



# HABITAT HAPPENINGS

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## **HFHOC celebrates our first official paid-in-full-family!**

***“It’s been a pleasure over the years,” say David and Laurel White.***

Editor’s Note: Although we have had three homeowners pay off their mortgages early in order to move, the White family is the first we’ve had that intends to keep living in their home. Below, Laurel White shares her happy and touching memories about their fifteen years as Habitat homeowners – now for keeps!

We got selected in May 1993. It took us 90 days to build our new house. We had the closing on October 3, 1993.

We had a lot of trees on our property. My mom, dad and brothers would come down and help cut the trees and clean up the yard where the hole for the crawl space was going to be. When the person came in to dig the hole for the crawl space it was all ready to go and he did not have to wait on us to get things out of the way.

Once the hole was finished Dave would lay the block for the crawl space. Our son Doug and I would help carry those heavy blocks and hand them to Dave. All three of us laid all the block for the crawl space. We worked on this every day and every night till they got this job done.

Mr. Dick Peinkofer told our son, Doug and me we would have to learn to walk across the board and help pound nails in plywood just like everyone else was doing. Before long we were walking across that same board as everyone else. We had to be real careful when we walked across that board.

When the time came to put up the frame Doug and I would ask the people, “How do you get the frame up and make it stay there?” This was the first house we had seen being built. The crew told us to stand next to the frame and when they started to walk we would walk with them and then someone would pound the nails to the board, and before we knew it we had all frame up and it stayed on its own.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 3**



***The Whites' former home (pre-Habitat)***

Once the blocks were done the people put this long board across the hole so we could get the plywood down for the floors. Once the boards were all down, the crew would carry plywood and nail the plywood to the boards. They did this till we had the plywood all the way across for the floor.



***At our October meeting, the Board presented the White family with a Certificate of Appreciation for exemplary homeownership. From left: Doug and David White, Norrie Beken, Laurel White, and Marie Hegeman.***

## I Have the Floor get it?

By Tom Norris, FORMER President

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This is my last letter as President. Our bylaws allow for a maximum of six years on the Board of Directors and then require at least a one year "time out." And so in November I will begin my time out and pass the baton of leadership to our new President, Jeanne Miller.

While I will be leaving the Board I will not leaving Habitat. I could not bring myself to leave such a great organization and such wonderful and caring people. I will continue my involvement working behind the scenes supporting our volunteers. If you believe in what we do and are proud of what we have accomplished – spread the word, tell others and invite them to join us. We need community involvement so that Jeanne and her team can make our affiliate more successful.

We always need Board members to provide new ideas and direction. In addition to needing those who build the houses there are many other needs and opportunities behind the scenes. What make us successful are the committee members, the ones who actually do the hard work. **Join us on the Board or join us in the trenches, just join us!**

My years as President have been most rewarding. Thanks to all whose efforts and support allowed us to accomplish so much. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped us at the work sites and to all the volunteers that worked behind the scenes and thanks to all the volunteers and friends of Habitat that participated in our many special events. Thanks to our many friends and local merchants who supported us financially. Thanks also to the many churches and the public and private organizations that allowed us to make affordable housing available in Otsego County.

Habitat is truly a community effort and all efforts are needed and appreciated, thank you!

Finally, I want to wish Jeanne Miller and the new officers the best of luck as they take us to the next level of success. Please join them and continue to give them your full support.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve!

**"To be happy at home is the ultimate result of all ambition" – Samuel Johnson**



## I Have the Floor, two!

By Jeanne Miller, BRAND NEW President

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I remember meeting Tom Norris at my first HFHOC board meeting just a few short years ago. I was impressed by his friendliness and the sure hand with which he steered the meeting. Over time, I was amazed by his encyclopedic knowledge of all things Habitat and the strength of his commitment to the work of the organization. I have seen him welcome many newcomers with the same attitude with which he greeted me – confident that we all have something valuable to contribute to the work of Habitat.

