

# Mount Lorne

Community Newsletter **APRIL 2013**

Joint Effort of the Hamlet Advisory Council  
and the Lorne Mountain Community Association

- *Stories and Voices of the Valley Project*
- **25 years Community of Mount Lorne**

Lorne Mountain Community Association,  
Hamlet of Mt. Lorne Advisory Council,  
Mount Lorne Volunteer Fire Department and  
Transformation Station





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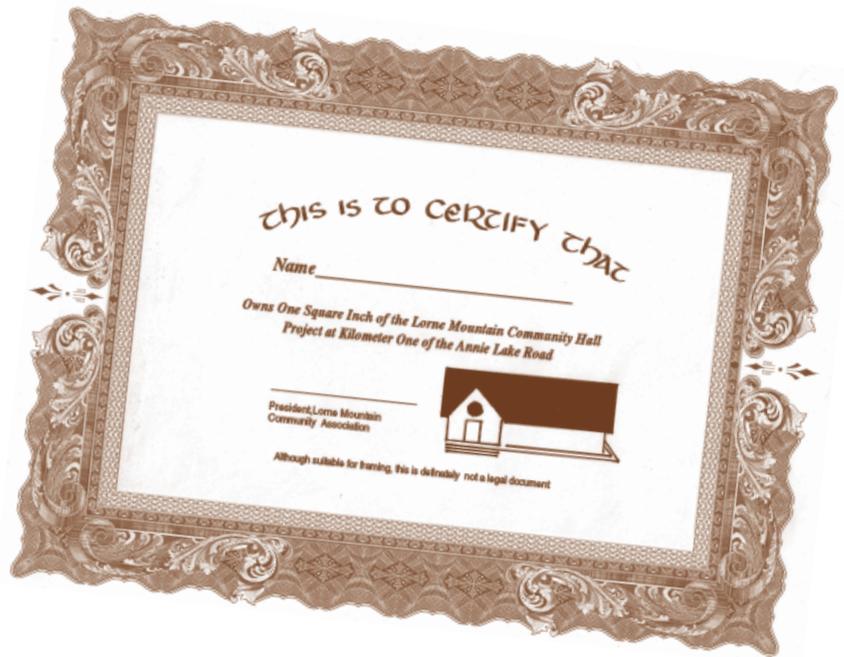
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# Stories and Voices of the Valley

A LMCA project initiated by local seniors on gathering history on the Hamlet of Mt Lorne. Stories of early dwellers, long term residents, changing road names, hunting and trapping, agriculture and mining, White Pass, Cowley Station and more... **And here are your stories: On who and what made this such a great place to live! Stories by your neighbors, about your neighborhood.**

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## “There’s gold in them thar hills”

“There’s gold in them thar hills” may be the often misquoted line about the gold to be found about the Dahlonega, Georgia USA Gold Rush in 1849 but it’s what came to mind as we prepared this special edition of our newsletter.

The Carcross Valley is a special place, and while it may not be filled with gold the precious metal — it does contain gold of another sort... the stories and experiences of the people who live here now... and those who came before us. Under the leadership of local resident Christel Percival, the Lorne Mountain Community Association had the good fortune in 2012 to receive some funding from both the federal and territorial governments.



With this funding we bought some equipment and arranged for some training for those who were interested in capturing the history of various pieces of infrastructure of the Valley and the stories of some of its residents... well, the stories they were willing to have recorded anyway.

I have it on good authority that there are other stories that are being reserved for “another time.” A time, no doubt, when there isn’t a digital recorder in sight!

We are pleased to present you with some of the stories we have gathered to date. We have all been learning so much about where we live and we hope that you do too. We welcome your feedback and stories of your own or ideas for stories you think we should collect. Eventually, the stories and photos we’ve put together in support of those stories will be filed at the Yukon Archives where they will be available for generations to come.

So settle in and start reading because “there’s gold in them thar hills.”

**SHARON HICKEY**  
*President LMCA*

## Mount Lorne Hamlet Council – how it came to be... .

On December 7, 1990 a Yukon Order in Council (OIC) created the Hamlet of Mount Lorne and also the first Local Advisory Council (LAC). The initiative to create the Hamlet came from local residents in the hope that they would have a greater say in how this area would develop in the future. It also came out of frustration on past development issues that concerned land, road upgrading and mine development. The process did not just stop there, we saw members of the community also come together to start developing our Local Area Plan. Over several years residents would meet at our recently completed community centre and hash out a community's vision on how we wanted to see this area develop. Some members stayed with the process to the final acceptance of the plan by government, others came and went, but left behind their thoughts about what should happen. In the end we had a plan that was community driven and incorporated some unique ideas that fit into the community's vision of the area. It definitely wasn't what I believe the government planners would have wanted to see, as it didn't quite meet the vision of your typical land planner, but it was our plan. It saw the need to maintain the Hamlet as a rural lifestyle community, it saw the need to revisit the plan every five years to insure we were still on track with the community's desires, and it saw the need to grow by envisioning 8 new lots being created each year, spread out over the hamlet. Some of the residents that participated in this process also went on to be councillors representing our Hamlet, which gave our council strong background knowledge when presenting issues to government departments. For a small population base (410 individuals by the 2011 census) we

have developed a sense of community that gets expressed at our great variety of community events, support of our volunteer fire department and dump and shown by the attendance whenever there is a government meeting concerning land development in the area.

Several times a year the various LACs get together to talk amongst themselves and with various government representatives regarding issues that they are dealing with and to hopefully find a solution. The commonality of our problems is what always gets my attention, which then raises the question is government just not listening and why? It seems like our only option is to keep hammering away at these issues, especially with land until equitable solutions that both meet the community's desires and government's initiatives are met. But we have to be extremely patient as this process never seems to move very fast or smoothly. We also have to make sure that we have a constant source of community members who are willing to step forward and volunteer their time, energy and ideas to keep the community active and growing, whether it is sitting on council, volunteering at a community event, learning to be a firefighter, attending a meeting and expressing their ideas. All these types of activities insure that the idea a few residents had back in the late 1980's to create a community called the Hamlet of Mount Lorne will continue to be a place that all of us will want to enjoy living in.

**AL FOSTER**  
*Councillor, Annie Lake Road Ward*

# Did you know?

We do have four great organizations – founded and run by volunteers, then and now, that have a great deal to do with why our community is the best place to live in.

## Mount Lorne Volunteer Fire Department

- MLVFD started out with a letter of request for a fire station to YTG in 1992 after Robinson area was built and had led to a greater population density as well as the scary experience of a fire at Lewis Lake.
- it was incorporated July 21st 1994
- first AGM was October 18th 1994. President Dave Dowie, VP Steve Gedrose, Treasurer Margret Mundell, Secretary Brenda Mattson. First Fire Chief was Elizabeth Row and 31 volunteers joined!

In 19 years since then various buildings have gone up at the Robinson site of the fire hall, countless volunteer hours have been spent, fires suppressed, car accidents attended, funky fundraisers planned and held and MLVFD gave great support to various community events. In 2013 there are over 20 active volunteers and a supportive executive! Thank You!

