

The Golubs

Always first in line to help

The first time I received a piece of business correspondence that had a smiley face squiggled beside the writer's signature was shortly after the premiere edition of *Saratoga Living* (then *Saratoga County Living*) rolled off the presses near the end of 1998.

The writer was Jane Golub and I marveled that she had personally responded to a query I had sent asking whether future issues of the then fledgling regional magazine might be sold in the community-minded chain of supermarkets owned and operated by her family.

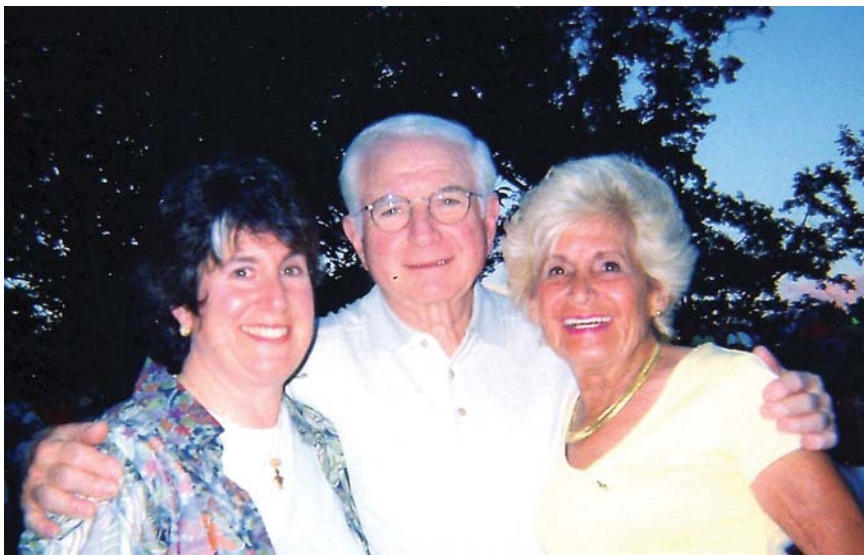
I was certainly impressed that Mrs. Golub had taken the time to drop a line via US Mail directing me to contact a senior manager to get the ball rolling in stores that fell within the boundaries of the new periodical's readership area. But what impressed me even more was that she had done so with a joyful spirit by adding a welcome ray of FUN-shine at the end.

In my mind, her cheerful vote of confidence said: "I believe the literary seeds you are planting are worth watering; I'm eager to help them grow."

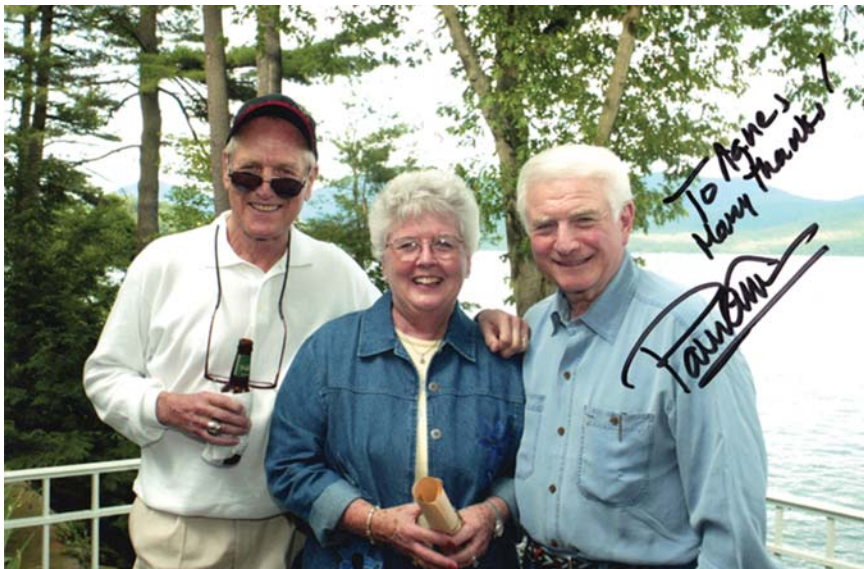
Which is exactly what began to happen after other prospective vendors learned Price Chopper had consented to carry the magazine inside some of its busy supermarkets in upstate New York.

At the time I did not realize that the foundation for what is now one of the nation's premiere independent food retailers had been cemented during the dark days of The Great Depression. (Please see sidebar to read about the company's evolution from humble beginnings as a single Central Market to a chain of 135 innovative Price Chopper supermarkets across NYS as well as Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Vermont.)

