the other. They and my grandmother put out the fire. How did these mothers arrive in time, then endure the workout without going into labor?

Years later, after Darwin Faulkner returned from Virginia to his house by the Turk Hollow Bridge, I came across him in his yard. Unable to breathe or reach anyone by phone, he had dragged himself outside, intending to lean on the car horn. I ran on down to Dot Bush, who had a spare tank of oxygen and a spare tube that he could use while waiting for the ambulance. Why was I walking by at that moment? Why were necessary supplies available, and why so nearby?

More recently, in October, Mom slid to the floor and couldn't get back up. I asked my brother to phone half a dozen folks who had previously offered help. Five people arrived within minutes. What a tremendous blessing, but why were they all home when needed?

Little by little, people began to drive to jobs out of town and lose track of neighbors. People just became too busy to drop in on one another or pick up the phone to say, "Hi." In

the 1990's, a discount food package program, Project Share, garnered new interest. Participating households qualified for the discount by spending an hour or two per week visiting neighbors and lending a helping hand. Children were once again taught to think beyond the ends of their noses. The pace of the rat race eased. Everyone benefitted.

The other day I visited an 89 year old widowed friend from the other side of the mountain. She became a Greene County Citizen of the Year by living out neighborly precepts. A lifelong giver, her ongoing search for needs to address reminds me of Rev. Ralph Darmstadt. He still follows his father's advice, "Ralph, if you see something that needs doing, you do it." Sadly no one noticed when my friend recently needed help. Not *a single* phone call came, not even from a church member. Could keeping in touch be a slipping art again?

As I came home from that visit to a quiet house, I wondered about the future here in Halcott. It wasn't so long ago that Hurricane Irene tore through (August 28, 2011). The late Shirley Finch was stranded in Elk Creek without a phone for two weeks. The Fire Department had checked on her *before* the phone went down, but there was no *follow up* by neighbors afterward.

Does anyone consistently pay attention these days? Well, the fact is that *Someone* does. We have a Friend who sticks closer than a brother, who is always with us. He is on the lookout for helpful neighbors. How should we respond? Keep in touch with each other, make some offers, and expect to receive Divine prompting. Then be His hands and feet of mercy.

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