

26,000 Days -Part 2

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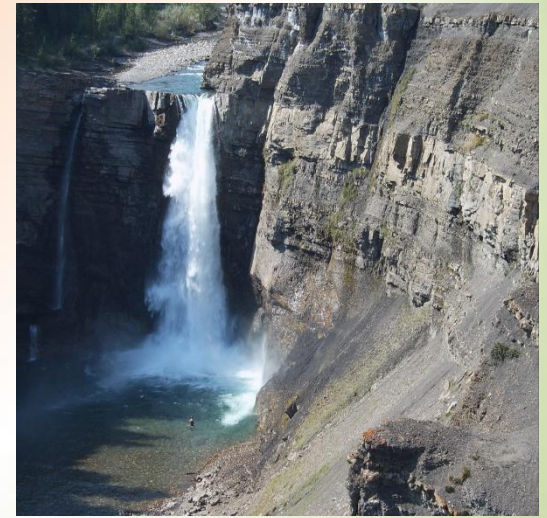
PART 2

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My Mum having a meal with us at Ram River campground.

We lived a two hour drive from the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. On Friday afternoons, we loaded the truck with tents, food and several children. We often camped at Two O'clock Creek, Ram River falls, and a place we called Mud Hole.



My Dad with our family at Lake Louise

On a hot day the water in the North Saskatchewan River was ice cold as we were just downstream from the Columbia Glacier. The very refreshing water flowed over sloppy clean mud. Soon the children, ... and us, were rolling and slinging mud at each other, before rinsing off in the river.



My parents were totally involved with making a campfire, boiling water for tea and exploring the wide open spaces.

We were always watching out for wildlife including moose, elk, and an occasional wolf, which we could hear at night. Black and grizzly bears were often seen in the foothills.



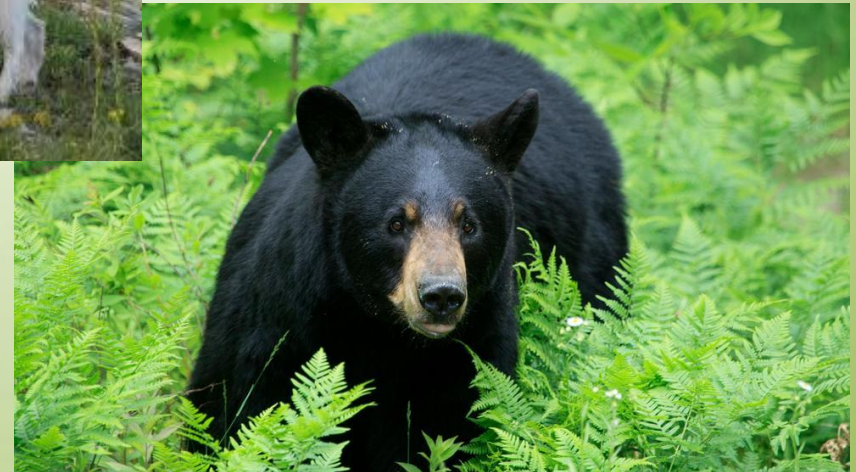
Hawks and eagles were common, and mountain goats and sheep were often seen high up in the mountains.



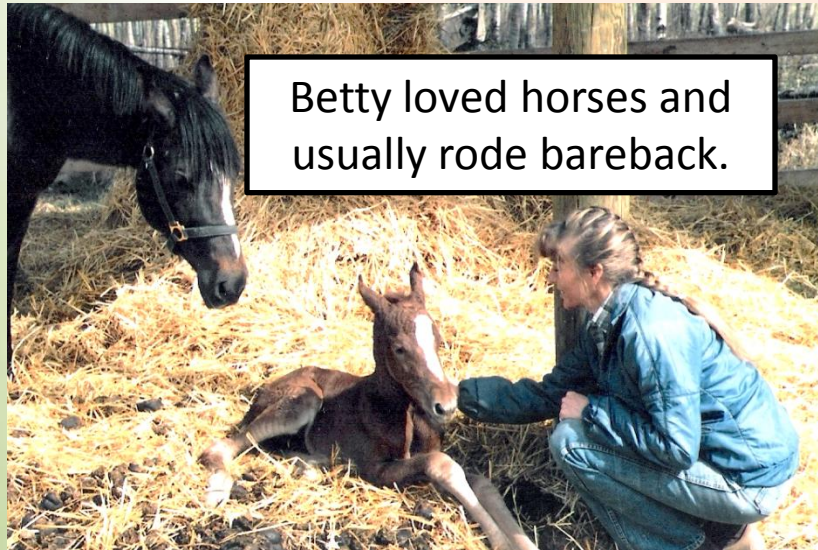
My Dad was very observant; he was always seeing some animal hiding in the bush.



We have had some close encounter with bears, usually in the evening or early morning in the campgrounds.



Eileen was always busy with our regular family, lots of animals and a huge garden. Cooking, canning and freezing was constant; then we had the other short term foster placements, some of which were troubled teens. One 15 year old foster daughter went out horse-back riding with Joanne and fell off the horse, breaking bones in both arms.



