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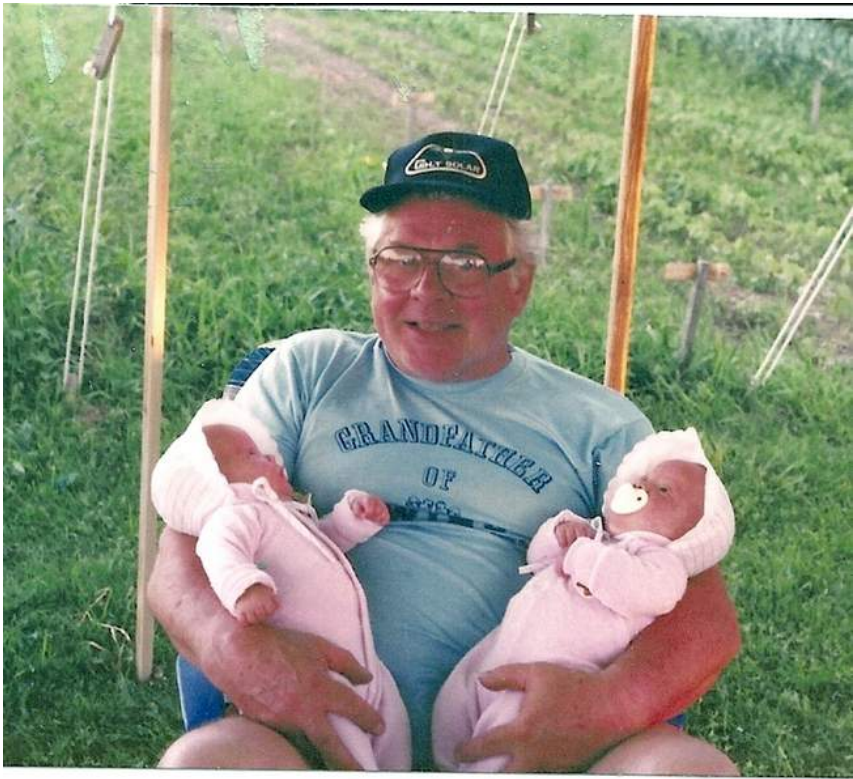
## Tribute: Remembering life with Pop

To his children he was Pop, to his grandchildren he was Poppa, and to his friends he was Eddie or Paul. Later in life he became "the hug man," or "the button man," or "the muffin man." But however he was known, one thing was certain — Paul E. Wegemann, Sr. was very much loved.



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Paul Wegemann holds his twin 4-month-old granddaughters, Danielle and Brigitte.

By Melody Burri, staff writer  
Updated Apr. 8, 2012 @ 8:13 am

Victor, N.Y.

Submitted



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**Report: Drew Barrymore, Will Kopelman Expecting Second Child**

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After a tumultuous childhood, 56 years building a family, and hundreds of hours of volunteering, teaching, and mentoring, the Victor resident died peacefully with his family by his side on Dec. 4, 2011, at the age of 81.

Born on July 30, 1930, Mr. Wegemann's earliest years were spent in the Bronx and later in an apartment near Hell's Kitchen in Manhattan. At the age of 8 — and after much resistance — he moved with his family back to their homeland of Germany, just in time for the start of World War II.

Mr. Wegemann's early teen years in a war-ravaged country were extremely difficult, including the loss of his oldest brother, Richard, who was forced to join the Nazi youth movement never to be seen again.

After the close of the war, Mr. Wegemann's mother, Cacia, sent her remaining three boys — Paul, Ludwig and Rudolph — back to the United States so they could have a better life. Mr. Wegemann soon became an apprentice woodworker, a passion he pursued throughout his life.

When he was old enough, he enlisted in the United States Navy and spent four years working in shipyards. After an honorable discharge, he returned to the sweetheart he had left behind — Janet Reiter. They married in May 1955 on Long Island, and spent the next 56 years building a family together — four children and five grandchildren. In 1969 he moved to Victor, and made it his home.

Mr. Wegemann was among the founding members of the Victor/Farmington Volunteer Ambulance Corps, and with his wife by his side, served tirelessly as a medic and ambulance driver. The two went on to start Troop 2400 of the Explorers through the Ambulance Corps and the New York State Troopers.

After attending night school to earn a degree, Mr. Wegemann became a carpentry instructor at BOCES No. 1 in Fairport. There he launched the modular house program, where students would build a modular house in class, then go out to the job site and finish the house. Through the program he was able to keep a number of his students in school.

Mr. Wegemann was also involved in the Scared Straight program for his more troubled students. A mentor to many, his graduates would often return to thank him for his support and to tell him what a positive impact he made on their lives. As a volunteer with Boy Scout Troop 52, he was also a positive role model for many boys and teens.

Using his medical experience from his work with the Ambulance Corp., Mr. Wegemann became a volunteer medical trainer for youth and high school football in Victor. Every Sunday, the family would pack up and head off to the football field where they would spend the day.

