

The Legacy Expressed



HONORING, CELEBRATING, AND PROMOTING THE LEGACY OF ELEANOR ROOSEVELT



*In This
Fall-Winter
Issue*

WHAT WOULD
ELEANOR DO?

ERVK MEDALS
CEREMONY

LEADERSHIP
LEGACY
PROGRAM

ELEANOR'S
BIRTHDAY

ERVK

THE LEGACY EXPRESSED
IS PUBLISHED BY THE
ELEANOR ROOSEVELT CENTER
AT VALKILL

We have to talk... (and listen)

"We have to face the fact that either all of us are going to die together or we are going to learn to live together, and if we are to live together we have to talk."
Eleanor Roosevelt



So let's talk – about commonalities. "We have so much in common, it's a phenomenon. We could pool our resources, by joining forces from now on." Every day we are bombarded with hate filled talk, violence, unhealthy debate – you get the picture. What if we were committed to highlighting our similarities, using them to catapult us into a global phenomenon of social and economic cooperation, and world peace?

I am fascinated by how many people are surprised to know that others different from them could possibly think, do, act, enjoy and experience life the way they do. Why is that? One reason could be that we were taught, or learned instinctively, that differences between us such as race, color of our skin, hair type, eye color, sizes and shapes, religious, and political affiliations meant that we were the only ones who thought or acted in a certain way. Another could be that our way was not only the "only way," it was better than anybody else's. After all, we are unique beings and no one could possibly be like us, particularly when they look so different; or God forbid, follow a different religion or no religion, or vote as a Democrat, Republican, Independent, or Conservative or Liberal.

In reality, these differences make no difference, except what we make them mean. Traditionally, differences have not been viewed as a positive. Yet, most of us say that we want peace on Earth, goodwill toward men. Is that possible if differences are only viewed as negative? Differences seen as a negative have the potential of serving as an invisible wall, keeping out anybody or anything that doesn't fit our belief of the way it should be. Wars result when we insist that we all must be and think the same way. Killing innocent people just because they are different or not accepting of our beliefs happens more and more. Polarization runs rampant.

Are we different? Of course. And we have at least one thing in common. Very simply, we are all people. Webster defines people as "Human beings making up a group or assembly or linked by a common interest." It is easy to apply this definition to our own families and friends. Applying it outside that sphere may require us to step outside our preconceived notions and embrace the unknown. Sometimes the unknown can be scary. But, maybe, the unknown can provide access to what we have in common that has been shut away for so long while we were busy arguing about our differences and "why can't they be more like us."

"Individual freedom of thought and conscience, to hold and change beliefs, is an absolute and sacred right." Eleanor Roosevelt. Imagine the changes that could be possible if we committed ourselves to opening the door to the unknown, searching out what we also have in common instead of only how we differ. We could start small: all of us have parents, we are all alive, some of us have sisters/brothers, guilt lives in most of our homes, and we all go the bathroom. It doesn't have to be complicated. Life really prefers simplicity.

"This I know. This I believe with all my heart. If we want a free and peaceful world, if we want to make the deserts bloom and man grow to greater dignity as a human being- we can do it!" Eleanor Roosevelt

Kathleen Durham

Executive Director, since September 1, 2008

What would Eleanor do?

What do you think freedom from want means?

“Freedom from want means being sure that if you want to work, you can get a job and that that job will pay you sufficient to give you and your family a decent standard of living. A decent standard of living means that your shelter shall be adequate for healthful living; that your food shall be adequate and of the kind which will keep your family and yourself in good physical condition; that you shall have medical care as needed, by some method which your government may agree on; and that there shall be a margin of income to provide the necessary clothing, educational, and recreational needs.”

Everyone has a certain philosophy on which they justify their life. What is your philosophy?

