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KAREN
ORLOFF



COMMENTARY

A look at the first barbecue

Today is the Fourth of July, a wonderful, patriotic holiday.

July 4th conjures up images of fireworks, flying flags and, of course, the first barbecues of the summer. Hot dogs and hamburgers will be cooked on grills all across the country.

I have to wonder (because that's just the way my crazy brain works) — what was the first barbecue like? Perhaps it went something like this:

Cave husband: Honey, you let the torch go out again. How am I gonna get the fire going? I've got a load of mastodon burgers here and nothing to cook them with.

Cave wife: So light another one.

Cave husband: Oh sure, you think that's easy? When was the last time you rubbed two sticks together, huh? You think making a fire is a piece of cake? This will take me all day.

Cave wife: Well you'd better start

*"It's the ONE THING we have in common,
the one thing WE ALL REMEMBER."*

ELIZABETH "BETSY" HAIGHT, resident of Woodland Pond



kind of appetites they have.
Cave husband: (Rubbing sticks.) True. Last time Bubba was here, he ate us out of cave and home. Hold on ... I think I got a spark here. Yesssss! FIRE!!!!

Cave wife: Will you please keep your voice down? They can hear you three caves over.

Cave husband: Oh yeah, this is a good flame, all right. Am I the fire king or what? (Does a little dance.) Pass me the first burger.

Cave wife: (Lugging huge burger.) This thing weighs a ton. Here you go.

Cave husband: Oh boy, it's sizzling now. Got any cheese?

Cave wife: What's that?

Cave husband: Never mind. I'm going to get a beer. Watch the fire pit for a minute, would you? (Leaves.)

Cave wife: Um, Sweetie, the flame is getting a little big. (Pokes at meat with twig.) I think the burger may be burning. Sweetie? Are you there? (No response.) I guess it's up to me. (She takes burger off fire and places on slab of rock.)

Cave husband: (Coming over, beer in hand.) What the heck are you doing? I'm the one in charge of the burgers.

Cave wife: It was burning. I had to take it off.

Cave husband: Well, it does look pretty good. (Takes a taste.) Ooga! Do I cook good burgers, or what?

Cave wife: You? What am I? Chopped liver?

Cave husband: You were my helper. But I am the master of my grill. Can you go and make the salad now?

And so the first barbecue was born. Enjoy your own on this Fourth of July.

Karen Orloff's books include "I Wanna New Room." Email her at kembo@aol.com. Her column appears every other Thursday.

LIFE DURING WARTIME

New book focuses on memories of WWII and Korean War

By **Jac Bergenson**

For the Poughkeepsie Journal

Albert Becker was 19 years old when he left his job as a cub reporter to join the United States Navy. A late bloomer from Oklahoma, he had never seen the ocean before.

But he grew bored of the "society and social stuff" he wrote about.

"I figured the war had the bigger stories," he recalls in his memoir, "Marooned for 46 Days."

Becker's memoir is one of 37 included in the newly released "Wartimes Remembered: World War II and Korea."

The book was written and edited entirely by residents of Woodland Pond, a retirement community in New Paltz.

Four of the stories were contributed by Poughkeepsie natives.

The book, which became avail-



Albert Becker

able through Amazon.com at the end of May, will officially celebrate its launch today, the 237th anniversary of the United States' independence.

This month also marks the 60th anniversary of the end of the Korean War, the setting of many of the included memoirs.

Others write about their time on aircraft carriers, on the sea and on the home front.

Poughkeepsie native Warren Church recalls the festivities of



"Wartimes Remembered: World War II and Korea," a book written and published by the residents and veterans at Woodland Pond at New Paltz, a senior living community in the mid-Hudson Valley.

Times Square on V-J Day. Pat Kirkpatrick, also of Poughkeepsie, re-

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Book

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members how his service during the Korean War helped him meet his eventual wife of 59 years.

Woodland Pond resident Ray Smith, and his wife, Anne, both 80, conceived the original idea for the 178-page book.

In a statement, Smith called the book "the whole story, from those who were in grade school to those who were fighting."

He said, "Some of the authors have not even shared these stories with their children or grandchildren before."

"Wartimes Remembered" opens with "Marooned," Becker's big story.

Becker, 90, retells how he escaped a sunken freighter, City of Flight, and drifted atop the ocean on a lifeboat with five merchant seamen and five Navy personnel for nearly seven weeks.

Each day, he and his 10 fellow castaways made a notch on the side of the boat.

Becker recalls that the men "worked very well together," despite near-insurmountable odds of survival.

"There was nothing to do when the weather was good," he said. "You just sit there and wait."

But on stormy days, "when we needed all hands on deck, we got all hands on deck."

After Becker's family had already held a funeral for him, a United States aircraft swooped by, the boat and a British



The residents and veterans at Woodland Pond meet to look at the hard copy proof of the book "Wartimes Remembered," a collection of personal stories from World War II and the Korean War that they have written. COURTESY PHOTO

destroyer scooped the survivors up.

Asked if he felt an overwhelming sense of joy upon being rescued after so long, Becker exclaimed, "You'd better believe it!"

On the boat, "you were nothing. You'd just as well be dead." Becker likened seeing his family once more to "being alive again."

Those at home felt the impact of the wars as well, and their stories are given equal attention in "Wartimes Remembered."

Elizabeth "Betsy" Haight, a self-described "home front girl," had colorful memories from the World War II period, which ended just before she entered high school.

Haight recalls stories about her father, who "was gone a good part of the day and night," working two jobs during the war.

"Dad was down on the list," of people they called to serve, since he had three children and he spent a large portion of his time working at the Hamilton Standard Pro-

peller factory in Hartford, Conn., supporting the war effort.

Her father gladly accepted his role, as he and many other men back home "felt guilty that they weren't fighting. It was the least they could do."

Scarce resources meant they "rationed gasoline and butter and shoes," but Haight recalls a sense of community that permeated East Hartford, Conn., where she grew up.

"Most of the men, and women, too, had more

than one job," Haight remembered.

Haight's father and grandfather maintained a "huge garden," of which she fondly remembers the corn on the cob. When neighbors were unable to keep up their own garden, for one reason or another, her family distributed the bounty around.

Haight believes that "it's a good time for people our age" to tell their "wonderful stories."

Now that they live in a community at Woodland Pond, "it's the one thing

"WARTIMES REMEMBERED: WORLD WAR II AND KOREA"

By the residents of Woodland Pond (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 178 pages, \$9.95, available at Amazon.com)

we have in common, the one thing we all remember."

"I sit in awe," she said of the war stories her neighbors have shared with her.

Today's launch party kicks off at 3:30 p.m. at Woodland Pond's Market Basket.

Authors and editors, as well as family and friends, will attend. Copies of the book will be available for purchase. All proceeds go to the Woodland Pond Foundation, which benefits the residents of the community.

Woodland Pond's Resident Services Director Sarah Hull said the book can "teach people history in a way that a text book cannot; through personal accounts with emotion and detail."

"Everyone benefits from the sharing and preservation of the life stories," Hull said. "It is important that their experiences live on and are preserved for the next generation."

Jac Bergenson is a Journal intern: 845-437-4838, jbergenson@poughkeepsiejournal.com; Twitter: @JacBergensonPJ