As I now take over as president, I am very much aware that Tom will be a tough act to follow. What I have learned over the past few years, however, is that I am definitely not in this alone. There are many dedicated supporters of Habitat on the board, on committees, at the worksite, and donating money. Tom, again, is a great example – after serving as president of the board for four years, he is now joining the Fund-Raising Committee and is continuing as a member of the Family Support Committee. As you read our newsletters, you will meet many other dedicated Habitat volunteers who contribute in multiple ways.

When I marched with HFHOC in the Oneonta Centennial Parade recently, I saw many people along the parade route applauding us and saying, "Thank you!" To those of you on the sidelines, I invite you to march along with us. Like Tom, I am confident that we all have something valuable to contribute to Habitat. And I truly believe in our motto, "Team work makes the dream work!"



**Newly elected President Jeanne Miller smiles as outgoing President Tom Norris thanks the Board for his farewell gift – a lovely desk clock that he can use to keep track of his time out! Tom, thank you for four fantastic years!**



**The Whites' Happy Memories (cont. from page 1)**

I would always provide lunch and drinks for the crew that was working on their house. One day Mr. Peinkofer was talking to me on what he would like to have for lunch one day. He told me he would like hamburgers, hot dogs, rolls, ketchup, mustard, sweet relish, chips, macaroni salad, and baked beans. But I didn't know that Mr. Peinkofer was teasing me about this! So the next day when lunch time came I served all the stuff he had told me about. Mr. Peinkofer and the other people could not believe that I really did this and were very surprised by what they had for lunch!

Mr. Bob Beken would always make us laugh. Mr. Beken always had a smile on his face and he sure was a happy person. Norrie Beken showed me how to paint the walls. Mrs. Beken would tell me not to worry about dropping any paint on the floor, because that would be covered with carpet or tile. If I got some paint on something that was not supposed to be painted she could just wipe it off since it was still wet. How Norrie Beken and I would laugh over this.

When it came time to pick out the carpet, Mrs. Alda Peinkofer would take Dave and me to get the carpet for our new home. Mrs. Peinkofer would suggest what kind of carpet to get but she would let us pick out the color they wanted for our new house. Oh how we would all laugh and have a good time as the day went on.

Doug would pick on Dick Jump and how they would laugh and have a good time together also. I can remember a man named Lou who had a hard time talking, and I have a hearing impairment. But no matter if you had a problem talking, deaf, hearing impaired, diabetic or other problems you might have, or what color the people were, everyone was treated the same way. It made us all feel so good to be able to work together with all different kinds of people.

I remember having a surprise birthday party for Dave. Everyone would bring something for lunch and when we were getting ready to bring out the cake, Bob Beken, Dick Peinkofer, and Dick Jump took Dave into the new house to show him what it was going to look like when it was all done. When Dave came out of the house he was so surprised to see the birthday cake, and all of us sang Happy Birthday.

Mr. Peinkofer was the boss, and we all knew where we stood with "His Majesty". When Mr. Peinkofer would tell us to do something we all would raise our hands in the air, bow down, and our hands would go down in front of him while we'd say, "Yes, Your Majesty," and we would all laugh. But we all did what Mr. Peinkofer told us to do no matter what!

We just could not have asked for a better crew. Oneonta Job Corps helped us with the yard work and everyone did such a beautiful job.



***We held a mortgage-burning ceremony during the October Board meeting. Dave and Laurel present their final payment to Assistant Treasurer Mary Ann Dowdell.***

Finally, we got ready to do the dedication ceremony before we could move into our new house. Rev. Reese Griffin and Bob Beken did a ceremony. Rev. Griffin said a prayer, sang "Bless This House," and gave us a Bible and a "Footprints" clock. Then we put on a pot luck lunch for everyone. It sure was a very cold day, but everyone still had a good time.