“I do not know that I have any very well-thought-out personal philosophy. I think, perhaps, the thing I consider the most important, is to bring as little unhappiness into the world as is possible. All of us, at times, inevitably bring some unhappiness to other people. If we try, however, to train ourselves so that our approach to life shall be one of kindness and cheerfulness, I think we will contribute something to the general happiness of the world. In addition, I think perhaps another important thing for real satisfaction is the knowledge that whatever we do is done to the best of our ability, whether it is taking care of a baby, scrubbing a floor, or writing a scientific treatise.”

How can we be moral and spiritual leaders?

“It depends on what each of us does, what we consider democracy means and what we consider freedom in a democracy means and whether we really care about it enough to face ourselves and our prejudices and to make up our minds what we really want our nation to be, and what its relationship is to be to the rest of the world.

The day we know that then we'll be moral and spiritual leaders, and I imagine it's you people gathered here in this room who are going to do a great deal of the thinking and the actual doing because a good many of us are not going to see the end of this period. You are going to live in a dangerous world for a quite a while I guess, but it's going to be an interesting and adventurous one. I wish you the courage to face it. I wish you the courage to face yourselves and when you know what you really want to be and when you know what you really want to fight for, not in a war but to fight for in order to gain a peace, then I wish for you imagination and understanding. God bless you. May you win.”



THE 2009 ELEANOR ROOSEVELT VAL-KILL MEDALS AWARD 2009 HONOREES

This year we were fortunate to have four incredibly talented people serve as co-chairs of this very extraordinary event: Board members Tony Campilli and his wife Ginny, and Marc VanderHeyden, and his wife Dana. We are grateful to them for their time, talent and treasure.

2009 MEDALISTS ARE:

ANDERSON CENTER FOR AUTISM (represented by Neil Pollack)

champion of lifelong learning for children and adults with autism
successful progressive advocate of educational- cultural- social-opportunities
beacon of community - trust- connections- encouragement- dedication- support
provider of an enriched and positive climate that fosters continuous growth,
independence and social interaction



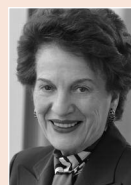
JEH JOHNSON

socially responsible architect, designer and inspirational teacher
forceful, untiring advocate for female and minority architects
builder of buildings that respond to "human emotional needs,"
designer of over 4,300 good-quality, low-cost housing units for underprivileged groups
improved the quality of the lives of thousands of Americans
committed to fairness and humane values in architecture and urban design



THE HONORABLE JUDGE JUDITH KAYE (formerly Chief Judge for New York State)

one of the country's most highly respected judges and influential jurists
of her generation
a legacy of visionary leadership
as a jurist, inspired state and national legal trends
presided over a sustained period of reform and innovation unique to the history of the state
ground-breaking work on behalf of children
created a 21st century court system that is fair, accessible, efficient, accountable, responsive
promoter of children's programs and diversity in the legal profession



THE HONORABLE MADELEINE KUNIN (formerly governor of Vermont & Ambassador to Switzerland)

author, speaker, advocate for education, environment and women's issues
breaker of glass ceilings when she won the first of three gubernatorial terms in Vermont
created early education programs for low-income children
established state-wide kindergarten programs for all public schools in Vermont.
protector of open spaces and farm land
public servant extraordinaire





ERVK MEDAL CEREMONY 2009

How could we decline the invitation to serve as co-chairs of the 2009 ERVK Medal Ceremony, especially when invited to do so by the ever-so-persuasive Executive Director who then promised us that she would convince our long-time friends, Tony and Ginny Campilli, to serve with us? This was, indeed, an offer we could not refuse, even though there were a number of times during the ensuing months that we questioned our sanity for taking on this challenge. Our goal was not only to make sure that this would become a memorable ceremony that would help attract and maintain lasting support for ERVK and the values it represents, but also to help raise funding for ERVK programs and operations. We not only exceeded our budgeted goal of \$113,000, we also made new friends.

The ERVK Medal Ceremony of 2009 represented another successful celebration of the legacy of Eleanor Roosevelt. In this 125th year of her birth, this past October's event --on the grounds of her cherished Val Kill cottage -- highlighted once again the enduring values of the "First Lady of the World."