## Lorne Mountain Community Association

- Rumor has it that LMCA was founded to house the ever growing food coop of those days (and to have more space for the famous community parties)
- LMCA was incorporated May 13th 1983
- The first building – Community hall was started in 1990 and went up 1991
- In the high days of hockey in Mt. Lorne two minor hockey teams, six coaches, and a regular family hockey league were active in the competition size rink
- 1994 saw a playground, 1995 a multi-use course and 1997 a skateboard park go up
- Over 10 km of cross country ski trails were developed and are maintained and enjoyed
- Two years ago a new building was developed with garage, showers and apartment

Today LMCC has an average of 100 family memberships a year and up to 60 volunteers involved in keeping this facility running



Solstice sparkler skate at LMCA ice rink

## Transformation Station

– **Mt Lorne Garbage Recycling Society** (still called Mile 9 Dump )

Early folks that made this happen were: Karen McKenna, Ian Campbell, Doug Gilday, Brenda Mattson and Bill Sinclair. Thanks to Mike Bailey for this info and for keeping us all on our toes when it comes to recycling!

## Hamlet of Mount Lorne Advisory Council

Check out page 4 and their webpage [www.mountlorne.yk.net](http://www.mountlorne.yk.net)

# Mount Lorne Volunteer Fire Department

BY JUDY BEAUMONT

When I was first asked to write a contribution from the Mount Lorne Volunteer Fire Department, I thought perhaps it should come from the Chief or someone else. Then I realized that I was starting my 18th year as a volunteer and had probably been there the longest. So here are a few of my memories:

The fire hall opened in January 1996 with a funny old pumper/tanker that looked like it was built in the 1950's. There were officials and a handful of volunteer firefighters in spanking new turnout gear. Liz Row was the first Chief and replaced soon after by Dave Dowie, who held that position for 10 years. My ex decided to join the department in March of that year and I have lived with a pager and radio sitting on my counter ever since. I figured I wasn't agile enough to put on gear and climb up ladders so focused on helping as a dispatcher, board member and floor washer.

The first big test came about 3 am one cold December night in 1996, about 10 days before Christmas. The Kowalysen's house on Cowley Lake was totally engulfed by the time MLVFD got there but the crew worked for hours and hours making sure the fire didn't spread to the surrounding buildings. I'm sure that Golden Horn Volunteer Fire Department was there as well. I remember that the Carcross Cutoff restaurant sent over much appreciated food for the crew as they worked in those -25°C temperatures. It was a long haul where many lessons were learned. I remember that my ex made it home about 5 pm the next day, just before our planned dinner guests arrived. A couple of months later, the Fire Marshal's Office delivered a "newer" pumper to the fire hall.



We started to hold fundraising events in 1997, mostly to get the community aware that we existed. We held car washes at the fire hall for a couple of years each May. Then I got the idea of having a raffle. In December 1997, I sewed and donated a quilt wall hanging. It was a lot of work (licences, tickets, reports etc) but we raised \$1,000 by selling 1000 tickets for a buck each. I think we bought another radio because we only had two for the entire department at that time. I considered the raffle a success and decided to do another one the next year and double our goal. However, this time I wanted to get the community involved so I persuaded 11 other ladies, who had some knowledge of sewing, to each make a 6" square depicting a month of the year. When it was all put together, it was a magnificent huge wall hanging. I knew the gal who won it and I have even offered to buy it from her! With the money raised, we spent \$1,000 to buy the huge spotlight that sit on top of the pumper. Each time the Fire Marshal's Office delivers an upgraded pumper to us, I remind the crew to take "our" light off so it doesn't get sent to some other volunteer fire department.

We've had many fun fundraising events over the years. When the Trail of 98 stage dog race came through our community in January 1998, we supplied the chili dinner and actually made a few bucks. I have photos of some unknown mushers named Ken Anderson and Sebastian Schneulle, lying



on the floor in sleeping bags with dozens of booties strung out on lines to dry. They both went on to become top Yukon Quest and Iditarod finishers. We try to show up at community events such as the Carbon Hill, Canada Day, Halloween, Christmas and Dumpster Dining to let the kids have fun with water hose games. We get to “play” ourselves during the annual Mt. Lorne MisAdventure run every July for the past 10 years. For a couple of years, back in the beginning, Pat Ross from Whitehorse would show up, dressed in his kilt, with his bagpipes. He jumped on the back of my ATV the first year and we bounced up Mt. Lorne together to my water station. You can imagine the surprise of the runners as they were piped up that long hill. Then we decided it would be easier to have Pat at the finish line instead.

In August 1998 we got our first taste of fighting a wildland fire down the Annie Lake Road. Of course the YTG crew was in command of the fire but we helped supply water. I remember Claire, who lived nearby, asked the crew to bring her gear from the fire hall and meet her at the scene. She drove to the scene in her own vehicle and didn't have time to roll up her windows. So when the water bombers dropped that red retardant and the wind blew it a bit...well, you can imagine what her truck looked like. In May 2002, a neglected brush fire, smack in the middle of the Robinson subdivision, got the attention of the community and we instantly got 4 or 5 new recruits. It's too bad it usually takes a wake-up call like this to remind the community that we exist and of all the hard work and practice time the volunteers put in.



In 2004, the Yukon experienced one of the worst forest fire seasons since the 80's. I personally think that is when we realized the important role we have in the community and really started to gel as a fire department. The next Spring, YTG sent out a crew to give us more advanced training, as first responders, in the art of forest fire fighting. We are usually the first on scene and can be of immense help before the YTG crews arrive. I was sure grateful on May 24, 2009 when MLVFD was there to spray my house and nearby trees with water and foam as helicopters, water bombers and attack crews fought a careless human-started fire 500 meters away up Bear Creek. I thought my worst nightmare was coming true as ash fell all around.

It's been fun trying to recall some of the fun things we have done at MLVFD over the past 17 years and also to see how much we have grown – Revenue Canada charity status; a new building addition last year to accommodate our growing fleet; a good solid crew of fire fighters with many training courses under their belts; successful fundraising efforts that allow us to purchase upgrades in PPE (personal protection equipment) and insurance not covered by YTG. Some volunteers have moved out of our community, others have moved up the ladder and become permanent full-time paid fire fighters at the Whitehorse Fire Department.

I remember when a 15 year old Kiara Adams used to tag along with her father to practice night. She was too young at the time to participate but eventually started her training. Last Fall she became the first full-time female fire fighter with the City of Whitehorse and is now helping train volunteer fire departments! Opportunities abound in the Hamlet of Mount Lorne.

I am proud to be a small part of the team!



# Lewis Lake 2005

## — Where Did It Go...

BY SHARON HICKEY

In June 2004 my partner Carol and I had the good fortune to move into our Dave Boucout built home overlooking Lewes Lake. With the mountains in the background, we were thrilled to have found this piece of pristine Yukon to call our own. Our delight in this property was tested when we came home from work one day to find that a portion of the lake had drained almost completely.