Betty loved horses and usually rode bareback.

She was in casts for weeks; a challenge for Eileen to look after.



Holly was placed with us for a while as she was ageing out of the foster care system.

Our good friends and neighbours Betty and Orville decided to unofficially adopt Holly, and she is still family. We visited back and forth a lot with Betty and Orville. They grew tremendous gardens, phoning us one evening to help pick tomatoes before an early frost. Picking as fast as we could we filled the back of their pickup with boxes. Another time the call came in the night, to help save a calving cow with a stuck calf. I was soon helping the vet to do a caesarian on the cow; both survived.



In a farming community there is always lots of work to do, and not enough people to do it. When I was in business as 'Commercial Yard Services', I was often asked to help out. Any free time I was milking cows, packing silage, driving grain trucks, and combining. Also hay bales needed to be stacked before a rain storm. Sometimes my small tractor was handy in tight areas, as most farm machinery was too big.



I worked constructing various buildings. When the farm jobs were caught up, the community hall needed a new roof, and the cemetery needed mowing.

The years on the acreage were a great learning experience, always something new. No two days were alike, both in our activities and the weather. We saw beautiful summer days turn into tornadoes and cool crisp winter temperatures drop below -40 degrees C.

Both Eileen and I played some field hockey while we were in Alberta. I'm not sure how or why, but I played once in the massive McMahon Stadium in Calgary.



A visiting British field hockey team, from a private school was playing against the Red Deer team. We offered to have the team, coaches, parents and others, over to our acreage for a barbeque and to let off some steam.



Our property was 5 acres with a perimeter of trees and the view to the west was the Sunset Hills. We could see for many miles and the setting was good for outside parties.



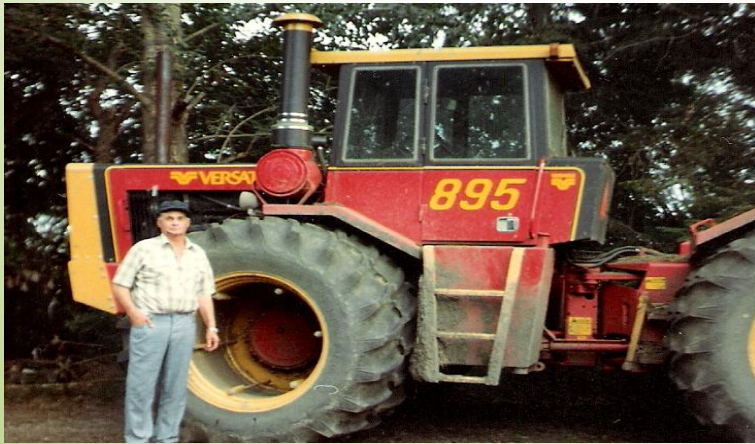
The organizers provided about 50 steaks and we provided the space, cooking, entertainment, and a big bonfire. These young people had been traveling for a couple of weeks, and they let loose when they arrived at our place. A good time was had by all.



Roy and Kathleen Philips were distant relatives who lived in Camrose, Alberta. We visited back and forth several times over the years. Roy was a very successful farmer, feedlot operator, seed cleaning plant owner, and oil field plant manager; a very hard working and smart man. Roy's sister Lillian was the person who first inspired us to emigrate to Canada.



We always had big farm meals when we visited Camrose. Roy would usually take me out to check the crops and pop in to a couple of Texaco oil well sites to inspect some gauges or motors.



When Roy's family moved to Canada from England in the 1930's, they had little money, and their first home was a modified granary. A tough beginning and hard work developed a strong character.





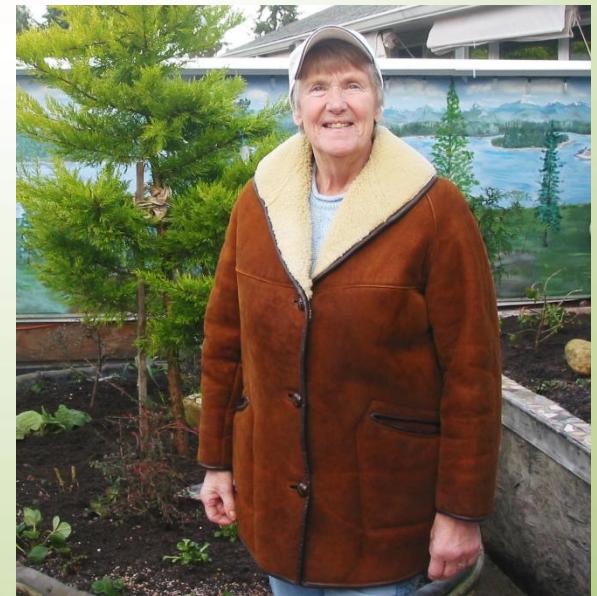
Crazy winter activities. I found a sheet of plywood that had been covered in heavy snow; the sheet was curled at both ends. I attached a length of cable from the plywood to the hitch on the back of my truck, then a longer rope with a handle to the bumper. Off we would go, sledding down the wide snow-covered road so it felt like water skiing. I could get enough swing from side to side, to pull the truck sideways in the road.

