

A Trip Down Memory Lane with Long Time Malvern Hills Resident Faith Keener

The Keener residency in Malvern Hills began in 1951 when Faith and L.C. "Bud" married and moved into their Cranford Road house. Faith is a native of North Muskegon, Michigan and moved to Asheville in 1948. Bud was employed with the railroad for 50 years. Unfortunately, he passed away in 1993.

Faith worked for an architect and later for a CPA firm and retired at the young age of 80. In her early days in Asheville she worked at the Red Cross Blood Center on Broadway.

For six decades she has watched and help nurture the generations that have called our neighborhood home. One young man who was a friend of their son Alan became so intrigued with Bud's ham radio operations he later became a NASA scientist.

Her memory recalls the December holidays when practically every house and yard became a seasonal wonderland with Christmas decorations and the churches complemented the occasion with live Nativity scenes. Yes, with animals. The sheep and donkeys became so loud with their neighing the choir had to step up their volume to drown out the four-legged crooners. Once the donkeys tried to eat the costume beards worn by the shepherds. Carolers serenaded families with the Yuletide spirit. Neighborhood children played well past dark under the streetlights and parents knew they were safe. One young man complained that he was given the task of tying a red ribbon to every utility pole in the neighborhood to add to the festive atmosphere. Mack Bennett is remembered for decorating a full-grown holly tree with his daughter's toys.

A jigsaw puzzle aficionado, Faith spends her days intricately matching the puzzle pieces to complete the masterpieces in record time. She is also a passionate NASCAR fan and her favorite driver is Jeff Gordon. Her enthusiasm for racing began when she attended the 1954 Indy 500 as a newly wed. If a race is on TV you can bet she'll be tuned in and if you want a detailed explanation of the point standings in the racing world, just ask Faith.

Her son Alan and his wife Dayle are parents to Alyssa. Alyssa is married to Marine Corps Major Chris Jones and they are the parents of three daughters Hanna, Luthien and Avenlea.

Crediting her strong religious convictions for her longevity and good health, she also gives thanks to her neighbors for their many acts of kindness. Her neighbors say it is her inspiration that defines a model we could all emulate. She continues to say that she has been richly blessed being a Malvern Hills resident.

.....Written by Dorland Winkler, one of Mrs. Keener's caring neighbors