Approximately 250 individuals from near and far braved the rainy weather outside the tent to attend this elegant celebration in an ambiance that was warm, cheerful, and inspiring. All medal recipients referred eloquently to Mrs. Roosevelt and shared precious footnotes of history with the audience who enjoyed their life stories, admired their courage, and applauded their embodiment of the values of the former First Lady. The festive event ended with a candlelight commemoration of our role model's birthday, as the medalists were flanked by alumnae of the Girls' Leadership Institute, which symbolized the passing of "Eleanor's torch" to future generations.

Co-chairs Marc and Dana vanderHeyden

BUILDING ON AND EXPANDING GLW...

THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT LEADERSHIP LEGACY PROGRAM

The Eleanor Roosevelt Leadership Legacy Program for boys, women and community builds on and expands 12 years of success preparing individuals for present and future positions of personal, political and professional leadership.

Girls Leadership 2009:

The Girls' Leadership Workshop reaches girls during a critical period in their development when many young women may become derailed by societal pressures, rigid gender-role expectations, and plummeting self-esteem.

Of the fifty-nine GLW 2009 participants, thirty-three self-identified as Caucasian or White, eight as African-American or Black, eight as Asian, five as Latina or Hispanic, three as Middle-Eastern, one as Indian, and one as Native American. Participants came from Jordan, North Korea, France, and thirteen different U.S. states. Eighteen of the girls (31%) live in the Mid-Hudson Valley area.

In the words of 2009 GLW graduate, Natasha Vega

"I first found out about the Eleanor Roosevelt Girl's Leadership Workshop at another leadership conference that was held at Ramapo for Children in Rhinebeck, NY. I remember seeing



Kathleen Durham who particularly stood out amongst all of the other speakers; she had a very exuberant personality. She looked passionate, confident, and best of all she looked like a leader. She talked about an amazing all girls' leadership workshop called EVRK-GLW. As she spoke about this camp and its overall goals that were designed to empower young women of the future by making them stronger and more confident leaders, I immediately felt a sense of empowerment and thought to myself "I have to get into that camp."

When I opened up my acceptance letter, I remember actually screaming and jumping up and down because I knew that this camp was a place for me; and I was not disappointed. The experience was remarkable; all of the girl's were passionate about the same things that I was, which allowed us to connect and interact with each other in a way that I had never experienced before. All of the girls were warm, welcoming, pleasant, and most of all were there because they were the best, and wanted to be amongst the best.

An Evening with Kati Marton & Tom Brokaw

On a beautiful early fall evening – September 30th – a sold-out audience was treated to a witty, moving, and at times very humorous conversation between author and former NBC News Anchor Tom Brokaw and human rights advocate, reporter and author Kati Marton at the Cosmopolitan Club in New York City. The evening, presented by ERVK, in honor of the 125th anniversary of Eleanor Roosevelt's birth, was a successful fundraiser in support of ERVK's Legacy Leadership Programs for girls, boys, women and community. Tom interviewed Kati about her childhood in Hungary during the revolution, her parents' work

as the last Western journalists to leave Hungary before the fall of the Iron Curtain, and the stories included in her latest book, released this fall, *Enemies of the People – My Family's Journey to America*. Following their talk, those in attendance enjoyed wine and hors d'oeuvre and had the opportunity to meet Kati and Tom, as Kati signed copies of her New York Times best-seller, *Hidden Power – Presidential Marriages that Shaped History*. Plans are in the works for ERVK to do an on-going series of similar events seasonally. Stay tuned, and visit our website for information on scheduled events: www.ervk.org.



We all lived for 9 days under the idea that “It is today that we must build the world of the future.”—Eleanor Roosevelt. We did this by listening to extraordinary female speakers who instilled different types of passions within us. Some installed the passion of teamwork, another of free verse, another of confidence, and another of knowledge; but all of these installations created extraordinary leaders. I left the camp with more confidence than I had ever had in my life and the idea that I could do anything I put my mind to. Through Eleanor Roosevelt, I was given power, hope, and clarity and I saw a path for the future. As I left the moving up graduation, I knew that it was my time to help “...build the world for the future.”