What do you mean, "the lake is gone?" I looked at Carol, not comprehending. Nobody "takes" a lake I said. It was August 11, 2005 and we'd just come home from work. We kept our window blinds drawn during the day to reduce at least some of the solar gain so that our black Labrador Retriever Dax would be more comfortable. Carol was the first to start raising the blinds that day and that's when she said, "the lake is gone."

*Carol was the first to start raising the blinds that day and that's when she said, "the lake is gone." We both rushed outside to the deck, still not fully understanding what had happened.*

We both rushed outside to the deck, still not fully understanding what had happened. The lake was indeed, gone, but this was not the first time it had more or less been diminished. Lewes Lake, apparently, had quite a storied history.

According to local historian Roy Minter, on September 14, 1899, White Pass and Yukon Route engineer A.B. Lewis had arranged for the lake to be lowered (drained) 10 feet in order to get this

section of track completed before winter. As the water started flowing out of a four-foot-wide trench the Lewis crew had cut, it was soon obvious that the flow could not be contained. The force of the water tore away the banks of the trench and flooded the Watson River. "Mud and debris covered the Watson River Valley and Lake Bennett was brown with mud for 15 miles south of Carcross and the waters were stained all the way to the North-West Mounted Police Post at Tagish Lake" (Minter, 1987, p. 324). The lake had been lowered 70 feet – 60 more than intended. Never the less, the lake was named to honour engineer A.B. Lewis but misnamed Lewes Lake when a typo was made on early maps. The latter is the more fitting tribute I think to a man who did not get it "quite right."

The lake fell in 2005 because a massive beaver dam on the berm left over from the railway construction failed. The water was unusually high that year so it's not surprising the dam failed. By comparison to the original epic fail, our portion of the lake fell only 10-15 feet this time.



Lewis Lake before

The remaining sections of the lake remained intact... held in place by other beaver dams located at the narrow points of each section.

While this is not on the same scale as the original breach, it felt just as catastrophic to us. I have often wondered what the original lake looked like. On March 7th, 1913 a Charles McConnell from Robinson Station wrote to R.C. Miller Assistant Gold Commissioner and Agent Dominion Lands, and requested that he (Mr. McConnell) be given land around Lewes Lake so he could establish a muskrat farm.

He described it this way: "Now I want this lake for Muskrat and Mink culture and it is no good for anything else, as it is a glacier lake bed and there is not one foot of ground for a mile or more all around the lake that is suitable for agricultural purposes or for anything else, only something of this sort. The ground is not good for anything else, you know the place, I mean the lake that was drained when the railroad was put through here, the lake with the high banks about six miles south of Robinson Station."

History does not tell us whether Mr. McConnell ever got the land he requested. From documents accessed at Yukon Archives (thanks go to our very own Shannon Olson) it appears that Mr. Miller was supportive of his request, providing he did not interfere with

the operation of or activities of the railroad. In a letter to Mr. McConnell dated March 11, 2013, Mr. Miller states that while the lake is now three and a half miles long, it had been approximately five and a half miles long and one mile wide before the railroad lowered it. It had been a big lake!

A letter from Commissioner George Black dated April 25, 1913 to Mr. McConnell was supportive of him having a lease of the land he requested but for 10 years only – not the 25 years he requested. We do not know to date whether Mr. McConnell ever activated that lease but a trip to the Yukon Government's Land Branch in the near future may help with that.

The newspaper accounts in August 2005 were full of expert reports of how the beavers were territorial little creatures and would rebuild the dam in no time. A biologist friend of ours says that beavers are smart and know what workload they can take on and so far, they have not rebuilt the big dam. The lake has risen a few feet since 2005 as the beavers continue to build, but we have not regained most of the water we lost.

Carol found a pair of hand-made oars one day and we think this may have been the original marge of the lake, although it's quite a ways from there now. But that's another story for another day.

*Sharon Hickey Lewis Lake,  
Yukon Spring, 2013*



Lewis Lake after

# The Campbells

## ... Stories from Long Ago

COLLECTED AND RECORDED BY  
DIANNE PARENTI  
AND CLAIRE DESMARAIS

*(Excerpt p 4-5 ) check with LMCA for full length interview if interested*

**Betty:** And when they were in high school we used to take them, like if there was any dances or a special show, like at the movie theatre, we would take them in, but we'd kind of gather up like the whole neighborhood.

And because I, I was paranoid about allowing the children to hitchhike, and I wouldn't allow them to do that. And so we'd take them in the truck, and there would be kids everywhere, but there was like no seat belt laws, so it didn't matter. And we'd have kids in the back, and we'd deliver them to their houses, and kids would jump out of the back (mutual laughter). One had to climb out the window because they couldn't get out because there was another kid in the way, but we made sure everybody got to their things safely and they all got home safely, so no one was on the highway. And I'm sure it was perfectly safe then compared to now, but anyways, they weren't allowed to do that. We took them. But they didn't miss very much, and often they just didn't even want to go. They'd rather stay home and do whatever they were doing with their friends. So they seemed to have had a good life — they say they did.

**Diane:** Well it sure sounds like a happy childhood.

**Betty:** But it was a lot of hard work. And then the girls, we had neighbors named Veerman, and they had been there for many, many years.

**Diane:** And this is at what we call Veerman's Farm now, the big property...

**Betty:** Yes, and they owned that whole thing. They had lived at the roadhouse, Robinson Roadhouse first, and Steve had pigs,

didn't he? And that's where he would load them onto the train, at the Robinson place, and then he had cows. He was this little, well not little — he was a tall, stick of a man, and he had these piercing blue eyes. He would follow those cows, and they were allowed to walk from there, all the way to Carcross.

And people would sort of — they seemed to have a phone for some reason. They must have.

**Ian:** I don't know.

**Diane:** A radio phone?

**Betty:** Yes, maybe. But they would let Steve know where they were. But you would see these cows going by on the railroad tracks, and Steve would be following them and maybe getting them home because it was time, and it was quite neat to see. And when he died, they slaughtered the cows, and oh, they even gave us some of the meat, and it was just gross! We boiled it so hard, and you couldn't eat it. Even the dogs couldn't eat it.

**Diane:** Oh no! (mutual laughter)

**Betty:** The fat from it was just bright yellow, you know, it was (laughing)...

**Diane:** Something was wrong with their feeding program.

**Betty:** Yes, I think so, and all the walking back and forth. And so the girls then would go and check on Margaret, because she was getting quite blind then.

**Ian:** She was legally blind.



*Stories of the Valley meeting*

**Diane:** And she was in her eighties?

**Ian:** Seventies at that time.

**Betty:** Late seventies, yes. And they would go and check almost every day. Either we would or they would. They would ride their horses down and make sure she was all right, because she was just there by herself. And occasionally we'd go — I think by then I think we were actually going to the pump house to get water, and if it was water day we could check then too. And she just lived there with, I think she had one dog

or two dogs and a whole mess of cats.

Cats everywhere! Yes, and she lived there quite a few years and then her nephew took her to the coast, to Vancouver I think it was, and she lived with him, when she was unable...

**Ian:** She lived in a home.

**Betty:** A home, oh right. Yes, that's right. She had to go in a home for a little while, until he could take her to Vancouver.

**Diane:** So the girls, Carolyn and Joanne, rode the horses a number of times to go check on her, even during the winter?