This phenomenal growth was realized because descendants of the first Golub to cross the Atlantic to put down roots in the USA more than a century ago worked diligently to nurture the seeds that were planted at a time when many others had given up on The American Dream.



Neil Golub flanked by daughter Mona and wife Jane as photographed by author Ann Hauprich at Music Haven in Schenectady's Central Park in 2008 and at a 2001 western-themed benefit for the Double "H" Ranch, co-founded by actor Paul Newman and Storytown USA/Great Escape creator Charles Wood. Many thanks Double "H" Board member Agnes Pompa for lending us the photo of her in the middle of a Double "N" (Newman and Neil) sandwich.



If Price Chopper's success formula could be compressed into starter kits, it would surely contain the seeds needed to grow **P**erseverance, **R**esourcefulness, **I**ntegrity, **C**reativity and **E**nthusiasm as well as abundant amounts of **C**ongeniality, **H**umanitarianism, **O**ptimism, **P**roductivity, **P**hilanthropy, **E**mpathy and **R**esiliency.

That's because creating tens of thousands of jobs while providing quality food and other products at competitive prices is just part of Price Chopper's "always first in line to help" legacy. Scores of artistic, cultural, educational and humanitarian causes have benefited from the generosity of the Golubs.

While much has been written about Price Chopper's Golub Foundation, it bears noting that Neil and Jane do equally as much with their own personal foundations.

Among the many charitable causes supported by the supermarket chain and the family are the American Cancer Society, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, St. Jude Children's Hospital, Melodies Center, and the Double "H" Ranch for children with chronic and life threatening illnesses in Lake Luzerne.

The Golubs have also taken a long list of other worthy causes under their wing. While serving as chairman of Bellevue Women's Hospital, for example, Neil Golub fought hard alongside then President & CEO Ann Saile to save the health care facility. Their combined efforts led to the creation of what is today heralded as a jewel called Ellis Medicine — which has reinvented the way health care is delivered to patients. Amenities that owe their births to the philanthropy of the Golubs include a modern Breast Care Center and the only Woman's Heart Health Center in New York State.

In addition Neil Golub chaired and underwrote Schenectady 2000 along with then Union College President Roger Hull. Their efforts resulted in the creation of the Metroplex Development Authority — the economic engine that fueled Schenectady's Renaissance. Schenectady is reportedly the only city in NYS to have its own Authority. Without this initiative, The Electric City would surely have continued what had been a long decline. Instead it is a symbol of rebirth, of which the Golubs are justly proud.

Their contributions to A World of Difference — now a national program the Golubs have underwritten for nearly 30 years, complete with a vital Be An Ally component — are detailed on subsequent pages within this chapter.

The faces of Golub family members have also long been familiar at benefits in settings as posh as the Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC) and Congress Park's Canfield Casino and as informal as family concerts beneath the stars in Schenectady's Central Park.

Indeed, a favorite photo in this chapter is one I snapped in 2008 as Jane and Neil Golub were relaxing beneath the stars with daughter Mona at Music Haven in Schenectady's Central Park as jazz bassist and vocalist Esperanza Spaulding delivered a sizzling performance. It was at Mona's suggestion that Esperanza (who made global headlines when she was named Best New Artist at the 2011 Grammy awards) took the stage before a live audience at this World Class event that was free and open to the public. It would be an understatement to say the apple does not fall far from the tree.

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“It was Mona’s experience as a concert promoter that brought this wonderful Free Concert Series to life in Schenectady’s Central Park,” notes father Neil. “Mona was the leader from Day One. It was her energy and leadership that raised the money to build the beautiful stage named after Agnes McDonald in recognition of her wonderful contribution. Mona also did Music in the Park in Albany for Mayor Jerry Jennings for many years.”

A few summers later, I had the time of my life skipping down Memory Lane as I went “grocery shopping” with a neighbor’s child inside of the miniature Central Market sponsored by Price Chopper at the Saratoga Children’s Museum. (My parents used to take many of their 10 children shopping with them at a Capital Region Central Market. In those days, customers could collect S&H Green Stamps — which allowed them to earn free merchandise from catalogues. How I loved moistening those Green Stamps and placing them in the S&H booklets!)

Shortly after my adventures at the Saratoga Children’s Museum, I had the pleasure of communicating with Jane Golub via email about the need for holiday refreshments for a special event for young readers at the National Bottle Museum, a not-for-profit educational institution in Ballston Spa.