We would like to thank everyone for all their help for letting us get this beautiful house. Without your help we would not know where we would be at today. We are sorry that Dr. and Mrs. John Huckins (Laurel's folks), Mr. Bob Beken, and Mr. Dick Peinkofer are not here to celebrate this very special day with us and with Habitat people. But we are sure they are looking down from Heaven, watching what is going on, and they are very proud to see the White family paying off their house and there are a lot of smiles going on also.

We will never forget what Habitat did for us. When we needed them, they helped us build a house. From the bottom of our hearts we would like to thank you all for giving so many memories to us. It is something we will never forget. We thank God every day for this lovely home and it sure makes us feel so good to have this special house.

We are so glad to have the house paid off and now we can say this is our home. We will miss Habitat for Humanity, but we are sure we will be seeing the people around as time goes on.



***The Whites in October, 1993 with their new home.***

## What's happening? The latest news from HFHOC



**Never can say goodbye dept.:** October marked the end of service for four long-tenured members of our Board. Shown in the photo far left are PR Chair Loraine Tyler (three years), Treasurer Rich Tyler (six years), President Tom Norris (six years), and Family Selection Chair Susan Melchior (six years). However, all four are staying very active with HFHOC. Loraine and Susan will continue in their posts as committee chairs, Rich is joining the PR Committee, and Tom will be on the Fundraising and Family Support Committees.



**Wilkommen, Bienvenue, Welcome, Come on in dept:** Say hello to our four brand-new Board members! Shown in the center photo left is Peg Fowler, who has volunteered with us since 1998. Peg is a member of our volunteer and building committees, and is our new Board treasurer. Peg and her husband Dennis, also a Habitat supporter, live in Otego.



Next to Peg is Emily Ernsberger, who met us when she visited our booth at the Hometown Fourth of July celebration in Neawah Park. She brings a wealth of experience to the board, as she has been active with other Habitat affiliates in Michigan, and once participated in a Jimmy Carter Work Project. Emily is a member of our Fundraising and Volunteer committees, and she is employed by Hartwick College as the Major Gifts Officer. Peg and Emily joined the Board in October.

Also joining the Board in October was Kirsten Wolfe, who has volunteered with us since May. Seated next to her is Karen Joest, who joined the Board in November. Kirsten is a member of the Volunteer Committee, and she has also been elected our Board secretary for the upcoming year. Kirsten is employed as a residence hall adviser at SUCO.

Karen has been active with our affiliate for over a year. She joined the Board in November, and is chair of our Volunteer Committee. Karen is a professor in the Department of Human Ecology at SUCO. Kirsten and Karen are also co-advisors for the student HFH affiliate at SUCO.



**We know a good thing when we see one dept.:** HFHOC's Board of Directors unanimously chose Emery Herman (pictured at right, with Habitat supporter Marty Winsor) as the first recipient of our Volunteer of the Year award. Emery received a personal letter of congratulations from Jonathan Reckford, CEO of Habitat for Humanity International. The letter, quoted here, said in part: "[HFHOC] said

of you: 'Emery is an inspiration to us all. His quiet demeanor and consistent presence leads us all to greater commitment to Habitat. He has mentored two individuals to become site volunteers, then to join the Board and, finally, to become committee chairs. He has brought many from his hometown of Cooperstown to the site to volunteer.' *What a testimony! The time you have spent nurturing your fellow volunteers as well as your work with the partner families with the Habitat U program is truly valued and your leadership has been exemplary. Thank you, Emery, for being a leader. It is both inspiring and uplifting to see love and faith put into action...it's because of you – and others like you – that Habitat is reaching increasing numbers of families all across the globe and is building more than houses where we work. Thank you, Emery, for the selfless hand you play in that.* We're proud that Emery's worth was acknowledged by the top man!

## Ain't too Proud to Beg

Really, we ain't. This is a list of stuff that we sure wish we had. If you are of a mind to donate any of these things, we'd be proud to take it. And remember, your donations are tax-deductible and we can supply you with a receipt. *Call our office at 432-7874 and Trish will gladly talk with you about how you can help.*

### *Pennies from Heaven:*



Cash – we are always grateful to receive, in any amount. You should find a remittance envelope in this issue for your convenience. **THANK YOU!!**

### *All your worldly goods:*



We urgently need refreshments for our laborers. **Lunches**, morning snacks, and cases of bottled water, juice, iced tea, lemonade, and sports beverages would be terrific.

