

Neighbors 3 Charlie, Ed, Rube and Bea

Across the street from us lived Charlie and Lenore Weaver with their daughter Beth. Charlie worked as an installer for Indiana Bell Telephone. A rather short balding friendly accommodating man, he had the distinction of owning the first television on South Street... well, maybe in all of Mooresville. On the occasion of important world events like the World Series or the 1952 Republican convention, his front room would be packed with a crowd of the amazed curious viewers from all sorts of economic strata -- from factory machinists like my Dad to Doc VanBokkelen. They viewed with delight Charlie's 10 inch TV screen that had a huge magnifier on the front of it. Charlie taught me how to play chess. Not sure how that happened--but it did. Charlie and Dad were both experts with the hoe. They simply loved the small of working the garden soil. I think there was an annual friendly contest on who had the first ripe tomato. Later, when dad purchased his Troybilt Horse Tiller, he gratis broke up Sylvia's and Charlie's Garden spots and always took care of their snow covered sidewalks.. or made sure I did.

On the corner of South and Indiana street lived the widower, Ed Nelson. Ed was an older gentleman. In the days before artificial everything, Ed's knees made moving around a difficult proposition. I admire his perseverance and ingenuity to this day. In the summer he kept his yard mowed by taking a wooden cable spool-- the kind that Charlie used in his work --then rolled it like a round bench on to the yard. He then would hobble out to it with his push type reel mower, sit on that spool and push that mower making a large donut of mowed grass. Then he would move the whole shebang to the next tall grass until the entire yard was neatly mowed. Ed was a patient man. Every winter of my youth, my after school unpaid job was to fill up two buckets of coal for Ed from the supply in the garage that Cotton Spoon had delivered. Ed heated his house with two pot bellied stoves. He also chewed 'bacy" and sometimes his aim at the spitton was amiss. The house had an interesting fragrance of burning coal, tobacco and old man. Often after the coal delivery I'd sit and listen to some of his interesting life stories. He had been a guard at the State Prison in Michigan City in his younger years and somehow had been on one of the last land rushes in Oklahoma. When he was a ten year old boy in 1889, his dad had awoken him on an early March morning and informed him that Mooresville's town founder, Sam Moore, had died. That news meant that Ed was to go to the Methodist Church and toll the bell 90 times one ring for each of Sam's life. He said the rope broke and he had to finish the job by climbing into the steeple and finishing it by hand. Some say he lost count. Of course I cannot verify the rope braking part, but as far as I know Ed never spoofed me.. or if he did he was successful. Later as a history teacher, I would start off the school year saying our country's beginning was not so long ago. That I knew a man who knew a man that was born when John Adams was President.... And I wasn't spoofing them either.

Across the street from Ed lived Rosie and Paul Meo. Rosie was about a foot taller than Paul. They had a dog name kitty. One year Paul and his brother Dominick ..who we called "Red" built a soap box derby car. It was for our annual soap box race down the hill on East Main. I do not know who they built it for, but it was a blue beauty. Sis and I dreamed of racing some year and started going around town seeking employment to finance our racing career. Unfortunately, we made the mistake of seeking a job at the local newspaper, the Mooresville Times, where our money making plot made the front page surprising our parents considerably. We never did get to race down that hill, but always enjoyed watching it..especially the race that Larry Laudig would be in. His car was sleek, but brakes were not his forte. That

lead to yearly wondering anticipation on race day- the same affliction that fills the coffers of the Indianapolis 500.

Next to the Meo's were the Forrester's, Mike, Mary and their son Jim. Mike was an upholsterer for the Rail passenger cars at the yards in Beech Grove, he had a small upholstery shop in his back yard next to Jim's basketball court and goal where he did his own upholstery business. He could take a worn out looking couch and make it look like it was freshly purchased. When I was in college in Terre Haute I found a fine oak rocker at a used furniture store for \$5. I placed it on my head and walked it down Wabash Avenue to my dorm room. When School was out, I brought it home and took it to Mike's shop where he fixed it up like new. Son Jim, was a year younger than me-- the same age as Perk. My ears were ever tuned to hearing Jim's basketball dribbling his dirt packed basketball court. That court witnessed many exciting games including countless games of "HORSE." Jim-- we called him Rube for some unknown reason-- was a sort of scrawny kid, but could shoot the eyes out the basket. Later in high school he was the lead guard and often the high point man. If the three point rule would have existed, he would assuredly have been the top scorer. Jim had a big scarred up dog named Flag. Once Flag took a liking to our little dog Nifty. Perk went running to our house excitedly announcing, "Nifty's getting married!" That evening we got "that talk." The other nice and convenient item in Forrester's back yard was an outhouse. It made for shorter times away from the games of horse and other activities. I recall one between game conversation where Jim and I discussed a crazy story that was in our "Weekly Reader" about the plan to build highways where one could go across the whole country without ever seeing a stoplight. Jim attended Franklin College on a basketball scholarship and like me, returned to Mooresville to teach school—became the Principal at Newby elementary school we both attended. One of the warm benefits of small town living was and is the enduring friendships. Jim is now retired—took on a part time of delivering flowers to the gravesites as well as opening the door and solemnly greeting the many friends of the departed as they visit the Carlisle Branson Funeral Parlor--seems I get to say, " Hey Rube," too often these days.

Between the Forresters and our home lived a single mother, Bea Myrick and her son Genie. Bea was a cook at the Newby Elementary where Rube, Perk and I attended. She was a most generally a pleasant lady but had a streak of stern and short temper. Genie was a few years older than the rest of us. I became rather accustomed to hearing her call out a various unexpected times, GeeeeenEEEE! She had that call down pat. Her back yard along with the Forrester's was large enough for some flies and grounders if you stood in the alley between our houses and didn't put everything into it. At the back of her yard was a large row of mammoth leaved rhubarb. Raw rhubarb is rather sour...and I like sour. After a warming game of shagging balls, too often I would hear her screen door crack as Bea loudly ordered, "Git out of my Pie Plant!" At least her Sargent like commands to Genie kept me from adding snow shoveling to my own list. Genie graduated from Mooresville High, married a quiet girl—prettiest in his class -- named Ladonna. He spent his working years at Newcomer Lumber about two blocks from where he grew up. He and his high school buddy, Max Park, still call me Donnie to this day—as they smile me a greeting.