**Betty:** Well yes, you would. Winter was really — you'd have to really check on her.

**Ian:** She wasn't there in the winter, was she?

**Betty:** Yes, she was.

**Diane:** And by the time they got home from school, it would be nearly dark.

**Betty:** Yes, but it's like what — a mile? It's no big deal.

**Diane:** Yes, but still, it's quite remarkable, I think.

**Betty:** But that was part of... Carolyn said the other day that really, like on the weekends they could stop for tea with her, and they often did. And she said she learned more about the Gold Rush and the Klondike from Margaret than she had ever learned from anywhere else, because she had tremendous knowledge about everything that had happened. And she worked, I think, in that field, in the history field, I'm not sure. It's been just so long, because she's probably been dead for 20 years at least, I'm sure. But it's too bad because it was interesting that they (the Veermans) went out there and had that farm, and survived, and managed, and Steve did all the walking...

**Diane:** Cattle was quite a business for them I think.

**Betty:** Yes, yes, it was.

**Diane:** Because I've seen pictures of their fields back in the 30's I think it was, and it was just full of cattle.

**Betty and Ian:** Yeah, yeah, oh yeah.



*Stories of the Valley* – Seniors BBQ Summer 2012

# Memories by Bill Thomson

## Carcross to Atlin Mail Run

RECORDED BY DIANNE PARENTI  
AND CLAIRE DESMARAIS

Excerpt p8/9

**Bill:** So I'm sworn in as the official mail carrier for the dog sled group, and now we gotta start organizing a trip. At the very outset I'd like to point out that this was not a race. This was just nothing other than a good will, friendly trip for dog sledders. So we decided that we would try and follow the old mail route, and we went over Striker's Pass. Well, Striker's Pass was terrible. I mean, anybody that thought that they were gonna go on an easy trip should think again, because it was a terrible, terrible trip. There's two little lakes at the top of the pass, and they, I'm sure that you sunk down a foot every foot that you went ahead, you sunk a foot in the snow to get there. It was terrible. We lost more brush bows. There was one tree at the bottom of a hill, I think there was 12 brush bows piled up that were broken. The sleds were inadequate, the dog sledding equipment was inadequate, the clothing was inadequate, dog food was inadequate.

Everything about it was amateurish. However, we finally got to the top of the pass, down the other side to Tutshi Lake. And there was a trail on Tutshi Lake, put in by a trapper, so we followed that trail through the pass, Tutshi Pass, to Mrs. James' cabin. And Mrs. James was a delightful little lady that had a cabin at the mouth of the Tutshi River. And she invited everybody in for tea, and very few of us accepted the invitation.

**Diane:** And can I just ask you here, how many teams were there that year?

**Bill:** There were 14 teams took part.

**Diane:** O.K., so quite a few people to invite in.

**Bill:** Well, and they came staggering in for over a period of half a day. Well, two teams never made it over the pass. They went around, what they thought was the right way, which turned out to be the route that we eventually instituted, but that was Paul Sheridan and Jerry Couture.

They got lost and they went around on the lake. So, we finally got down to Tutshi Lake, or to the mouth of the Tutshi, and then it's a straight run down the Moose Arm to the end of Moose Arm. And Mrs. James told us that that's where — nobody knew where the trail went.

Nobody had the foggiest idea where they were going. They were just following the leader, as it were. If the leader went left, they went left too. So anyway, we got to Moose Arm, and there's two cabins at Moose Arm that were built at the turn of the century for the dog sled mail carriers.

At that time somebody owned them; I don't really know who owned them, but we used them anyway. And it was not particularly cold, but it was freezing, because I woke up in the morning, and I had hung my moccasins out on the ridge pole, or on the eavestrough of the cabin, above the door. And after we lit the fire and got the cabin warmed up, the water ran down and dripped into my moccasins, filled my moccasins full of ice, which I wasn't pleased about, but that was neither here nor there, just one of those things. So we had a wonderful trip, and a typical dog sledding group. There were two or three that enjoyed a drink along with the rest of us, only they over enjoyed their drinks, and some of them got a little rowdy.



And anyway, we had a wonderful night's sleep, with nobody had a proper stake-out chain, dogs were tied all over the place, dogs were chewing their rope off and were loose, fights were breaking out all over, guys were staying up all night trying to catch their dogs. I mean it was absolute pandemonium, just absolutely amateurish. But we enjoyed it, and not knowing any better.

*When we got to Atlin there was a welcoming committee, a big welcoming committee, and they had one of the original mail carriers there.*

So the next day we got up, and the order of business was clean up the mess around the camp, and make sure there was sufficient wood in the wood box, and kindling for the stove in case the next guy came along in dire need of warm, and a fire. So we got everything all set and we headed out, but we headed out on a trail this time, because there was a trapper came up from Atlin, and this trapper put in a trail to Moose Arm, to the cabins at Moose Arm. And he would overnight at Moose Arm and then turn around and go back. So now we have a trail through Jones Pass that's just an excellent trail. Well, we thought we had it made. So we head out on this trail, and it was substantially better than anything we'd run into so far. So we got to Atlin Lake, and there's a cabin at Atlin Lake that's still there. I have a photograph of it. And the trapper, there was a young fellow that was trapping out of this cabin, so he invited everybody in for coffee as they came over the pass, and a few of us took exception and had coffee with him.

Why we did this, I don't have any idea, but anyway, we started across the lake. Whether he told us to go straight across the lake or not, I don't know, but we went right straight across the lake. And we find out after we'd gone out on the ice for a ways that there was only seven inches of ice. Well, seven inches of ice is far more than you need, but it gives you a creepy feeling when you hear the ice cracking and rrrpp ahead of the sleds, you know. Anyway, we got across the lake, and then we went down the east side of the lake for miles and miles and miles and miles until we got to a bay about five miles outside of

Atlin, and teams were strung out as far as you could see, and you can see a long way on Atlin Lake. And the teams were strung out for miles, back behind and ahead of us and what have you.

So we decided that it wasn't fair to go into Atlin, all one after the other. So the best thing to do would be to go in, and stop at this little bay and wait for everybody to catch up. And then we'd all go in together, so we'd go in together from this little bay into Atlin and there'd be a nice welcoming committee. Well there I'm going into Atlin, and there's old Norman Fisher.

When we got to Atlin there was a welcoming committee, a big welcoming committee, and they had one of the original mail carriers was there. And so he took the mail, and we went to the post office with the mail. And then we started parking our tents, or sleeping bags, down on the ice at the marina where all the boat ramps are, and we camped down there. Most of us spent the night there, and then the next day somebody came down with a pick up and trailer to take all the dog sleds, and everybody had their own transportation back home. So that pretty well finished off the mail run for the first year.



Bill Thomson 1991 at Rick and Diane's trapline at headwaters of Watson River/Mount Skookum

# Touching History

BY SANTANA BERRYMAN

My travels through the forests of Cowley bring up many revelations and still more questions. There is a gravel pit between the CCC Road and Cowley Road — beyond the walls of the gravel pit lie virtually — untouched pieces of history. I found them on a walk one day, and now visit them frequently.