A gift of **LAND** – we need building lots all around Otsego County. Donations are great, but if you have some land you'd like to sell, we may buy it if the location and price are right.



We need people to volunteer behind the scenes on our family, fundraising, public relations, and volunteer committees. And people for our Board of Directors. For a relatively small donation of your time, you will receive a world of fun and friendship in return.

We would like a person who has the experience and contacts to promote us to local and county governments.

We would also like a person with photo/video experience who could develop a promotional video!

**And if you have specific building skills to bring to the site  
(and maybe a desire to teach or lead a small crew) – wow!**



***Christmas is coming -- buy our stuff!***



**Stop by our office to check out our Habitat merchandise – our NEW “Teamwork Makes the Dream Work” T-shirts, books, hammer-screwdriver sets, note cards – all priced to sell!**

It's all about you! Spotighting some of our supporters and friends



**THANK YOU**



*The SUCO Habitat affiliate, now in its third year, is a tremendous help to us. They are pictured above left, leading off our award-winning entry in the Centennial Parade – we won a \$100 prize for having the best non-profit entry! The students are also planning fundraisers, including selling shirts and raffles, planning an “Open Mic” night, and a Silent Auction dinner for faculty and staff.*

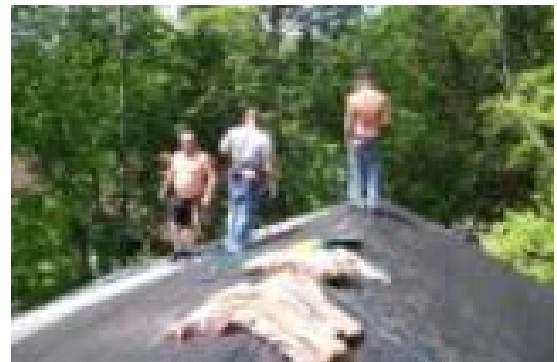
*The students also volunteer regularly at our worksites, and helped at the Wightman’s Lumber annual Open House on October 11. Shown above right are Kirsten Wolfe and longtime Habitat supporter Oscar Oberkircher at the Open House, where Wightman’s invites us each year to hold a refreshments fundraiser. This year’s fundraiser earned us almost \$500 – **thank you, Wightman, for giving us this opportunity!***



*Not pictured, but just as much appreciated, is the generosity of the Life Insurance Council of New York, Inc. For the past several years, as part of their annual fall meeting in Cooperstown, the LICONY spends part of their visit working on our houses, and presents us with a gift of \$1,000. We are very pleased and touched by their continuing support!*



*Our construction supervisor, Mike Lanza (left) is shown with Victor Carrascoso of the Otsego County Bar Association. About a dozen lawyers and their family members contributed a work day in August. Bar president Ellen Coccoma said that the Bar has adopted HFHOC as one of the community organizations to which they lend their official support. The Bar Association also held a fundraiser for us in March.*



*The Jerry B. Wilson Roofing Company was established in 1928. The name was changed in 1971 to Wilson Roofing Inc., and is now owned by Les Roe. They do residential, commercial and industrial roofing. This summer Wilson Roofing generously donated their employees’ services to our Monroe Avenue site. Pictured above, left to right, are Brad Honahan (employed six years), Dillon Foster (two years), and Jeremy Spallholtz (three months). Thanks to their professionalism and hard work, they finished the entire job in one day!*



## On the Level

By Marie Hegeman, Editor

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Two years ago, I became friends with a lovely woman named Betty. She was visiting from out of the area, had some wonderful childhood memories of the house, and just wanted to see it again. You see, she explained, our house used to belong to her great-aunt Katherine and uncle George. They bought the house in 1902, and lived in it for the rest of their lives – almost 70 years.