And from her mother, Michele Winchester-Vega:

From the moment I heard that there was an Eleanor Roosevelt Girls’ Leadership Workshop at Val-Kill, I wanted my daughter to attend. I was delighted that she had heard about it and was interested in it also.

My hope for Natasha was to re-expose her to Eleanor Roosevelt. Having taught at a graduate school of Social Work, I remember telling my students that Eleanor was more than a feminist... she was a peopleist...she championed so many causes for women, children, aging groups, ethnic diversity, gender identity, and all the other facets of human rights.

On the first day, our family arrived to get Natasha settled in for first sleep away experience. I kept saying Eleanor’s words to myself: “You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing you think you cannot do”. My own separation anxiety was over- ridden by being greeted by a group of positive, engaging, competent, and well organized women. I watched the process of their helpful collaborative interactions. With the support from staff and each other, the girls who were away for the first time were comforted, and by the end of the camp wanted to stay longer.

We were impressed with the quality and character of the women with whom we were leaving our daughter. We observed women collaborating, not competing; speaking confidently, not uncertain; looking at each other as they spoke, not over talking each other; listening, not just nodding; joining with each other; laughing; sharing; and best of all speaking the “same language” even if from different countries.

After visiting Eleanor Roosevelt’s house, I was left with the images of her writing her thoughts, and planning her strategic interventions to make a difference. I whispered “thanks Eleanor for making such a difference.” Thanks now to all the volunteers and staff for giving our daughter a wonderful experience and for ensuring that Eleanor’s legacy lives on and is honored for all to experience.”

Note: The actual cost of the program per girl is \$3,300, which includes housing, food, transportation and fees within the program. In 2009, each girl paid no more than \$2,000, the advertised fee for the program. While ERVK strives to offer scholarships based on need to offset the cost, the ability to do this is dependent on generous grants and donations. We are grateful to the generosity of The Dyson Foundation, Best Buy, Harriet and Richard Fein Foundation, FAWCO and each of you who made GLW possible through your donations and service.

WOMEN EMBRACING RISK

ERVK hosted Author and motivational speaker Robin Gerber at a special workshop and reception for 60 exceptional women leaders on June 25th. Robin discussed inspirational insights into core concepts of leadership. Her talk combined the latest research on leadership development and effectiveness with stories and examples from admired leaders, particularly Eleanor Roosevelt. Participants gained a new understanding of their own potential, and the motivation to act with passion and commitment.

(Robin Gerber is the author of Leadership/Eleanor Roosevelt Style; Eleanor vs. Ike and Barbie & Ruth).

BOARD NOTES

Present Board Members

Secretary Mary Moody and 1st Vice Chair Tony Campilli received the Marist College Community Service award for their “commitment to excellence in education, dedication to the principle of service, and understanding the importance of community.”

Board Chair JoAnne Myers was guest editor for the Autumn 2009 Hudson River Valley Review which focused on Mrs. Roosevelt and her Legacy. She also received the Thomas W. Casey Fellowship in Hudson River Valley Studies.

Vermont artist Mickey Myers painted a series of 63 pastel images called “Making Their Marks” to honor the tenure of Marc VanderHeyden and his wife Dana as President and First Lady of Saint Michael’s College in Vermont.

Former Board Members:

Cora Mallory Davis received the Alexis de Tocqueville Community Service Award from United Way for her unflagging service to the community.

Cleveland Institute of Art professor **Frances (Franny) Taft** was honored with the Golden Achievement Award in education, from The Golden Age Centers of Greater Cleveland (GAC) for her significant contribution to Cleveland through her professional career and philanthropic activities.

Shirley Handel and her husband Bernard were honored by the Community Foundation of Dutchess County for their outstanding community service.