This is what I see: The forest floor is dark and gloomy, covered in moss and Labrador Tea bushes. Then, spots of rust on the forest floor — tin cans swim in an ocean of moss. Looking closer, I find that the cans are ancient enough to be viewed as historical artifacts. They are paperless, their worn surfaces deep brown with rust. I, alone in the forest, am fascinated. I pick up one and it makes rattling noises like a dirtfilled maraca. According to study results from Penn State University and the New York Times, tin cans take between 50 and 100 years to break down this much. Therefore, these could have been left here during, or shortly after, World War II. After lying here for almost a hundred years, it's as though the garbage has become sacred — I hesitate to touch the cans, always careful to leave them just as they were before being discovered. How could they have remained here for so long, I wonder? Hidden in the dark forest, they look like they haven't been touched for ages. They're half decomposed, most of them partially buried. There are possibly two dozen of them. I pick my way over the forest floor, avidly examining the cans.

direct quotation, reads like this: "Score and clove Spork. Bake in oven for 30 minutes at 350°F. Baste occasionally with your favourite recipe. Serve with baked potatoes, and other vegetables."

The strikingly Canadian spelling, rarely seen on other products, makes me smile with amusement. This looks like it's been left here more recently than the completely rusted tin cans — "Spork" was distributed in the 1940s. How old must the other cans be? Other discoveries are two ancient 'vacuum thermoses' and a large can of oil. Squinting at the barely legible label, I struggle to make it out. It says that it contains "One imperial quart of special lubricating oil. Manufactured in 1947." The use of imperial measurement proves its age, as Canadians stopped using the imperial system of measurement in the mid-1970s. The cans are dented, most half-buried disintegrating, partially eaten by the jaws of time. I put the tin of Spork back in its place and continue to look around. These artifacts make me think. I've always found a kind of magic in very old things — they offer a glimpse into a faraway past. People might think that the cans are an environmental hazard and should be removed, but really, they don't seem to be hurting the surrounding ecosystem at all. They are halfdecomposed. In my opinion, getting rid of them would be like tearing down a museum. It would be a terrible waste, and a way of forgetting the past of our area.

Who ate from these cans? Who bought them and took them home? Touching their crumbling rustiness, I am thrilled by their history. We may think that we're the only ones who have ever lived on this land, but we're not. The cans are a reminder of the fact that the past wasn't just inhabited by the famous, academic figures from Social Studies textbooks. People just like us also inhabited it; people who rejoiced, grieved, and fell in love on the same land upon which we now live. They lived and died on this very community of Cowley Lake. Deep under our houses and trails, maybe their remains still lie. I imagine that we're walking on the dust of their bones.

*Santana is a youth living at Cowley Lake and has been involved in Stories of the Valley.*



One of them, I notice, is a square tin, half-buried with a label partially showing. I pick it up. As it turns out, half of the label is worn off from facing

the sun. The buried half, preserved by the cool dirt, still has a legible label. It's a tin of "SPORK: a Pork Loaf with Beef Added" (Later I find out it's post-war mystery meat, like a form of ersatz Canadian Spam.) The label, in

# Making Ice

BY DICK EASTMURE

## Making Ice in the Early Days

When we first got the rink in at Mt Lorne it was not unlike any other back yard rink you might see. Resurfacing was accomplished by pulling out the hose and flooding it. Of course it tended to be on the rough and somewhat uneven side. Unlike a back yard rink however, it was full size! I had been putting a few rinks in at home for the kids and had come up with a way of improving on the flooding technique. It was a plywood box with an old osculating sprinkler attached and turned upside down with a piece of carpet attached behind the sprinkler. Just hook up the water hose and start dragging it around. Worked great! So I build one for the LM rink and it was a big improvement over the straight flooding. I would walk around the big rink dragging this contraption. It was helpful to have a second person there to keep the hose untangled! It was time consuming but it made for pretty good ice. Since I had expressed an interest in helping to make the ice, LMCA decided I should attend the 'ice making' seminar that the city was putting on. So off I went to the course to become the 'expert' ice maker. Near the end of the session, the instructor mentioned that the city had an old ice resurfer ('Zamboni', but this one was called an 'Olympia') and asked if anyone was interested in aquiring this piece of equipment as they had upgraded and need to find a home for the old one. I immediately put up my hand. When I showed up at the next LMCA meeting, I proudly announced

our good fortune fully expecting to be congratulated for my efforts. The reception was luc warm at best and the feeling of some was it would be a maintenance nightmare that they did not want to take on! Suffice to say, they eventually reluctantly agreed and I think it was Peter Carr who showed up at the next Whitehorse City Counsel meeting to present our case as to why the City should sell us the ice resurfer for a dollar. They agreed and the rest is history!

## The First Season With the ice Maker

Now that LMCA was the proud new owner of an 'Olympia' ice maker, we had to figure out how to use the new contraption. We needed to come up with a space to heat the machine before we could use it. Doug Gilday, being a general contractor, had a bunch of old 4x8 plywood concrete forms which he donated. We stacked enough of these up till we had a rough looking 'garage' and I think we put some insulated tarps over the hole thing to add some insulation value. The heat source was some propane fired 'torpedo' blast heaters. These needed to be put on for about an hour to unfreeze the unit before use. Of course the open flame heaters sucked up the oxygen in no time so the environment inside the make shift garage tended to be quite toxic! Once thawed, the unit needed to be filled with water then open up the tarps and in a big cloud of steam out came the ice maker and on to the ice to do it's thing. We were so proud and felt very empowered. So here we had a regulation size rink with our own ice resurfer, and what seemed to be at the time for most people, way out in the bush! I figured the whole thing was probably pretty unique. Of couse we eventually build a proper garage with heated floors and heated water and our rink became a well established and well maintained facility.

*Dick has lived in the are for over 30 years*



# Perfect Moments

BY PETER CARR

Many of us blessed to call the Carcross Valley and the Hamlet of Mt Lorne home probably have a "mind file" of perfect moments. I also happen to have a favorite sound track to go with the remembering of those moments, a song I first heard some years ago that captures the essence of a perfect moment and how each of them has the ability to balance off the not so great things that happen in each of our lives.

*Sunset glow from a hill  
Let it flow take your fill  
Such a perfect moment  
Mona Lisa smile  
One such perfect moment  
Makes it all worthwhile*

*Autumn night crystal clear  
Mystic light seams so near  
Such a perfect moment  
Nothing you can say  
One such perfect moment  
Gets you through the day*

*Mountain sheen ocean shine  
Miocene valentine  
One such perfect moment  
Never twice the same  
Such a perfect moment  
Will keep you in the game*

Lyrics from the song *Perfect Moment*  
by Blues/jazz musician Mose Allison

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What follows? My recollections of a few of those perfect moments that happened here in the Carcross valley and in the Hamlet of Mt. Lorne since I first lumbered into the country back in the early 1970's.

