

## **MY NEIGHBOR CHARLIE HOLDINSKY**

**Kathleen Harrold**

Charlie Holdinsky was born in Moundsville, West Virginia, where his father was a glassblower for Fostoria Glass. Charlie fell in love with his high school girl friend, Joann, and upon graduation in 1952, they decided to marry. He went to get her dad's permission, finding him on the porch. Joann was peeking through the screened door. When Charlie asked for his daughter's hand, her dad replied, "Hell, no. You gotta take all of her."

They went to get a marriage license but were told Charlie, still 17, was too young to marry in West Virginia. Joann had turned 18. But in Maryland, with parental permission, it was allowed. His dad wouldn't go, but his mother accompanied them to Cumberland, M.D. to sign the papers for a license. Then they had to wait two weeks to marry, at which time the two of them returned. They had no plan of who would perform the ceremony or be witnesses but found a pastor who did so.

Soon Charlie lost his job, so he was married and unemployed. When he went to the unemployment office he was told there were jobs in a Lorain, Ohio, steel mill; if he wanted the job he should get on a departing bus. So he got on the bus without his wife knowing. They had no telephone so he sent a postcard from Lorain to the store where she worked. In two weeks, after receiving his first paycheck, he took a Friday night bus home to Moundsville. They packed up some belongings and returned to Lorain. Charlie thought he had rented an apartment, but really it was a room with a kitchen and bath shared by four other couples.

Charlie looked around at the condition of his co-workers and decided a future of being a steel worker wasn't what he wanted. So he took correspondence courses in electronics and found employment in electrical repair shops. Then he applied to a program at IBM, passed the test, and was accepted as an electronics technician. He started in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., and from there, for 35 years, went everywhere. He

describes his movements as “Like horse manure, you could find me anywhere.” San Jose, CA, was a main location.

He and Joann moved to Wind Crest on Halloween, 2007, among the first residents of Blue Spruce. He lost Joann in 2013 after 61 years of marriage. On his door shelf are pictures of their three children, three grandchildren, and six great grandchildren.