

Giving thanks for good neighbours: 1968

Story and photo by Sherry Stewart,
Artwork by Holly Stewart

[My husband, Don and I, with our children Stewart, Carole, and Holly, moved into a cabin at the north end of Roe Lake in October of 1968. We were all truly babes in the woods and probably wouldn't have lasted out that first winter if not for the enormous concern and extreme generosity of our newfound neighbours. These folks didn't know us, but they stepped right in like we were family and made us feel so thankful to be a part of this special Cariboo community. —Sherry Stewart (Berger), October 2004]

It was early November 1968 and we'd been here only a few weeks when Dan and Mark Caziers, two bachelor ranchers to the west, came by to see how we were getting along. When they realized that we were expecting to heat our 40 foot square log cabin with only the wood stove, they left so quickly as to be almost rude. Very unusual.

Then, in no time, they appeared again lugging a huge heavy cast iron heater. With much effort and several hours work we all maneuvered it into position in the cabin, and then learned to our astonishment that the heater had come from the basement of someone called "Sam" who was a summer resident. They had gone into someone's house while the owner was away and taken a huge heater out of his basement!!

"Sam won't mind," Mark grinned.

"We'll write to him and ask his permission," Dan assured us, brushing soot from his hands and nodding approval at the



Taking a break are (L to R) Mark Caziers, Holly and Don Berger, Dan Caziers.

monster's final resting place.

We raised our teacups to "Sam," and I hoped, whoever he was, he'd understand. (He was Sam Huey and, of course, he did.)

We busied ourselves those early weeks with the projects we felt must be done before winter really set in. With the help of Harold Ellis's cement mixer we hurriedly (the concrete had a

way of freezing in the mixer) built a 4x5x8 ft. septic tank, and immediately bought the Amway products to go with it from Hazel Larson.

Several times our friends the Caziers brought up the subject of gathering wood, explaining that the heater wouldn't work without it. We cheerfully replied each time that as soon as the tank was finished and the roofing done and the fences mended, etc., etc., we would get right on it.

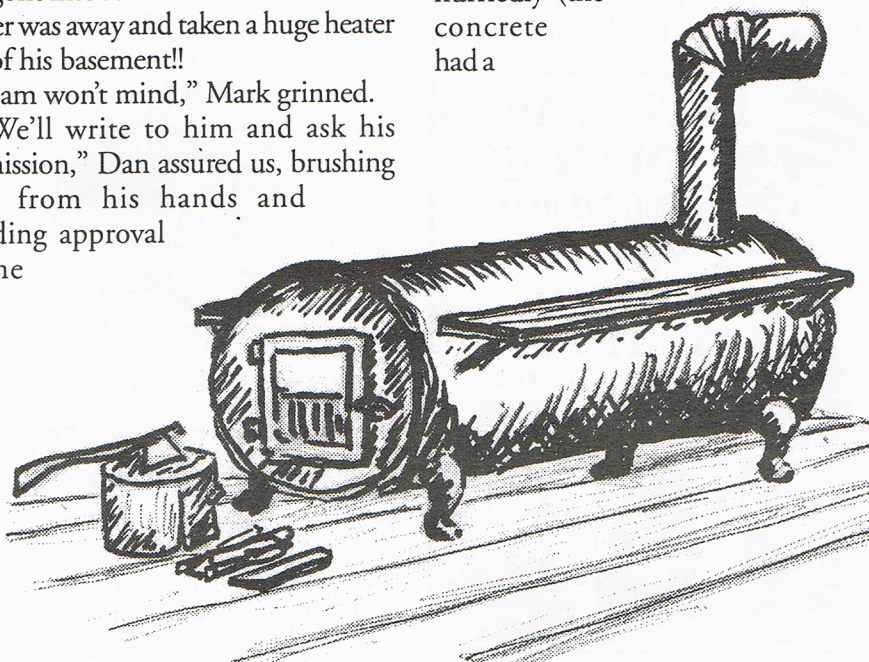
Finally, Mark and Dan appeared one day and, waving aside the usual Cariboo custom of chatting politely several minutes before getting to the reason for the visit, they came right out with it.