## The Moments?

- Moose Hunting on Mt. Lorne (no Moose yet) and loosing the rough trail we were following in and attempt to make it home before dark. The usual suspects – Peter Heebink and Peter Carr – no flashlights or gear for overnight and a raging thirst for Peter H's signature (sometimes explosive) homebrew. Flash of inspiration – prompted by a hazy memory of a story about earlier hunters that found themselves in just such a pickle on near-to-home ground. We started howling like wolves in the hope we could get a response from some of the dogs in the area. It worked like a charm! It took a fair more amount of call and response before we were able to home – in on the noisy dogs and their ticked off owner (what's with those damn dogs tonight?)

- An early skating party and follow up dance at the community hall is next. It was the wish of some who made use of a few old beaver ponds and smallish lakes in the Carcross valley and Annie Lake Road area for a better ice surface that helped lead to the creation of the Community association and the eventual construction of our lovely skating rink and community hall complex. What made this

particular skating party/dance extra special was the fact that the temperature – a few days in advance – of the advent had gone ultra – polar and was somewhere north of – 50! The organizer talked it over and decided that if the band from Whitehorse (Barb Chamberlain, Manfred Janzen and friends) would agree to "try and make it "we'd just go ahead with the thought of providing a much needed break from old Jack Frost. The band managed to keep the vehicles running long enough to make it to ALR and though it wasn't a big crowd that turned out for the dance everyone went away with a sense of having taken part in something quite unique.

- The perfect moments – sharing a few circuits of the ice fog shrouded skating rink with Doug Gilday and a few others that were curious about what it would be like to skate at that temperature (hard on the face with really strange sounds coming from the contact between the skate blades and the ice). The ice fog came from putting the Zamboni out for a quick refresh and was an instant visible byproduct of the collision of the warm water with the super cold ice surface. Also memorable – the frigid ice snake that would coil its way into the hall each time the main entry door was opened that night. Many other perfect moments came with "warmer times" happenings and scheduled events in the community centre, at the skating rink and in people's homes, garages, hangers and tents but that deep freeze event really have a special place in my memory.

- We constructed the community hall and the mark 1 skating and warm up facility with the first of a number of much appreciated grants from Community Development Fund YTG. Aside from one paid position, that of an experienced carpenter (George Stetkiewicz) who acted as a foreman on the job, we did the lion's share of the work using volunteer muscle and brains. I remember Doug Gilday suggesting we put off any further work on the community hall (volunteer burnout was making itself felt) until we got the skating rink up and running. It didn't hurt that our well was able to deliver stupendous amounts of water for the rink. Someone even came up with the design of a welded frame that we could attach the Water hose to... a sort of person-pulled Zamboni substitute we called the "Zuchini" – which helped in the labor intensive job of building up the ice surface. Our first and only Zamboni to date came later courtesy of The City of Whitehorse that graciously turned over one of their used machines for a token one dollar payment.

- The perfect moment that in my minds-eye at least wrapped up that part of the construction effort happened just before the start of one of the early day's make-up hockey games. Doug Gilday and I were leaning on the boards and talking about some aspects of the job when into our astonished view skated someone decked out in a complete goalies outfit. He looked like he just skated onto the ice at the Montreal Forum for the start of a regular NHL game. After the initial shock wore off a bit Doug quipped... "Yep, built it and they will come!" And they did!! We not only pulled in players from Whitehorse and vicinity but even a few from the State Capitol of neighboring Alaska who couldn't believe that such a facility existed in the bush outside of Whitehorse (they had a hell of a job just finding the place) when their city didn't yet have a decent skating surface.

- Two very special moments... the time Gunnar Nilsson and his partner Mickey Lammers of Gunnar's sawmill (Sloughmill) located by the Yukon River near Marsh Lake visited the community hall. Much of the excellent tight grained spruce and pin used in the facility came from the sawmill that they

operated for nearly 30 years. Following a walkabout a quite emotional Gunnar told one of our volunteers that he was very impressed – "The best use of my wood has been put to yet" – or words to that effect.

- Also charmed by the facility during her much anticipated visit was the then serving Governor-General of Canada—the Honorable Adrienne Clarkson. Including the Community of Mt Lorne in one of her Northern sojourns was something unique for the Queens representative in Canada. That's because the Mountain dominating our area carries the name of Canada's 4th Governor-General, John Campbell, and the Marquess of Lorne (served 1878-1883). He never actually made it to the Mountain bearing his name. Remy Rodden and Sheila Alexandrovich were both a big hit with the Governor-General... Remy composed a song in her honor that he performed during her visit and Sheila unveiled a specially commissioned and completely unique rendering of Mt. Lorne that she had created making use of a number of natural materials like fish skin.



Governor General visit at LMCC

I closing I want to express my thanks to the hundreds of persons from inside and outside of the Hamlet that have contributed their labor, ideas and resources to our community over the years. The beautiful complex on the Annie Lake Road is a fine example of what can be accomplished when people get behind an idea and work to make it a reality.

# Grant Lortie

## Life in the early days at Cowley Lake

BY MANU DESOBEAU

Summary of a conversation 2013

My name is Grant Lortie, I have lived on the side of Cowley Lake since the summer of 1970. I had lived in downtown Whitehorse since 1948. Peter Percival and I graduated in the same year from the University of Alaska in the spring of 1969. I was married at that time and had one child. In the spring of 1970, we decided to find a place so we could build a house.

to Art Ellis, it was taken over later by Ingo Grundman. There were a few other places along the road. Down the Cowley station was Nick Basaeraba.

In the first years, the Annie Lake road started to go, there was a bit of a rush in the late seventies, early eighties. I knew a few people there, Jerry and Delia Broswick were some of them. Bill Sinclair, an old-old friend, was one of the first ones out there in Kookatsoon Lake.

My first wife Pat and I had a tough first winter, we had to haul water and there was no electricity. It was a cold winter, we had 40°C below for a long time. We used Coleman lanterns which I was so glad to get rid of. Power came in 1973 or 1974.

Peter drilled a well early on and I hauled water from there until we had running water in 1983 or 1984. So, our second child Amy was born on September 9th, I just had time to put a roof on the cabin. It was a rough and rustic place but I was able to cut enough firewood in my few hours off every day. I built the rest of it over the years. I never borrowed money for that, I thought that if I did not have the money, well, I could not have it.

I was working at the Venus mine on Windy Arm and went underground as a trammer, later I did mine sampling. I used camp stove with a tin can on the burner to get the truck

*Pete came to the house and said he thought he found it. I remember it was May 22nd.*

I was working construction in town and on my time off, evenings usually, we scouted out all over the country, separately. We looked here and there and after a month, Pete came to the house and said he thought he found it. I remember it was May 22nd.

The day after, we staked claims and took care of the paperwork. We first had to work on the road, a friend of mine, Wayne Lerner, had a CAT machine we used for this. Then, I had to deal with all the logging. I worked like an animal all summer and cut most of my material. An outfitter named Dennis Callison lent me a skid horse by the name of Tim, I had the harness and everything. Another fella, Johnny Ross, had a really good homemade miller. Since I did not have money to pay him, he told me to bring twice as much as I needed. But Peter had another idea, I would cut his logs and he would pay him, that became the deal. Most of the logs were eight feet but there were also ten, twelve and a couple of fourteen.