By now I had sold my beloved “Paper Baby” (my term of endearment for *Saratoga Living* magazine) and was devoting my life to writing regional history books and volunteering in the community. It was in this new capacity that I reconnected with Jane in the hope that Price Chopper might be able donate a little something to the museum.

Jane promptly emailed a gracious response encouraging me to connect with the administrator of Price Chopper’s Golub Foundation, so the necessary paperwork could be completed in time for the December 2011 arrival at the museum of national children’s book illustrator Jody Wheeler.

While there was no smiley face squiggled beside Jane’s name at the bottom of her emailed response, I wish she could have seen the many lips that curved in a heavenly direction on the day of the big event. There was no need to worry about anyone leaving the premises hungry or thirsty as delicious freshly baked cookies were served to young readers, their parents and grandparents together with juice boxes donated by Price Chopper.

BOTTOM LINE: It would take an entire book to do justice to the extraordinary ways the Golubs have touched hearts and lifted spirits over the decades.

Price Chopper's future as Market 32 honors its Central Market past

Having helped my parents fill Central Market grocery carts in the 1950s and 1960s before continuing the tradition with my own three kids at Price Choppers in the 1980s and 1990s, I was fascinated to recently learn of plans to re-brand the company's stores under a new banner: Market 32.

Since I was writing this chapter when the re-branding announcement was made in November 2014, I decided to email Neil Golub, Executive Chairman of the Board of Price Chopper Supermarkets, seeking additional insights.

I was delighted to discover that pride in Price Chopper's past as Central Market, fueled by a passion for innovative excellence, are at the heart of the company's decision. It turns out the change builds upon Price Chopper's contemporary Market Bistro concept that showcases an enhanced product mix with an emphasis on freshness, health and wellness.

A pledge to set and maintain even higher customer service standards promises to engage and inspire customers for generations to come. But what most impressed me as a writer who is devoted to preserving the past and present for future generations was learning the company is now in its fourth generation of Golub leadership, with a fifth in view.

Reading Neil's reflections about his ancestors — starting with the paternal grandfather who served customers in turn-of-the-century settings ranging from Mom & Pops to Cash & Carry wholesale shops — fostered an even greater appreciation for this family's legacy.

Customers of that bygone era had to go from store to store to secure the products and services they needed. The butcher sold meat. The baker sold bread and perhaps also cookies, cakes and pies. The florist sold flowers. And so on.

It wasn't until the world's first supermarket debuted in Queens in 1930 that Grandpa Golub's sons, Bernard "Ben" and William "Bill" (Neil's father) "saw the future" and began making plans to open their very own supermarket. The seeds took root and began to bear fruit that literally multiplied after a Golub-owned store Public Service Market opened in Green Island in November 1932. The first of the company's Central Markets opened near Schenectady's Central Park a year later. (The Central Market name was re-branded as Price Chopper in August 1973.)



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-- Neil Golub

Praising Ben and Bill as “true entrepreneurs and pioneers,” Neil observed that in the company’s early days “it was all about figuring out what to do and how to do it. Everything under one roof was a revelation in 1932. Innovation back then consisted of the basics: one-stop shopping with perishables and groceries under one roof, shelves to display the goods, hand-held baskets for customers, adding machines at registers.”

“When the United States entered World War II, many goods had to be rationed. Although this was tough for everyone, food prices remained stable. The focus remained on the basics. It wasn’t until around 1950 that retailers started becoming more creative.

“Up until then, Mom’s home savings was a piggy bank,” recalled Neil. “Then in 1952, Ben and Bill introduced S&H Green Stamps – perhaps the first loyalty program in the nation.” This innovation resulted in Central Market sales nearly doubling during the first S&H year. The Golubs also initiated a local grower distribution program long before “local” was in vogue.

By 1960, there were 23 Central Markets across New York State that offered bigger, brighter store designs. These welcome innovations were followed three years later by night stocking and rapid reorders.

But the greatest growth years were yet to come — escalating after the corporate baton was passed in 1968 to Neil and his now late cousin, renowned philanthropist and food industry visionary Lewis Golub. By 1973, the company had officially changed the name of its supermarkets from Central Market to Price Chopper.

“For some 40 years, Central Market took its place as a family enterprise. The times were difficult. Its founders learned as they went. Friends in the business from distant places helped each other by sharing ideas about operations, systems and procedures ... a new experience for all. The family has never been risk adverse. It was the only way to get ahead. We have always tried new ideas to see what works.”

