

Pioneers: Marie Monette [conclusion]

By Sherry Stewart



“And we made our own fun too,” Marie Monette says. “Everybody had a horse. I remember Olga Granberg and I would ride to the Bridge Lake Store. We had fun in the

winter too. The Granbergs had an old horse, and we’d get a toboggan and tie the toboggan behind the horse, and as many as could would pile on the horse and the rest on the toboggan.

“And we would skate. There was always a rink on Roe Lake. My dad made this gismo, it was a Finnish thing. He would set a stump or a block into the ice and it would freeze there. And then, running out from that, was a long narrow pine tree log that he would attach to the stump, so it was like a long pole that went out the length of a small tree. Then he had a runner business on the end of that, and you sat on this runner thing and hung on to the sides, and then the other kids got in the middle. Then they pushed it in a circle, like a merry-go-round on the ice. Dad built one of those every year.”

Another childhood delight for Marie was photography, and she won first place ribbons early on for her pictures at the Bridge Lake Fall Fair.

“I started entering pictures in the fair when I was 9 years old,” she told me. “The fair was a big event for the local people because everybody competed. Usually it was held at the Bridge Lake Hall. They brought baking, vegetables, flowers. It was kind of a dress-up affair, everybody



Irma Malm, Curly Granberg, Howard, Marie and Nancy Malm loved skating on Roe Lake. The three Malm sisters had one pair of skates between them and were happy to share.

went, there was lots of food. I remember a friend from Vancouver gave me a cake recipe. I made it for the fair and I won first prize. I was so proud of that, and I was only 10!”

Marie’s brother, Howard, has this to say. “Growing up, Marie and I were

the two oldest, so we were pretty close. She was outgoing, likeable, and the apple of her dad’s eye. In the school year of 1938/1939 she was old enough to start school, and we lived up at Montana Hill, where the Montana Hill Guest Ranch is now. There was no school there, of course, so Dad put the place up for sale and homesteaded at Roe Lake so his children could go to school.

“The Roe Lake School was there, but closed at that time for lack of students. I had been taking correspondence for two years, so I was ready for Grade 3 and Marie was ready to start school. Since there was no school at Roe Lake that year, we were boarded out at Lone Butte with Frank and Noveta Leavitt. That was the first year they were married.

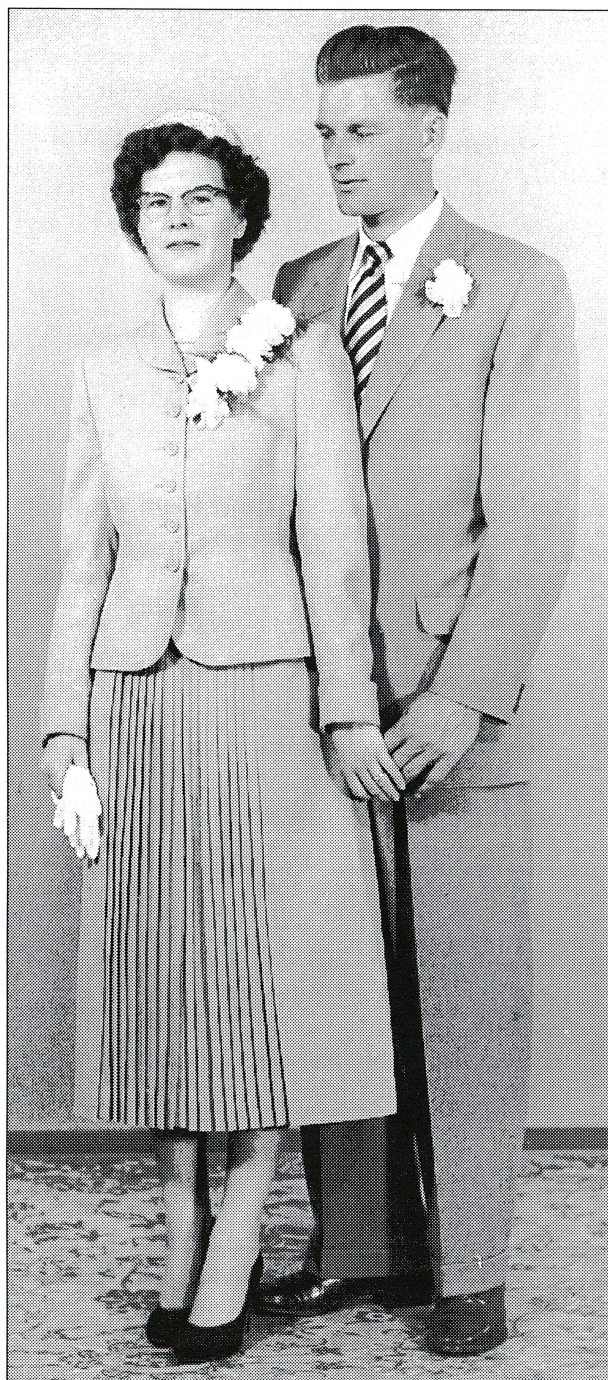
“Then in the Fall of 1940 the Roe Lake School opened and we went on from there. After grade school, she and Irma both



Ed, Nancy, Marie and Velma Malm with Verna in front. Taken in Kamloops where Marie and Nancy were living. Marie worked and Nancy attended school (note uniform).



Dowling and Marie, still smiling after over 50 years of marriage



Marie and Dowling were married in June of 1954

went to business college in Kelowna, and they boarded out with Ross and Jean McMillian. Then, when she was done there, she came back and worked in an insurance office in Kamloops. That was the company which was the beginning of Barton Insurance Brokers today. That was Marie's professional life.

"In June 1954, Marie married Dowling Monette. Their first home was a little cabin on Horse Lake and they still live on Horse Lake today, though in a different location." They have three children, Adele, Joe, and Michele. Dowling eventually started his own business, Dowling C. Monette Logging Ltd., which Joe runs today.

So the 2007 Marie is little different from the girl raised at Roe Lake. She is still taking big awards at the fair. In 2005 she was awarded the Bridge Lake Fair's highest award, the Grand Aggregate, and also won the People's Choice Floral Award.

She is still caring for her family, still making people feel good, making people laugh, and calling things the way she sees them.

Niece Sharon Stewart says, "I think what makes Auntie Marie stand out from others is her commitment to her faith, her family and her friends. She has that wonderful gift that always makes everyone around her feel comfortable and loved. How lucky we all are to have her on the other end of the telephone when we need a good laugh or just for someone to listen."

Sharon's sister, Ruth Peterson, echoes

her sister's sentiments. "She has such a fabulous sense of humour and the most hilarious sayings ever. No matter the mood I'm in, when I see her I always come home with a smile on my face.

"One thing for certain, she has cared for and helped with more family matters than anyone. At a time when most of us are ready to throw our arms up in despair, Auntie Marie is patiently and quietly tending to the issues we would all like to forget about. Yet I have never once heard her pat herself on the back for all that she has done. It truly shows that everything she does is out of love and not for recognition.

I have to believe it is that humble quality about her that everyone gravitates towards. And although nobody can tell a story with as much flair as Auntie Marie, you never have to question that every word is the gospel truth.

"She's just a simple, loving, caring person that you can trust with your soul. Perhaps she doesn't see herself that way but it truly is what emanates from within her."

So the girl born at Montana Hill is still strong and responsible, feisty and funny, kind and loving, and she still tells it like it is.

And she is still an avid supporter of women. She told me, with a great burst of enthusiasm, "I'm so delighted that Hillary Clinton has declared her intention to run for the office of President of the United States! Then if we have a woman run for Prime Minister in Canada—we've got it made!"