I've always liked old houses. I think they have "character," not only in their appearances, but because they carry the vibrations of everyone who ever lived in them. Living in an old house is sort of like joining a family. Meeting Betty was a wonderful gift, because I had always wished I'd known the others who called it home before us. Would we have liked them? What would they think of us?

Betty told us that her uncle George was a lawyer. So is my husband. He and her aunt Katherine didn't have children – neither do we. And Betty, describing the happy times spent there when she was a little girl, told me, "It was always a treat to visit Aunt Kate – she made every visit an occasion." Hmm - there are kids in our lives who feel the same way about us.

Over the next months, in telephone conversations, letters, and a couple more visits, Betty told us as much as she could remember about life in our house, and even gave me some photographs. We now have, in our dining room, a picture of a dinner party from the 1950s. Betty is seated around a big table with her family. I notice the layout, how different and similar at once. Family and friends smiling around a table, in the room where we've eaten twenty thousand meals, hosted hundreds of lunches and dinners, laughed and talked and ate too much.

My very favorite photo was taken in the living room, about a hundred years ago. Uncle George and Aunt Kate hosted a taffy pull. George is grinning, a dish towel wrapped around his head. Everyone with aprons and towels billowing over their clothes. I love seeing proof that Aunt Kate, who "made every visit an occasion," didn't mind if her guests played with sticky gloppy taffy in her formal living room. I display that photo in the exact spot where it was taken. The corner looks different now; we've installed cabinets and bookcases, but I look at the people and sense the warmth that's still there.



*Our living room, a century ago and now*

In 2002, when Tom and I remodeled our kitchen, we slipped an envelope into a crack behind the new kitchen sink and the wall. We put in photos of us, before-and-afters of the kitchen, and a letter with some stuff about our lives. Fifty years from now, when the kitchen gets torn up again, I hope whoever finds the envelope appreciates the surprise.

As much as I like the past, I also really like seeing the finishing touches put on a new Habitat house. Each one is a bright blank slate on which our families begin to write their histories. Maybe their children and grandchildren will live in them someday. Or maybe the houses will eventually pass to other hands, to have their histories continue with people who are not related. Or are they?

A hundred years ago, a lawyer and his wife bought and loved that house and lived in it for their entire lives. I think George and Katherine are happy that we live there now. And a century from now, I know our Habitat houses will hold the same sense of warmth and welcome for the families who care for them too.



## Awl About Us

Habitat for Humanity International is a Christian housing partnership that serves all God's people in need. The Otsego County affiliate was founded in 1989. Since then, we have built 25 houses.

We build on Thursdays and Saturdays, and everyone is welcome to help. Don't worry if you don't have skills; bring a willingness to learn and we'll teach you. **Our construction supervisor is Mike Lanza.**

OR, you can volunteer with one of the many committees that work behind the scenes.

Our Board meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at Elm Park UM Church, Chestnut Street in Oneonta, at 7pm. Stop by and learn more about what we're doing! Our officers and directors are:

President: Jeanne Miller  
 Vice-President: Mike Donahue  
 Secretary: Kirsten Wolfe  
 Treasurer: Peggy Fowler  
 Assistant Treasurer: Mary Ann Dowdell

Board members: Carole Alicino, Barbara Dauria, Bruce Downie, Emily Ernsberger, Janie Forrest-Glotzer, Karen Joest, Marie Hegeman, Bill O'Dea, Judy Thistle, Norm Tiffany, Alton Van Cleef, Steve Walsh, Bruce Ward, and Cecilia Zapata.

**Our office manager is Trish Dukes.**

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From our hearths to yours – wishing you all the warm comforts of the season.

## ***INSIDE THIS ISSUE***



***Who*** is our Volunteer of the Year?



***What*** did our award-winning Centennial Parade entry look like?



***Which*** family is our first to officially burn their mortgage?

***Details inside!***