A chain-wide event that allowed customers to shop 24/7, 365 days a year was but one of many headline-making innovations. The corporation acquired eight other companies between 1970 and 2000, boosting the store count to over 100 – a number that as of the end of 2014 had jumped to 135.



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Little wonder Price Chopper's name has been synonymous with supermarket success for the past four decades as Central Market had been during the previous 40 years! So why change the name now?

"Over the past 70 years, I have witnessed the maturing of one of America's greatest experiments: Supermarketing. My job now is to help set the stage for its future," mused Neil.

The fact that today's customers are less likely than ever before to cook and prepare their own meals from scratch led to the creation of Market Bistro as a learning opportunity to meet rapidly changing consumer concerns about mealtime solutions. "Market Bistro was a laboratory for learning; for our customers it was a food delight, however, Market 32 will NOT be a replication of Market Bistro because store sizes play a critical role in what the company will be able to merchandize," explained Neil. While smaller stores will have some Market Bistro elements, the size and dimension of that experiment can only be replicated in a few locations. Market 32 will have a whole new look and feel. Customers will experience the BEST of Price Chopper – and more.

"Market Bistro has provided us with the tools for our next generation of stores. Utilizing our best skills, our experiences, and our best successes, we went back to the drawing board and asked: *Where do we go from here?*"

I, for one, can't wait to experience first-hand what Market 32 has in store! For like legions of others, my grocery list now includes foods and beverages with labels highlighting words that weren't even in my vocabulary a decade ago.

No longer do convenience and price dictate where I'll spend my supermarket dollars. Rather I seek out fresh produce that is certified organic and, whenever possible, locally grown. All edibles must be heart-healthy and, in keeping with nutritional guidelines recommended to help keep blood sugar levels in check. Foods that delight vegan dinner guests are also finding their way onto my shopping lists. Ditto select herbs and all-natural vitamin and mineral supplements.

At 63, I not only want to be around to enjoy my future grandchildren. I've finally unearthed a simple, but powerful, truth: Investing in one's health and well-being isn't just good for the body. It is good for the soul.

It's never too late to learn how to “Be An Ally”

My maternal grandmother, who was raised in the late 1800s listening to her Tiernan relations recount ancestral tales of The Great Potato Famine and voyages in coffin ships from Ireland to America, had keen insight into many things. But one thing I never could see her way was how to handle bullies.

I'll never forget the time I went to convalesce at her residence just off of New Scotland Avenue in Albany following a near fatal battle with spinal meningitis in 1962. Having lost 30 pounds during a lengthy hospitalization, I was one gaunt and pale third grader.

Despite my frailty and the fact that my many siblings and friends were miles away in a small suburban neighborhood in Latham where Mr. Rogers would have felt at home, Grandma had insisted I venture outdoors where youngsters I did not know were playing on the sidewalks.

It would, she insisted, be “The Best Medicine” – helping to restore color to my cheeks. The experience restored color to my cheeks alright. But not in a healthy way.

What it did instead was introduce a scrawny girl clad in ill-fitting clothes to the terrifying world of bullies. It was a place where I felt powerless to protect myself from ridicule. Though not physically harmed, the cruel laughter and taunts about my scarecrow-like appearance made me feel ashamed and violated.

Nothing like this had ever happened to me before in the sheltered environment of St. Ambrose School where Safety Patrols rode the buses and nuns with eyes in the backs of their heavily veiled heads had zero tolerance for any kind of negative behavior on the playground where everyone looked more or less alike in a sea of navy blue and white uniforms.

Having never before been bullied, I didn't know what to do, but I was sure as I raced back to my grandmother's place, heart pounding and hot tears streaming down my beet red face, that she would find a way to bind the invisible wounds that had been inflicted upon my spirit.

Instead, after hearing what had occurred, she stoically offered these words: “*Sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me.*”

“But Grandma,” I vividly recall sobbing, “those names DID hurt me. Very much!” It took many years after that baptism by fire into the world of bullying before I could look in the mirror and not see a hideous scarecrow staring back at me. A sense of shame and hopelessness ensured that I never talked about the incident throughout the remainder of my elementary school years, but I felt extremely insecure when meeting new kids. I'd even go so far as to cross the street to avoid passing children I did not know – unless accompanied by an older sibling or cousin.

Several years passed without incident and I began to feel safe and confident again. The bubble burst when I made the transition from the private school in Latham that had sheltered me from kindergarten through Grade 8 to a neighboring public junior high school.

