



A Father's Day Tribute

Mark honors his dad, Ralph, with a walk down Memory Lane

"Don't buy too much stuff from New Jersey."

That was my dad's advice when I asked him for a Father-to-Son Father's Day quote. We were visiting in the store he and his brother Donald founded in 1960, just two years after their own father passed away.

Ralph Adams was born in Poughkeepsie in 1923, on a farm called Fair Acres on the Pleasant Valley Road, at the top of Brickyard Hill. Back in those days, a lot of local farmers, including my grandfather, worked during the off-season in the brickyard where the Arlington Fire Department now stands. Many of those farmers were Italian immigrants, growing tomatoes for the canning factory that eventually became the IBM main plant.

Our ancestors hailed from Calabria, and we were definitely not related to any old-line Bostonians.

As I was growing up on the family farm, my dad taught me by example – if you got off work at 5 p.m., that counted as a "day off." In the early days, everything we sold at the store was grown on the farm: apples, peaches, cherries, sweet corn, tomatoes, raspberries, you name it. Back then you couldn't buy fresh vegetables unless they were locally grown – maybe you still can't. We would harvest a couple hundred bushels of corn every day.

The "crew" was an assortment of school kids, transients and jacks of all trades. Over the years, I swear about 50 people named "Ruger" worked on the farm. My father

complained that all the good help left to work for IBM. Ironically, with the 1,000 good people Adams now employs, we might have more people than IBM in the Hudson Valley.

My father graduated from Cornell University with a degree in Pomology (the science of growing fruit). He was in the same class as a lot of local farmers who made a good living right after the Second World War – Ed Fitchett, Bill Plass, Warren Wigsten, Bog Greig. Dad never talked about his service in the war, as a navigator on a B-24 flying missions over Italy. He also never told me he was a track star at Arlington High. I found out when I broke his record in the mile (4:30).

In 1969 I borrowed my Dad's Ford Torino station wagon to drive some friends to the Woodstock Festival, promising to be home to pick corn at 6 a.m. Sunday morning. I made it back in time, leaving just as Jimi Hendrix was taking the stage.

One July Sunday in 1973, I told my girlfriend Sue to meet me in the cornfield at 10 a.m. We would be done with the early morning harvest, and I was sure my dad would give me the rest of the day off once he met my pretty new friend. Sue drove down in her new VW bug, and I introduced her to dad.

"Nice to meet you," he said. "Here's a pair of clippers. Get to work."

He wasn't kidding. And she still married me.

Now about that New Jersey advice. We



Ralph Adams, father of Mark Adams, visits the greenhouse filled with homegrown flowers. Photo by Mark Adams

hated to run out of fresh produce. But as the store got busier, sometimes we'd have to buy some stuff from New Jersey to keep up with demand. Following in my father's footsteps, Sue and I grow all the garden plants sold at Adams Fairacre Farms. This spring season has been the best ever for gardening – thank you, loyal readers – and we're running out of flower and vegetable

plants.

I hope I don't have to buy too much stuff from New Jersey. Happy Father's Day, dad.

Mark Adams is president of Dutchess Putnam Westchester Farm Bureau and New York State Representative for the nursery/greenhouse industry to the American Farm Bureau Federation.

A & E Calendar

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Museum of Rhinebeck History. To pre-order, contact Steven Mann at (845) 876-6892 or smann320@yahoo.com

MONDAY ~ JUNE 9

E-mail events to creativeliving@sutchessnews.com

TUESDAY ~ JUNE 10

E-mail events to creativeliving@sutchessnews.com

WEDNESDAY ~ JUNE 11

Commemoration of the Royal Hot Dog Picnic, Wallace Center, FDR Presidential Library & Home, Rte. 9, Hyde Park. Series of events celebrate the 75th anniversary of the 1939 British Royal visit to Hyde Park, during which the President & Mrs. Roosevelt famously served hot dogs to the King & Queen of England. Free tours to Top Cottage depart from Wallace Center at 11:10 a.m., 1:10, 3:10 & 5:10 p.m. Children's book presentation at Wallace Center ("Hot Dog! Eleanor Roosevelt Throws A Picnic" by Leslie Kimmelman and Victor Juhasz), 5 p.m. Hot Dog Picnic, 5:45 p.m. and author talk/book signing ("The Roosevelts and the Royals" by Will Swift) at 7 p.m. All events are free, and registration is required. Call (845) 229-5302 to schedule Top Cottage tour; call (845) 486-7745 to register for other events.

Music in the Parks, Staatsburgh State Historic Site, Old Post Rd., Staatsburg. Free lawn concerts, 7 p.m. This week: The Greyhounds. Call for rain location. (845) 229-8086

Gallo Park to host multicultural festival June 8

A free multicultural festival at Kingston's T.R. Gallo West Strand Park from noon to 4 p.m. June 8 will feature live ethnic music, dance and comedy, along with multicultural handicrafts, children's activities, food and drinks.

The Kingston Community Block Party, as the annual event in its second year is called, will include classic "all-American" foods such as hamburgers and hot dogs. Kosher options will also be available.

Participating groups will represent

cultures of African-Americans, American Indians, Eastern Europeans, Jewish-Americans, Hispanics and Latinos, and Americans of German, Greek, Irish, Japanese, Scottish, Spanish and Ukrainian origin or ancestry.

Children's activities will include arts and crafts, face painting, games, singing and storytelling.

In the event of rain, the block party will be held at the Andy Murphy Midtown Neighborhood Center, on Broadway at the

corner of Hoffman Street in midtown Kingston.

All entertainment, activities, handicrafts and food will be provided by more than a dozen community organizations representing a wide variety of racial, ethnic and cultural groups.

For more information, go to rehercenter.org or the Reher Center's Facebook page, [facebook.com/ReherBakery](https://www.facebook.com/ReherBakery). Information is also available at info@reherbakery.org and at (845) 338-8131.

Proscenium Works: 1979-2011

The legendary Trisha Brown Dance Company returns to SummerScape as part of its farewell tour, presenting some of the final performances of Brown's largest-scale works.

Program *Set and Reset* | *If you couldn't see me I'm going to toss my arms—if you catch them they're yours*

Sosnoff Theater June 27 at 7:30 pm | June 28 at 2 pm and 7:30 pm
Tickets start at \$25

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Image: *Set and Reset* ©Julietta Cervantes 2010