

Remembrances from Craig Spooner

I wish that I as one of those people that can easily talk off the top of their head because I have so many things I would like to share about Chuck. I have written some thoughts down and feel that it would be easier for me to share my memories by reading what I have written.

Chuck was a good friend and neighbor of mine on Center Street for 37 years. My wife Jeanne and I owned the Home and Cabinet shoe just up the road from the Nelke's. I have been trying to remember how we first met, but early memories on Center Street have started to somewhat fade.

Chuck and I did have many connections early on: We were both members here at St. Joseph Church, Lorraine worked in the Orthopedic Office of our brother in law Don Paluska, and Chuck and I both managed our own businesses in the construction field. Chuck was a floor and counter contractor and I made cabinets.

Chuck loved to talk. I would often stop by if I saw his shop door open just to say "hi." Usually, an hour later, we were still there shooting the breeze. Chuck had a dry sense of humor and he told me kiddingly that if ever I saw his shop door open and the TV on, Lorraine had probably kicked him out of the house. After that, whenever Jeanne and I would drive by the Nelke's, we would look for the open shop door with the TV on and comment to each other – "Oh Boy, Lorraine must have kicked Chuck out of the house again."

Chuck loved to talk to all of his neighbors. We would often see him hanging over the fence talking to the family that ran the golf course next door. The kids, Summer and Jake, used to call him Mr. Wilson. Jake was Dennis the Menace and Chuck was the next door neighbor Mr. Wilson.

Chuck was a very generous and giving person. When we needed trees to decorate in the St. Joseph Sanctuary, he allowed us to take trees from the back of his property. He also brought over his 200 lb floor roller and his free advice when I was installing vinyl flooring in my shop office. When he heard that I had a bad back, I had an open invitation to visit the Nelke Hot Tub anytime.

Chuck loved his family and spoke of them often. I always admired his deep love of family and of his Church. But this is where we differed. Chuck was a sit close to the back of the Church kind of person and I was a sit up front kind of person. I always made a point of saying "hello" to Chuck and Lorraine in the back of the Church on my way up to the front. And Chuck always made a point of giving me a little nod and smile on his way back from Communion.

Our neighbor, Sharon Moore, gave us some of her memories of Chuck. Mostly she remembered Chuck up on a ladder with a chainsaw, cutting off the tops of his arborvitae as she walked by. She also remembered his enormous burn pile every year. A memory of Chuck that Sharon and I share is that of him every morning on his way to share coffee with his buddies.

We both remember him as cheerful and friendly and a great neighbor.

I feel privileged to have had Chuck as a friend and neighbor all these years. Ever since Lorraine's passing, Chuck has confided in me how lonely he was without her. When I think of him now, I can picture him back with Lorraine, being free of that loneliness, because God has called him home.