Over the course of the summer, I hand-logged fifty-five thousand feet of timber and built the cabin I finished on September 9th. I never worked so hard in my life. At that time, there was a cabin at the north end of the lake, owned by a guy by the name of Tim Strand. There was another staked property on the East side of Cowley lake who belonged



started, that is what I relied on for years. I also had a weed burner, never burnt a truck off but you could do it very easily, you had to be very careful.

In the next years, I built a garage, a chicken house, a green house, a root cellar... All of these things still work, even though the green house is getting pretty shabby.

Usually, I was spending one summer fishing and hunting, the next one was gardening, growing more stuff in the green house and raising chicken. We used to alternate and it worked well.

In the early days, with nobody around, I used to do a lot of duck hunting on the lake down here but I stopped after more people came around, I did not want to irritate anyone.

My original lifestyle has not changed that much over the years but it is a lot easier with power and water. I still use an outhouse though, it is not that I am stubborn, I actually do not mind. It is a nice way to wake up!

*At the end of our conversation, Grant tells me this story he has from Randell Joe, with whom he worked on a survey crew along the Campbell Highway.*

*Randell Joe's house was at the outlet of Marsh Lake. One day, Grant asked him about Mount Lorne which is right across the lake from there, and Randell told him a name he forgot the original form but he remembers the meaning of it which is 'Wounded Bull'.*

## Cowley Station: White Pass and Yukon Railway

BY CHRISTEL PERCIVAL

Many people don't know that Cowley Station, a two-story building, once existed at the end of Cowley Road. (Cowley Road is located off the Carcross Road at approximately Km 149 South Klondike Highway.)

Cowley Station wasn't a train station where people bought tickets—but a Section House. It was one of 21 buildings constructed along the White Pass and Yukon Railway in the early 1900's. Until the 1970's the building housed the crew that helped maintain the railroad tracks between the village of Carcross and the City of Whitehorse. The building had bedrooms for the crew upstairs and a dining room and kitchen downstairs.

The crew included a crew chief and a cook. The Station was closed in the early 70's when other arrangements were made for maintaining the tracks.

What happened to Cowley Station? Rumors were that Nick Bazaraba, who owned a cabin across from the Station, was given permission to tear down the building in the mid-70's. He moved the materials to his home at Marsh



Lake. He planned to use the lumber to build a structure there—it didn't happen. Only the Station's foundation remained. Recently, beavers have built dams upstream and the area where the building was located is now flooded.

There are many people around the Yukon who visited Cowley Station area over the years when it was operational. Several local residents hope to collect stories and pictures that would document the history of Cowley Station. Please let us know if you have any stories or pictures you would like to share. We will be happy to add them to our community resources.

*Christel S. Percival, Resident of Cowley Lake*

# Charles McConnell

“Founder” of our Annie Lake Road Wilderness Golfcourse

BY SEAMUS BEAIRSTO

When I first read about Charles McConnell, I had every intention of climbing Mount Stevens and finding these mountain pastures that he grazed his cows on. After looking up the location of this mountain on Google maps, I drove down the Annie Lake road until km 19 and there between Mount Wheaton and Surprise Mountain, was a very steep Mount Stevens. Needless to say I never climbed the mountain. How McConnell managed to coax cows up there is beyond me. But as I gathered more and more information on this early Mount Lorne resident, the idea of him driving cows up cliffs seemed more and more believable.

*... as I gathered more and more information on this early Mount Lorne resident, the idea of him driving cows up cliffs seemed more and more believable.*

McConnell arrived in the Wheaton district as a postmaster at the Robinson Roadhouse, along with many others during the mining rush that took place in our valley during the early 1900's. However when most of the miners left the area during world war one, McConnell stayed on as a coal miner and rancher.

McConnell was the first cattle rancher in the Yukon. He would graze he cattle around the valley in the summer, often driving them up into high alpine meadows such as the one found between Mount Stevens and Tally-Ho. Then in the winter he would bring his cattle back to his homestead at the roadhouse. Too feed his cattle in the winter he used the hay he grew during the short summer season. Some of his hay fields can still be

identified today. In fact the Annie Lake Golf Course was built by the United States Army on some of McConnell's old fields.

Also identifiable today are the areas where McConnell had cleared trees to saw up in his mill that he built on the south side of McConnell Lake. (Believe it or not, this lake was not actually named after Charles McConnell!) Amongst McConnell's other notable enterprises was his mink farm. He would breed and raise mink and then harvest their furs, which were in high demand at the time.

McConnell lived to the ripe old age of 93.

In 1942 McConnell was described as “an alert and active old gentleman who still drove a 1924 Ford touring car with brass radiator and planetary transmission.

To start the car he jacked up one rear wheel, cranked the engine as there was no self-starter, and away he rolled.” He was known to be extremely fit well into his golden years. He allegedly would run down (on foot) cars and wagons that went down the wrong roads on his property. McConnell passed away in 1956. Leaving behind a legacy as the first Mount Lorne homesteader, and the first of many colourful characters in our lovely Mount Lorne community.

*Seamus is a youth living in our community and was involved in the Stories of the Valley Project.*



# Gary's Work Bee

BY AL POPE

It used to be common in the valley when someone was building a house to hold a work party, or even a few work parties, to get the big jobs done — pouring the footings, standing the walls, building the roof. You would work all week on getting things ready, and on the weekend you'd buy a bunch of beer and cook up a big pot of chili and have a work bee. It was the model that was used for building the community centre, although beer didn't play quite as large a role there. This is the story of the last big work bee I was involved in.

The house on Annie Lake where Tamra Reynolds lives now sat empty for most of the 70s and 80s. So far as I can remember no one had lived there in years when the late Gary Toews bought it. A while later Gary decided he needed a second story. He hired me to do the job, and I convinced him that we would need a good sized crew to get the roof off, the walls up, and the roof back on again in one day.

Gary was not the kind of guy to do things in half measures, and he had a lot of friends. On the day of the work party, I had such a big crew that half of them spent the day in the kitchen cooking, and we still had more labourers than we needed. There were so many of us that Jacques Lacoste spent the whole day just changing the music and opening beers. We had a great day, got the work all done on time, and then had a really memorable feast, after which a bunch of us started to dance. Gary's pride and joy was his Bose stereo system. It had enormous speakers and could put out perfect sound at ear-splitting volumes. It was almost impossible not to dance when the Bose was cranked. Despite having put in a long day, we rocked late into the night.

Gary and his wife Kelly were both working nights at Youth Services, and I guess they (naïvely) expected the party would be over before they left, but in fact it was just getting

going. Looking a bit nervous they went off to work and left us to it. We were having so much fun, I believe that if our power source had been endless we may have been there to greet them when they got home.

I have no idea how late it was when the generator ran out of gas, but I recall we had *Steppenwolf* on the stereo, and some of us were in mid air when we were suddenly plunged into silence and darkness. After a drunken attempt to refuel the generator in the dark failed, the party fizzled out and we all went home.

When Gary and Kelly got home next morning they would have found the house in fairly reasonable condition. The kitchen crew had done the dishes, so the only mess would have been some empties lying around that we didn't get cleaned up in the dark. Gary was in the habit of coming home and firing up his electric coffee maker after work. I guess they got a big surprise when he started the power plant that morning.