Noted biographer **Hannah Pakula** published a new biographical work, *The Last Empress: Madame Chiang Kai-shek and the Birth of Modern China* (Simon & Schuster) (NY Times Sunday Book Review, November 2009)

Lorraine Roberts received the Community Leadership Award from The New Horizons Foundation fostering a better life for residents of the Hudson Valley through her diverse interests and volunteers efforts.

Nancy Shear’s article, Happy 125th Birthday, Mrs. Roosevelt, was published online History News Network (<http://hnn.us/articles/118147.html>)

(If your name was omitted, it’s because we didn’t know. Tell us and we’ll be sure to include on our website)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

October 11, 2009 marked the 125th anniversary of Eleanor Roosevelt's birthday. The traditional wreath laying occurred at her gravesite on a very special sun-filled day. The birthday cake was a replica of the one presented to her on her 70th birthday. Of course there are always memories of Mrs. Roosevelt that continue to nurture us.



John McHugh of Allentown, PA, a stalwart fan and admirer of Eleanor Roosevelt, who calls the many trips he took to Val-Kill some of his happiest ventures, gifted us with a very special box of tapes. They are tapes he made of special events that occurred at Val-Kill at the beginning. They will be put to good use.

A GRANDMOTHER'S "EYE"

My grandmother, Eleanor Roosevelt, resembled many grandparents: She did not want to lose touch with her newly married grandchildren who would soon be starting families of their own. (As "Aunt Eleanor," she extended the same devotion to her brother, Hall Roosevelt's children.) Ours was a large and extended family.

"Grandmere," as we grandchildren knew her, cleverly combined her public speaking tours into opportunities to visit the young families - from New York to Texas, the mid-west, and the west coast. She was in Portland, Oregon when our baby, her first great-grandchild, was on the way. She spoke at Reed College about the United Nations. It was 1949, and she was a delegate to the United Nations, appointed by President Truman.

In Portland, she came to our apartment downtown; a very ordinary one-room place combining kitchen, bath, closet and living room/bedroom, with a Murphy bed which Van and I pulled down at night. The following day, Grandmere said she had a proposition we could consider: With a substantial gift from her we could take a trip, even to Europe, or we could use the money as a down payment on a house. Hardly imaginable today, we bought a cozy house, quite near the college for the full price of \$10,500.

In January 1950, Grandmere and dear Tommy (her secretary, Malvina Thompson) arrived to greet six-month old Nick. They stayed overnight, sharing a room in our little house, and I cooked dinner. What good sports they were!

Often between 1951 and '53, when Van was a junior economist with the Marshall Plan in Paris, Grandmere came to our apartment for lunch. She walked with me, three-year old Nick and his baby brother, David, to the little park up the street on the rue du Bac. As United Nations conferences at the Palais du Chaillot were fairly frequent, Eleanor Roosevelt, Chair of the Human Rights Committee, stayed at her hotel on the Place de la Concorde. On some off-duty hours, Grandmere indulged us from her vast knowledge of special places to visit and things to see, or I attended her talks, formal and informal, to both English and French speaking audiences. Some afternoons, people from many countries, with pressing issues of their own, sought her out, and she accommodated as many of them as possible at small teas in her hotel quarters. Or, she invited several guests to dinner at her favorite restaurant, "Le Porcerolle."

By 1954, we "came down to earth" in Carbondale, Illinois, home to the University of Southern Illinois. Van and I had a tiny house off the main highway 51, "the south Hard Road." There was Grandmere one day, checking out our chickens in the hen house and our half-dozen white Peking ducks in the pond. The ducks lasted only about a month, as snapping turtles had mangled their legs, and we had to remove the poor things to the slaughter house. Nick and David showed their great-grandmother how they worked the pump off the back door to collect our drinking water. Grandmere was staying at the faculty house on the campus. Aside from lack of space in our house, I could not imagine Grandmere bathing in our bath tub filled with cistern water collected off the roof. It was usually gray with coal dust - but all right for us "pioneers."

