

'Mayors of Creek Street'

Continued from page 6

Creek Street adventures

The Creek Street home holds many happy memories. The door continues to be open to one and all. There have been times when you might find as many as 15 friends and family members sharing the living room.

The Ball gatherings are not a new phenomenon.

When Billie was young, 50 or more people would all head to Church Street to Bill's parents Charlie and Sophie Ball for Sunday dinner. Barbecues at Bill and June's Creek Street home would often have 15 steaks on at a time. These days, the family barbecues are at Brett's place in Grafton.

Bill and June have been dubbed the mayors of Creek Street by their neighbours. June is using her mayoral authority to promote a street dance. One of her first acts as mayor was to have a street barbecue at Glenn and Lynn Rusaw's last summer.

This winter has been a busy one for Bill. He's had his snowblower more than once clearing neighbours' drives.

Changes

There have been changes in Colborne over the past 80 years. Bill remembers many of them.

In the 40s and 50s, young people were involved in many sports. They played baseball, hockey and bowled in a league in Brighton. Colbright Orchards sponsored leagues in all three sports. The owner, Joe Persofsky, lived in the home where the Hearndens now live. Joe had several homes in the area and was at one time one of the biggest apple growers in Canada.

Bill studies photos of his former ball and hockey teams. Only a couple of his peers are still alive. He hopes one day to have the Northumberland Cup displayed in a case at the Keeler Centre. Bill played for the cup in 1948, the last year of competition. Colborne won. Terry Gifford's widow, Joy, now has the cup.

Bill still has his sports uniforms of the 40s. He has recollections of the curling club from when it was in the old Canadian Cannery building. The club house had a weigh scale in it. The rink was in the warehouse where the tomatoes were stored. The ice makers laid down sand and flooded in the winter.

The downtown has changed a great deal.

Years ago, a creamery and bakery were located where Lotsastuff is now. There was a barbershop, post office, Redfern's Variety, Keye's Express newspaper - all on the south side of King Street East. Captain John's of today was a clothing store and a bank sat where McGlennon's Insurance now does business. At the east end of the downtown was Quinn's Garage.

People curled two weeks a winter at an indoor rink where Becker's is today. The rest of the winter, the hockey teams and skaters had at it.

Oldtimers will remember Tony the popcorn seller who made his living off his little cart by Victoria Square Park.



PHOTO COURTESY BILL AND JUNE BALL

How many 1941 Grade 7 and 8 classmates do you remember? Eighty-year-old Bill Ball identified most of his friends from the class of 1941. Perhaps there is someone who knows the names of some of the others.

In front, from left, are: Walter Rutherford, ? Gifford, unknown, Bernard Knapp, Clare Haynes, Cecil Hall, ? Waller. Second row: unknown, Kay Kelly, Mavis Stickle, Faye Thornton, Betty Ball, Shirley Chatterson, unknown, unknown, ? McMullen, unknown. Third row: unknown, unknown, Colleen Brooks, Elinor Haynes, Shirley Valleau, Ethel Tong, Barb Johnston, Betty Sheldrick, ? McCracken. Fourth row: Mr. Davis, Ross Keating, unknown, unknown, unknown, Bill Hetherington, Bill Ball, Ted Hall, Bill Tye, Paul Mallory, Blake Hetherington.

On one of their skating trips, Bill's brother left his boots close to the fire to keep them warm. Unfortunately, the fire grew and he returned to find his boots melted.

On one wall of their home, Bill and June have a painting done by one of his former teachers, Mrs. Wilson. It's of the derelict Keeler Mill with the massive mill pond in the background. Bill has lots of stories about the eccentric Mrs. Wilson.

One day she called him over, all in a flap. When he got there, she wanted him to release a fly caught between the window and the screen so it wouldn't starve. Another time, already in her 90s, she sent him to the store to get some avocados. She'd read that if you eat three a day you'd live to 90.

Retired - and active

These days, Bill and June use their annual park pass to go once a month to Algonquin, walk through the woods, the lumber camp, the hardwood trail and the visitor centre. They stop at the

wag locked them in. June laughs when she thinks she might have been stuck there all day.

Red measles, deer hunting, visits at the ranger's - their time spent up north were amongst some of the happiest in their lives.

The secret to success

What keeps a couple together and happy despite the tests of time?

June says you have to give and take.

"There's always a way of working things out and making them better in the end," reflects June.

"We had to work for what we got, nothing came on a silver platter."

Bill is pretty much in agreement. "You both make mistakes. You toss them out the door."

They are attracted to each other, not money. And they share similar interests.

Their continued close bond, built through the resolution of life's many tests over 60 years, is obvious.

Their wealth is a lifetime of shared memories of the good times savoured and the bad times experienced - spiced by a delicious sense of humour.

