

The Grimsby Lincoln News'

FOCUS

ON LINCOLN

Letter to Editor

The News • January 8, 2003

Neighbour reflects on memories of Bill Soby

Dear Editor,

As we gather around the kitchen table, we are reminded of a dear friend and neighbour whom we respected, admired and with whom we shared many humorous moments.

Central Avenue mourns the loss of our dear neighbour, Bill Soby; historian, writer, milkman, farmer and our very own street reporter. When anything seemed to be out of sorts, or new construction or maybe a new addition to someone's house, Bill was the one that kept his eye on the events of the day. This way we could all be nosy at the same time.

One is truly blessed to have good neighbours. Living beside Bill and Shirley has truly been memorable. Bill and his tomatoes, year after year. Some years big, some years small, but always tomatoes. Russ and I had the pleasure of receiving the first bad tomato every year which would be placed on my car (yes, there is a story to that but we will leave it for now).

Bill always loved his garden and enjoyed planting his impatiens each year. Lawn-cutting was a neighbourly treat and all who would be out at that time would mix work with pleasure. A little cutting, a little talking and a drink on someone's porch after.

In the summer, Bill and Shirley would sit every night after supper on their porch.

That's when every neighbour possible would usually stop by. Joe and Marilyn from one direction, then Ann, Russ, Lisa and Bandit, Bill and Elsie, Nellie, or Gord and Marge, just to name a few. This is truly when everyone would vent or just laugh. It didn't matter because everyone had their say.

Bill enjoyed people and his articles reflected that. He knew cars, people, and their content in life. Every article educated us in some way. It might be a history lesson or a humorous one, like shopping for a dress with Shirley, and even an article on our dog, Bandit.

One of the last articles was on Christies' Christmas parties and mention was made of Jim and Ann's wonderful Christmas party held each year. We are minus one dear friend now.

Everyone has been touched by Bill's articles. A lovely memory the neighbours can share is of Bill and Shirley's 50th wedding anniversary. Once again the handsome couple were enjoying watching the traffic aboard their porch when all of us came from up the street carrying a new garden bench. There were Joe and Marilyn, Russ and Lisa, Nellie, Lesley, Steve, Jim and Ann, Issy, and Bandit. I am sure Mark and Lisa and Mrs. Shepherd were in on it but not available. I hope I didn't forget anyone. We

were singing Happy Anniversary and the happy couple sat down to have a picture taken. Even former neighbours Willy and Nettie have stayed in touch with Bill and the street.

Bill was always right there to lend a hand whenever needed. He helped Russ with the Car Show directing traffic, and along with our other-neighbours, was most trustworthy to lend your house key to.

Looking at pictures of their trips is another memory and another summer fish story would be giggled at by all.

Bill's articles touched on people's lives and Bill has touched his neighbours' lives and deserves an honourable mention.

Everyone who knew Bill has their own story to tell but this is a small contribution from Central Avenue.

Each morning, Bill had his routine of placing the lawn ornaments around the yard since he brought them in each night, and then he would proudly raise the Canadian flag. Whenever a

significant person had passed on, like a family member, friend or celebrity like the Queen Mother, Bill would raise the flag half-mast, but the tree would block the view of the flag so Bill had the problem figured out and just added an extension pole to the existing one. Brilliant!

The little things like collecting all of our recycle bins after collection and placing them so neatly at our doors; his timely morning walks to the coffee shop and return home by 7:30 a.m. for breakfast; picking up our kids from work if needed, letting Bandit out; and the daily chats all seem so precious now.

May God be with you Shirley and family, in helping you to cope with the loss of an inspirational person whom all of us loved, and as Bill's articles were titled Around the Kitchen Table, we the neighbours so fondly remember it as Around the Soby's Porch. We will miss you.

Lisa Robinson, on behalf
of your neighbours

Popular columnist dies at 73

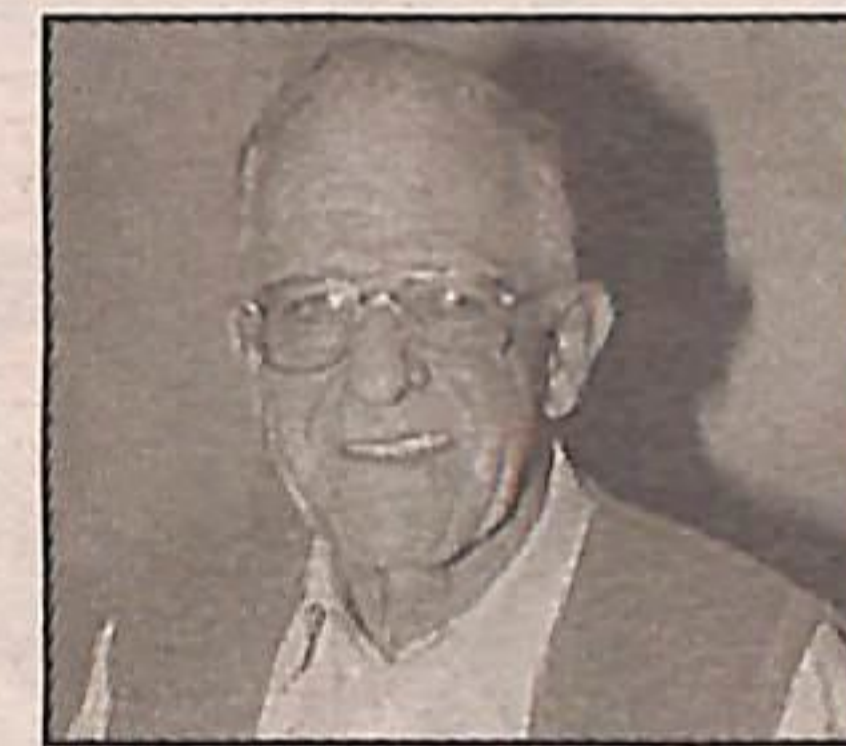
Trinity United Church in Beamsville was packed with family and friends last Friday to remember the life of William Clemens Soby.

Mr. Soby, a columnist with The Grimsby Lincoln News for more than four years, writing "Around the Kitchen Table", died on Dec. 31 at the age of 73.

"Bill Soby was always cheerful," said Mayor Ray Konkle. "I think Bill was born in the right era. He grew up here and he saw a lot changes. He wrote about the simple things and he had a large readership. I don't know anybody who didn't read his column. He was very much involved in his community."

A life-long resident of Lincoln, Mr. Soby was diagnosed with lung cancer in late November.

Rev. Judy Bowman of



BILL SOBYE

Trinity United Church and Rev. Mary Kimberley of St. Alban's Anglican Church hosted the ceremony by "special request"

On reflecting on his columns Rev. Bowman noted, "He was the type of man who could turn the ordinary into extraordinary. Through his writing he has helped his readers do the same. Through the writing and his stories we all know him."

"I have known Bill Soby all my life. I remember visiting their farm on Thirty

Road when I was a young girl with my father," said Rev. Kimberley. "I remember he always gave a smile and wave when he recognized you."

He loved Beamsville, she added.

"He said, 'If it wasn't to be had in Beamsville, it's probably not worth having'."

"Bill was a family man, a good citizen and a good businessman. He will greatly be missed by his friends and family, and this community."

Mr. Soby will be sadly missed by his wife, Shirley, children Debbie and Chuck Knight of Vineland, Patricia Nunziato of Port Colborne, Joe Soby of St. Catharines, seven grandchildren, and his sister Mae Annable and her husband Ken of Beamsville.