Gary never complained to me about it, but I heard from Shiela Alexandrovich that he had not seen the humour in it at all. I guess *Born to be Wild* at brain-rattling volume doesn't have the same charm at 8 am after a full night shift as it does at 2 am after a great work party.



# Getting To Work In The Winter Of 1982

BY DIANE PARENTI AND  
RICK MACDONALD

It is mid-January 1982, our first winter on the Annie Lake Road, Mile 5 (Km 7), and we are living off the grid. The time is 4:45 am on a weekday. Diane is getting the wood cook stove fired up. Rick goes down and tries to revive the barrel stove, which is just about dead. While it's heating up, Rick ducks outside and refills the wood box. And dang, if it ain't nippy out there! After a cup of coffee, Diane starts breakfast while Rick heads over to the chicken coop to revive the little tin airtight stove there. The stars are bright enough to see

*Brian and Rick are talking, and Brian mentions that he was looking at his woodpile and noticing it was getting pretty low.*

the path, while the Aurora Borealis are dancing overhead. On the way back, Rick stops at the weather station and checks the thermometers: - 62°F, and it's been between - 45°F and - 65°F since Christmas.

After breakfast, Rick prepares to go start the truck. He grabs the 20 lb tank of propane and the tiger torch. Three lengths of stove pipe are already under the truck, with the elbow pointing at the oil pan. He fires up the tiger torch, sticks it in the end of the stove pipe, lets it run full blast for 15 minutes, watching all the while to make sure it doesn't set the truck on fire. After 15 minutes he heads into the house, grabs the battery, runs back to the unheated bare-bones garage, hoping that the tiger torch

hasn't set the truck on fire. He puts the battery in the truck, shuts off the torch, and prays that the truck will start. Good truck, it starts! He takes off the sleeping bag that was laid over the hood and carefully wraps it around the engine under the hood to help preserve the heat of the engine. He goes back in the house to have the last cup of coffee while the truck warms up.

Meanwhile, 7 year old Dawn is up and getting ready for school at Whitehorse Elementary. Just before 7 am, Dawn and Rick get in the truck and head out the driveway on "square" tires. A mile down the road, everpunctual Brian Lendrum was waiting at his pick-up spot, having walked across the river from his cabin, to get a ride to work. So on the way to the bus stop at the Carcross Road, Brian and Rick are talking, and Brian mentions that he was looking at his woodpile and noticing it was getting pretty low. "I

might have to call a woodcutter pretty soon," says Brian. Rick says, "I was noticing the same thing. We've already burned nearly 10 cords of wood." Later, Rick realized how natural it sounded for Brian to say he was looking at his woodpile, because he is totally blind.

They get to the bus stop and wait for Bus #10 to arrive. Rick gives the windshield a good scrape on the inside, and they proceed down the Carcross Road to the Alaska Highway. They stop at McCrea and scrape the inside of the windshield again. They make it to town at just before 8 am, drop Brian off at the government building where he works, and Rick proceeds to his workplace. It is a balmy - 45°F in town, with super thick ice fog and near zero visibility.

After work is done and a few errands run, Rick arrives home after 6 pm. He parks the truck in the garage, opens the hood and removes the sleeping bag and battery, replaces the sleeping bag on top of the closed hood, and takes the battery in the house. Once the last chores are done by refilling the wood boxes, there may be an hour to relax after supper, before reloading stoves, going to bed and doing it all again the next day.

*Rick and Diane km 7 Annie Lake Road since 1981...*



# Far Side Co-op

BY SHIELA ALEXANDROVICH

Officially, we are the *Far Side Co-op*. Thank goodness the original group of Kim and Randy, Scott and Miriam and Jacques and I didn't settle on some of the other name options—I could be living at *Avalon*! 1981 had evenings spent at our Cutoff cabin dreaming of community, cooperative and a place for some friends who could not find affordable land to have a family, raise a few goats and a garden. Funny, after all these years it's the same issue for young families. Jacques and I decided to open our spot on the Wheaton River, applied for a lot enlargement and formed the *Far Side*. Until we had the lot enlargement paid for, we were the owners on paper, but after year five, we all became joint tenants. For years, sales were sealed with handshakes. Members in and out were usually celebrated with pretty good parties! It was a time of puppies and kids, woodpiles and wheelbarrows. No power, often no passable roads and always skinny on the money. We looked after each others' kids, worked on our houses, addition by addition, picked a lot of berries and slowly got the gardens to grow us some food.

People came, stayed, changed, went, bought, sold, rented, house sat. Families came together, came apart, grew up, grew older. We had our share of *Peyton Place*, struggles and surprises. It never seemed like a learning curve, rather a steady slope. The issues that took so much work to sort out were never the ones coming down the pipe next! All those opportunities to learn something! Yet each time there was room for a sale to happen, we had people

lined up to apply to join the *Far Side*. Land tenure changed to Tenants in Common and we wrote up a share holder agreement that attaches to the title. We got a zone that guaranteed our ability to rebuild as a three family co-op if there should be a fire. The dog teams (we had almost 50 dogs at one point between us all) were sold off or died of old age, and we got horses to eat the money instead.

Jude, Levon and I mostly homeschooled, and I started doing artwork to pay the bills. I remember so well in '91, telling Steve I was going to survive making baskets, and he just laughed. And Al trying to explain half way through the first cabin what diagonals had to do with getting the roof to fit on the walls. Yet here we are; still in a beautiful valley, still with a painful road to plow each winter, still with friends that we can count on within walking distance. And the row call: Jacques and I, Scott and Miriam, Kim and Randy, Robert and Edith, Fay and Gunter, Ava, Chris and Suzette, Kay and Pete, Carmen and James, Abbey and Rose, Jerry, Eva and Brett, Poul, Robert and Carmen, and Shannon. Nine kids spent time growing here, some all the way up, some for a few years. And one baby born here last year! And when asked would I do it all over again?

All I can say is I'm still here, and so very grateful for it all.

*Shiela has lived and gardened at the end of Annie Lake Road for over 30 years*



# Stories and Voices of the Valley

A LMCA project initiated by local seniors-on gathering history on the Hamlet of Mt Lorne. Stories of early dwellers, long term residents, changing road names, hunting and trapping, agriculture, mining, White Pass, Cowley Station ...

Has been happening at LMCC throughout 2012/13

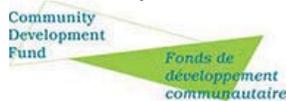
We had a great time, great events, a great educational workshop and the project will keep on going- check in with us [lmca@northwestel.net](mailto:lmca@northwestel.net)



Canada

## New Horizons for Seniors

for Stories of the Valley Program Support \$ 14,035.00



## Community Development Fund, YG

for oral history workshop \$ 4500.00

# COMMUNITY BUSINESS DIRECTORY

## Kevin Barr, MLA

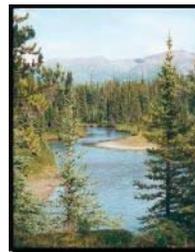
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