Robbed of the safety nets of bus patrols, uniforms and nuns with eyes in the backs of their heavily veiled heads, I was easy prey for the bullies who lurked in back seats of buses and corners of locker rooms. When my grades began to slip, my parents and teachers wrongly assumed it was because I wasn't paying attention in class. I eventually made a large enough circle of friends that I could hide behind.

While this invisible shield protected me from being singled out for special attention by bullies during the remainder of my time at that school, I now shudder to think that another vulnerable soul must have had to take my place. Studies I have read during my adult years (which became of interest to me when my own now adult children were occasionally targeted by bullies during the 1980s and 1990s) reveal that bullies always need someone to pick on in order to make them feel superior. And, it turns out the main reason bullies continue to offend is that those who witness their negative words and deeds do nothing to stop them. Sadly, this sometimes includes parents and educators as well as fellow students.

There is much truth to the adage "Silence is agreement." Turning a deaf ear and/or a blind eye to those who are emotionally tormenting others is akin to condoning the bullying. Or, in the case of cyberbullying, the character assassinations that headlines show have been linked to adolescent suicides. Tragic endings that might well have been avoided through prevention and intervention.

Thus it was that I yearned to learn more when I first heard about the "Be An Ally" program that the Golubs and Price Chopper co-created in partnership with CBS-6 and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) as part of the "A World of Difference" (AWOD) curriculum in New York State schools that has since earned widespread recognition.

What I didn't know until recently was just how mammoth a role the Golubs had played in laying the groundwork for this much-needed bullying awareness breakthrough.

In 1986 Neil brought the ADL's AWOD Project to the family and company. "It was," he recalls, "all about teaching high school students about bias, prejudice and hate."

Having then just celebrated 24 years as a Grade 3 teacher at Hillside School in Niskayuna, Jane was asked by Neil if she would consider taking a year off — a sabbatical to assist with the NYS edition for high schools. He would later observe that Jane's awareness of children's learned behavior caused her to make a statement that changed the course of AWOD and the entire project.

"Jane said if we don't start educating children in elementary school, then it's too late. By the time kids get to high school, it is very hard to change," recalls her husband. "And so, in Albany, we were approved to write curriculum K-12. Jane led that effort with a group of wonderful local teachers representing elementary, middle and high schools. This eventually became the impetus that drove the national program."

BE AN ALLY



Thanks to the combined efforts of the Golubs, Price Chopper, CBS-6 and the ADL, there is reason to hope and pray the world may one day be bully-free.

While Jane led the educational element, Neil managed the community process. After receiving approval from then NYS Commissioner of Education Thomas Sobel, the program was approved by the state in the spring of 1987.

Adding to their humanitarian legacy is the fact that the Golubs have underwritten the cost of this program in NYS's Capital Region since 1987 through a foundation Jane and Neil established and merged with one founded by ancestors William and Estelle Golub.

Be An Ally became an important outgrowth whose message reached legions of additional parents and teachers when Neil convinced CBS-6 station manager Vince Nelson to support the importance of education in fighting this serious program for schools and the children.

Utilizing the broadcasting power and credibility of CBS-6 (WRGB has the distinction of being the world's first television station and has been committed to making a positive difference in the world for more than 80 years), the commitment and impetus of Neil and Jane Golub and Price Chopper and the rich informational services of the ADL, the Be An Ally program is heralded as a call to action for everyone.

Efforts to combat bullying and cyberbullying include resources with such titles as Five Ways Students Can Be An Ally; Five Ways Educators Can Be An Ally; Five Ways Community Members Can Be An Ally; and Five Ways Family Members Can Be An Ally. ADL also offers interactive workshops on bullying and cyberbullying to middle schools and high schools.

It's too soon to know how profound an impact the "Be An Ally" program will have on this and future generations. But I was uplifted upon receiving an unexpected visit from the same child who had accompanied me on a "shopping excursion" at the miniature Central Market inside of the Saratoga Children's Museum.

The girl, who at the time of this writing was a third grader – the age I was when I was first bullied outside of my grandmother's home in Albany – was eager to share with me about an exciting new program in her elementary school in Ballston Spa called ... you guessed it: Be An Ally.

Her eight-year-old face lit up as she recited and acted out some of the Be An Ally tips she had learned. As I watched my little friend demonstrating simple ways she could Be An Ally to another child in need of support, I felt the child within me leap for joy.

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