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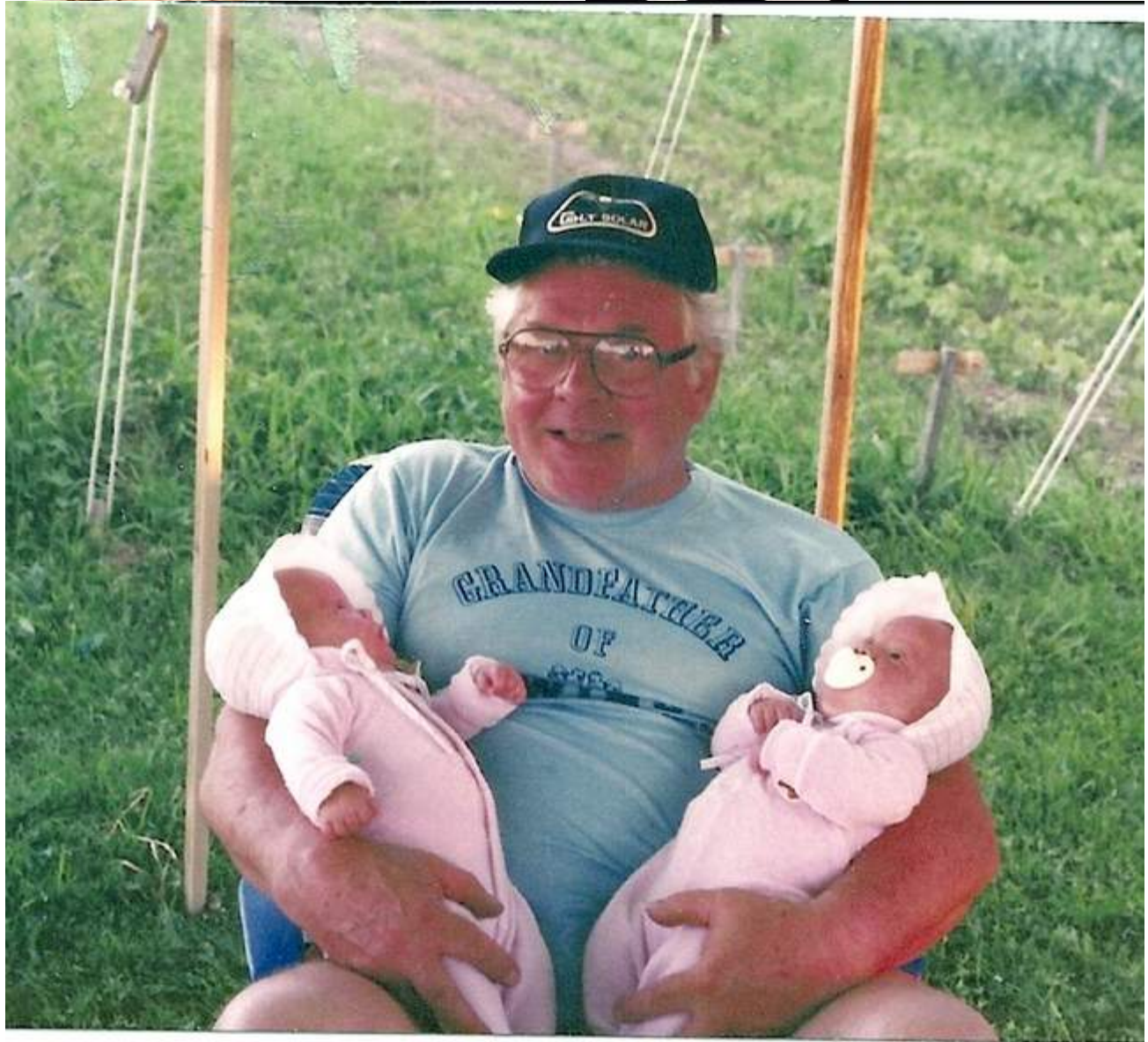
**TV GUIDE**



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Submitter

Paul Wegemann holds his twin 4-month-old granddaughters, Danielle and Brigitte.

**Page 2 of 2** - Family was the most important aspect of Mr. Wegemann's life. When his first



grandchildren were born, he was at their side every day, volunteering for school field trips and with their Girl Scout troop. He became very popular with the children, who could not wait until the next time they would see him.

A master carpenter and woodworker, Mr. Wegemann built his daughter's house and completed many woodworking projects over the years, including his grandchildren's cribs, rocking horses, trains, shelves and decorative watches.

"He was known for telling people 'a hug a day keeps the grumpies away,'" remembered his daughter, Diane Wegemann. "He had this whole spiel about how many hugs a day a person needs to exist. He was 'the hug man.'"

After suffering a heart attack in the late 1990s, Mr. Wegemann joined the Cardiac Rehab program at F.F. Thompson hospital, and soon became a model patient. His positive attitude and sense of humor inspired those around him, and he was the first to be named to the Hall of Fame at the annual Walk for Roses fundraiser.

"He was also known as 'the muffin man,'" said Diane Wegemann of her father, "because he used to collect lowfat muffin recipes at cardiac rehab."

Mr. Wegemann had another passion in addition to family, woodworking and carpentry: He made thousands of unique buttons over the years and would hand them out randomly to put a smile on people's faces and give them a lift.

"He was also known as 'the button man,'" said Diane Wegemann. "If you're being admitted to F.F. Thompson, you might still see some of his buttons on the bulletin boards. He was a true giver."

A few years later in 2005, Mr. Wegemann suffered an aortic aneurysm rupture, an ordeal from which only one percent of people actually survive. He was one of that one percent, and in the following year, with his persistent, positive attitude and the love and support of his family and friends, his health returned.

A devoted, loving father and grandfather, he schooled all of his children and grandchildren in the art of carpentry and woodworking. He left a legacy of optimism and generosity, and taught them to seek out the joys of life as he did.

"Over the past few years, his health deteriorated," said Diane Wegemann, "but that didn't stop him from being such a great influence on people. Always a smile, a hug or a word of advice — he was the most giving man you would ever want to meet."

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