A year later, still in southern Illinois, we welcomed our baby girl, Anna Eleanor, (Nell). We had moved eight miles south of Carbondale to a remodeled farmhouse, rented from a wonderful couple who owned a large peach orchard. When Nell was a few months old, Grandmere, on another speaking tour, was driven out to us by a hired chauffeur who joined us for dinner. I had made a couple of whole wheat loaves, and likely the meal was an improvement over the Portland effort. Except for fruit, desserts were beyond me however, so it was grapefruit and cookies that evening. While waiting for dinner, the chauffeur read the paper in a corner of our large farm kitchen - a lovely space, part playroom and sitting room. Grandmere sat close enough so we could talk while I did a few last-minute things, including sectioning grapefruit with my usual paring knife. All of us so much enjoyed that cheerful family time.

About a month later, before Christmas, I received a little package from New York City. Inside was a short note from Grandmere. "Sistie dear, I think you may find this little grapefruit knife of use. Such a lovely evening with you & Van and the children. Much love, Grandmere."

I still have the knife, the only one for sectioning fruit I've ever needed in a lifetime - its rivets solid, the cherry wood handle slightly darkened with age. To me, it represents so much kindness, coupled with that quiet ability of a loving and extraordinary person to observe a need, to remember it well, and to fulfill it so gently, be it ever so small.

Ellie R. Seagraves

Happenings...

HOLIDAY CANDLELIGHT FESTIVAL

The Friends Committee at the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill is hosting its "Holiday Candlelight Festival" Sunday, December 6th, at 1:00pm at The Eleanor Roosevelt Center on the Eleanor Roosevelt Historic Site in Hyde Park, NY. The 2009 Candlelight Award will be presented to Frank Van Zanten. Lighting of Memorial Candles and the reading of Tributes will follow. Refreshments will be served.

The Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill
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The Legacy Expressed

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Many thanks to our committed
volunteers for your exemplary service.
You do make a difference.

We can save trees and postage
if we send this newsletter to you via
email. If you agree, please send your
email address to info@ervk.org.



Dear ERVK Family & Friends,

People often speak about having their money “work” for them, referring to the returns they can obtain from good investments. There is another kind of work that your money can do, on behalf of world peace, human rights, education, life and leadership preparation for the next generation, and other critically important causes. This is, in itself, a different kind of investment: in the future of our civilization — and that word is used in its highest and truest sense.

Headquartered on the grounds of Mrs. Roosevelt’s former home in Hyde Park, NY, the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill (ERVK) works to advance the causes to which Mrs. R devoted her life. The organization’s influence now extends globally. The quest for human rights, as Mrs. R stated, “Begins in small places, close to home.” From her home and yours, support for these causes — which define our humanity — can be furthered by a contribution now and by a bequest in your will.

For many of us, the necessity of earning a living has precluded us from having time to work actively for humanitarian concerns. Making a bequest to ERVK allows us to know that, eventually, we will help to further these causes, under the umbrella of ERVK. For me personally, including ERVK in my will has offered the comfort that my assets will help to perpetuate Mrs. Roosevelt’s legacy. It is something like the promise of an afterlife, bringing great satisfaction while we’re still here.

Please get to know ERVK by visiting the website, attending ERVK functions, and meeting with an ERVK representative.

With sincere thanks for your consideration,

Nancy Shear
Former Board Member

To learn more about how to make
a bequest to ERVK,
please visit our website at www.ERVK.org

Your continued support allows us to promote ER legacy
through programming that benefits girls, boy, women and community.
Thank you for your ongoing generosity.



Photo by Patsy N. Costello

We were saddened to hear about the death of our dear friend **MAUREEN CORR** on October 14, 2009. Maureen was Eleanor Roosevelt’s last secretary before Mrs. Roosevelt passed away. ERVK Friends group member Patsy Costello has written a very moving tribute to Maureen which you can read in full on our website, www.ervk.org.