

Biology class...ecch!



Blanche Williams at home before her 90th birthday. Friends celebrated her birthday on Sunday.

Tea-time with Blanche

I had tea with Blanche Williams, of Green street in Port Elgin, the other evening. Blanche has just celebrated her 90th birthday and is more alert at 90 than I am at 24. Blanche fed me muffins and pastries until I could eat no more.

This was not the first time I had gone to tea at Blanche's. I had often done so as a nine year-old Port Elgin youngster.

After school I would run down the alley behind her house, and knock on the door uninvited.

But I knew there would be cookies and milk awaiting me there. I would tell Blanche what I had done during my classes, and converse at great lengths about the issues of the day.

When my mom found out about my little jaunts for free cookies she quickly put a stop to them. But I remember my childhood "tea-time" fondly.

Blanche has a lot of memories of Port Elgin, and has seen more than her share of change in this area. She farmed, along with her husband, the late Will Williams, for 18 years on the 8th of Bruce, and later in Saugeen township, before moving into the Green street home she and Will had built for them in 1952.

Blanche and Will were up at half-past five in the morning (if they didn't sleep in until six) in the farming days. Cows were milked and chores were done until seven or eight when it was time for breakfast. Getting the mail meant a two-mile walk to North Bruce.

Among Blanche's childhood memories were the times when cars were unheard of and horses were the sole means of

transportation. She recalls seven years of going to a one-room school where a pointer was slapped smartly across your fingers if your penmanship wasn't up to snuff.

As a youngster Blanche was the youngest of 10 girls and had two brothers. Most of the children didn't have single beds let alone single rooms. Most of the day was spent working.

"You really wonder how we got along," Blanche says of those years.

But it wasn't all work...the family was a ready-made baseball team, and could be formed in an instant for a backyard game. Wood-cutting bees were also common in those days.

"We helped each other out. You knew your neighbours then," Blanche says.

As a Port Elgin resident she remembers the leading businessmen of the day, like H. H. Stevens and John Hepner of the Brush Works. There was also McGillivray's Clothing.

She started to live in Port Elgin when the population was just more than 2,000.

As the hours passed by and Blanche discussed older days without television, I heard the sounds of her antique clock, given to her and Will as a wedding gift. After hours of lively chit-chat I felt I should be on my way.

But just like my childhood tea-times Blanche could not let me leave without taking a bag of muffins with me.

If you know of someone who has lasting memories of this area, let us know. Until next time!



With the science room temporarily off-limits because of the construction of an addition to SDSS, these Grade 12 students must do their dissections for biology in the green-house. Right to left, they are Heather Howlett, Tracy MacGregor, Elizabeth McEwing, and Krista Schwass.

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At the Bruce County 4-H leader's appreciation night, the Lloyd Hutton award of \$500 plus a plaque was presented. Left to right: Gary Munroe, Barry Baetz, Tim Halliday, Andy McCulloch, Mrs. Lloyd Hutton and Stan Eby.