"If a man's going to heat with wood, he'd best be getting it in."

"Oh yes," came my husband's ready reply, "as soon as..."

"He'd best be getting it in now," Mark politely held his ground.

"We know a place where loggers have left lots of good-sized fir branches. We can use our tractor and wagon to haul them over here," Dan pressed on. "Then we'll use Rick Buchanan's tractor and the buzz saw to cut 'em up for you." (cont'd on p 7)



Sudden loss at Deka Lake: Werner Marx

Deka Lake lost nothing less than a "support beam" when Werner Marx passed away unexpectedly, September 7, at the age of 62. Owner of the Cariboo Chalet B&B, Werner had experienced serious health problems in the past but, at this time, had simply been undergoing tests in Kamloops, which made the shock of his passing from liver failure that much greater. Deka Firehall's flag flew at half-mast, in honour of the VFD's Head Fire Commissioner.

The small confident man who firmly but courteously led most of Deka's non-profit community organisations was loved and respected by all, as evidenced by the hundreds of friends attending his funeral mass at St. Jude's, September 11. His firefighter peers were pallbearers, and Harv Allen gave the eulogy.

Werner was laid to rest at Lakeview (Roe Lake) Cemetery, September 14.

Deka will never forget Werner, and the community extends its deepest sympathy to Ruth, his wife of 33 years, his sister Edith and his family.

(Cont'd from page 6)

Getting the wood in...

Finally, and fortunately, we saw the light. Those men spent the next five days showing Don "how it's done," and when they were finished the mountain of pine logs and fir branches almost hid our cabin. All around the snow was building up at an alarming rate, and we realized at last how very much we needed our new neighbours' help.

When winter really hit, she hit hard. Twice the thermometer dropped to a numbing -54°F, and stayed there. But inside our new log house we were cozy as cats before a fireside. Sam's huge heater radiated warmly as our newfound friends wove priceless yarns for us over hot coffee or tea and fragrant homemade bread.

As the months raced by, we encountered again and again a unique, selfless sense of sharing that seems to be the way of life in these parts. Dick and Clara Buchanan brought over a whole pig, explaining that their freezer was too full, and that we could repay them if we liked with one of our lambs next fall. Other friends stuffed our freezer with what

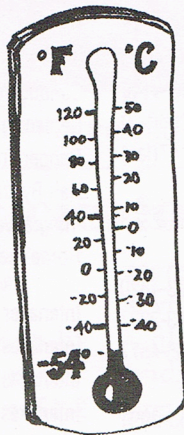
must have been at least a quarter of a moose. When we purchased a beef quarter from Kayo Higgins, we found ourselves in a new dilemma. How do you get that hopelessly huge hunk of meat off the hook in your basement and into your freezer, neatly packaged?

Donna and Ernie Unger came to our rescue, as they so often had before, offering not only moral support but a meat saw as well.

"Aren't you terribly afraid of being there all alone," a friend wrote, "with no phone and wild animals all around and that awful cold?"

I could only smile at that, for I knew I could never explain to someone raised in a crowded city the concern the people here have for one another. The pioneer spirit of the Cariboo that attracted us to move here in the first place had now come vividly alive in the very warm and generous people who make up this special community we now call home.

[First published in the 100 Mile Free Press Cariboo Calling, August 1969, byline Sherry Berger]



Newsbits...

Citizens wanting Land and Water BC Inc to modify its development plans for the Crown Land around Birch Lake and Lac des Roches have had three meetings so far. "The Friends of Lac des Roche and Birch Lake" want to preserve the ambience and quality of life in that area. Brian Reid, 593 4964, has more info.

Book your space now for the annual Roe Lake Christmas Craft Fair, the best show in town! From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 14, Interlakes Hall will be full of wonderful gifts created by local craftspeople. Table rental is \$20, which must be paid by Nov. 1. Reserve before it's too late; space always sells out quickly. Call Joanne at 593-4570 (cont'd on p 8)

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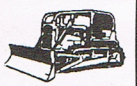
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