

God, Life, and Everything  
"Yes, I Saw the Roosevelts"

Never let it be said that I am above self promotion. I write a column, after all and got them made into a book (which you can still purchase for \$12! Make checks payable the the Hudson Valley News but e-mail me at [revckramer@gmail.com](mailto:revckramer@gmail.com)).

Now, where was I?

Oh yeah, self promotion. I'm all for it if it doesn't take too much effort, but when somebody else does all the work, it's pure gold. Such was my situation last week when PBS aired Ken Burns' "The Roosevelts" every night.

If you're not a PBS viewer, then you may not be aware that the famous documentarian created a massive show - a miniseries, really - about the most famous New Yorkers (and Hyde Parkers) ever. You may also not be aware that St. James' Episcopal Church - that would be the church I serve at, 4526 Albany Post - is prominently featured.

Well, prominent by my standards. Which means that they mentioned it. And if you look very closely at the credits, it mentions St. James' in the locations. Nice!

The show was quite good. I knew about most of their challenges which each one of the threesome had to overcome, but somehow it seemed more depressing and less heroic in this documentary. In particular, the need for Teddy and Eleanor to always be busy, always doing something - that made me feel sorry for them. And the end of Eleanor's life moved me - she wanted to die because she felt she had nothing left to offer the world. But then, real life is usually a lot less heroic than our memories.

Back to self promotion. What may not be so nice about all this prominence is that people keep asking me, "Did you see the Roosevelts?" Of course I did, what do you think? On the other hand, I actually had to work every night it was airing, so I didn't get to watch until the next day online.

What's also not so fun is that for the entire week people kept asking if The Roosevelts had made a difference in church attendance. Now think about this: It started airing on a Sunday evening, and by Tuesday, people wanted to know if we'd seen a change.

In fairness, we did have three people the next Sunday who came specifically because of the show. Furthermore, several folks *did* visit the church's graveyard during the week. So yes, we have noticed a modest uptick in our visitors.

Now I'm hoping for a bigger payout. This weekend, our annual Graveyard Tours begin, and I would love to be able to say that every tour sold out thanks to The Roosevelts. All I can do is wait and see.

But *you* can order your tickets now at [stjameshistoricgraveyardtours.com](http://stjameshistoricgraveyardtours.com). See, told you. Self promotion.

*The Rev. Chuck Kramer is rector of St. James' Episcopal Church in Hyde Park. You can contact him at [revckramer@gmail.com](mailto:revckramer@gmail.com). You can also reserve a copy of his book "God, Life, and Everything" at that e-mail address. (See? Self promotion)*