

## **Dale Groce Shares Memories of Malvern Hills in Earlier Times**

The Groce children: Joan, Dale and Bill Jr., grew up at 46 School Road, which our parents, Bill & Mary Groce, built in 1950. On one side lived Dr. Dwight Ware, a retired Methodist minister and somewhat stout gentleman (think Winston Churchill), and who incidentally, owned two black Checker automobiles, and on the other side Albert and Lina Fortune, she a school teacher, and he owned the hardware store in West Asheville.

Childhood memories include many youngsters in the neighborhood: from Ann Clayton in the first house on School Road, to Charles and Nicky Bennett, in the last house at the other end.

We played whiffle ball with Johnny Cooper and Billy Meece in the Meece's back yard at 57 School Road, badminton and shuffle board in the Groce's back yard, and basketball in the Cooper's back yard. Each house had ping-pong tables to entertain us when it rained, and almost every neighborhood mother had cow bells or other attention-getters to call us home for supper. Larry Fortune, Richard Hull and Butch Chesley, who, being a couple of years older, occasionally tolerated us as they experimented with ham radios or boy scout projects.

Mrs. J.O. Hendrix taught smooth square dancing to the neighborhood children in the basement of her house, "Blue Heaven" at the corner of School Road and Cranford. Every year she took a team to the Mountain Youth Folk Festival in the city auditorium, a group that often included Becky Snyder, Dorothy Jacokes, Frances Ann Bennett, Julie Jones, Mary Elizabeth Belz, Rosemary Kiser, Billy Meece, Jay McCracken and me.

In the winter, all the kids would gather at the old golf course for sledding (followed by hot chocolate at the Bryson's), and in the summer, we would ride our bikes to explore "Big Pines", the dark and mysterious forest that is now the location of Bear Creek Apartments.

When Terrie and I married, we lived for a few years at 85 Wendover Road, between Gus and Tweetie Ann Devlin, and Mike and Eva Green, across the street from George and Linda Humphreys. But when Mr. & Mrs. Herman Medler decided to sell their home at 42 Cranford Road, (reportedly the original Asheville School headmaster's home) we jumped at the opportunity to purchase a house we had always admired. We raised our daughter Kristina there and welcomed Terrie's parents, Glenn and Blanche Starnes, in an apartment addition to our residence.

Malvern Hills has always been a safe and comfortable neighborhood and Terrie and I never regretted our decision to remain near our roots and stay with our friends.