We bought some cross-country ski equipment would sometimes head out across the wide open fields and down into the Blindman River valley.

One time, we skied on a big lake in the Banff National Park. We had not realized that warm spring water can melt the thick ice in places,... oops,... the fresh layer of snow made the trek across the lake very interesting.



Cast iron longevity When we moved to St John New Brunswick in 1968 we had no cooking utensils. Our first big purchase was a small cast iron frying pan. When we moved to Alberta that small pan was not big enough for my appetite so we bought a big brother pan. Now 50 years later those two pans have cooked more than 20,000 meals and we are sure the wooden handled turner is the same age.



When Eileen was about 15 she bought a sheepskin coat. That coat has been worn for about 55 years and still looks good.

We often had ten to twelve people around our dinner table; with so many hungry mouths to feed we consumed tons of food. One late summer we dug up, cleaned, and sorted twenty sacks of potatoes. We packed five gallons of shelled out peas into the freezer. Loads of greens, beans root crops and soft fruits were frozen or canned for winter.



Cutting and wrapping two whole sides of beef or pork on the extended kitchen table was a challenge. We always had a good selection of food stored. We even hauled a full deep-freezer on the trailer when we moved out to B C. We plugged it in every time we stopped on the way.



We raised dozens of chickens from day old chicks. Unlimited loads of free grain and other feed were converted into eggs and meat. Also duck, turkey, rabbit, lamb, pork, and beef were on the menu.



My brother John and Angela, Stephen and Mel visited in 1980. We spent overnight in Drumheller, and in the morning the town had a outdoor pancake breakfast. Our visitors had never had pancakes, sausages and syrup for breakfast, especially sitting in a mall parking lot.



The same afternoon we were driving the truck and camper from Drumheller out to the Rocky Mountains. We had to pull off the road because a very violent storm with high winds and large hail pounded us and destroyed all the farm crops in a wide swath.



Here is John driving the working 1939 McCormick Deering. I wish I had painted it up a bit before I sold it for \$100.



122 ROCKIES VISITORS NEIGHBOURS

Good friends were very important in the rural community. Jim and Sue were a lovely couple, Sue a retired teacher and Jim worked a hard life in grain sales and farming. Jim was always busy on the farm, driving machinery, feeding and working with cattle building fences, etc. The fact that he had one arm severed in a farm accident, never slowed him down.



We would pick him up when we had space in the vehicle. The greeting was always the same; he looked into the open door with his head turned sideways. "How are ya doin Basil?" ... "Fiina than frogs hair." he replied with a glint in his old tired eyes.



Pot luck meals were very popular. Events and seasonal celebrations were attended by many in the community with lots of food, drink and conversation.

One of the country characters that lived a mile south of us was Basil. He lived in an isolated house without electricity or any comforts. Only once in a while we saw a wisp of smoke from the chimney, even when it was 35 below zero. When he walked the 17 miles into town he was so bent over the children called him the headless man.



In February 1980 we decided to take a week-long trip out to the west coast; we had never been further than Golden B.C., which was just across the Alberta border. The night before we were to leave the phone rang. It was Red Deer Hospital. Joanne, our foster child who had moved out of our care about a year before, was having a baby. Joanne had asked for Eileen to be with her.



After the delivery, Eileen headed home in the early hours, with little or no rest before we were in the car heading west. The morning was very cold with deep snow. The following evening we made it to the ferry to Vancouver Island.

The weather was warm and the grass was green.



It was 40 degrees warmer than when we had left home. We took a quick look around the East Coast of the island, and into Victoria, and in 2 days and we were heading back to Alberta.



124 HEADING FURTHER WEST

Needless to say we were very impressed with what we saw of Vancouver Island. We had a great trip and arrived home on Sunday afternoon. Sharon was in 2nd grade and off to school early Monday morning. That evening we had two phone calls from the school. In show and tell, Sharon said, “Mom and Dad might be moving to BC”. They asked, “Do you want to sell your house”?



How many people can sell a property without even putting it up for sale?

We had two sets of visitors from England during our preparation to move but we were able to get all of the jobs done before we left.

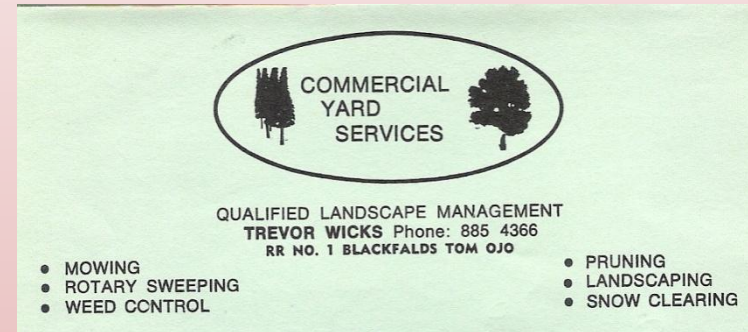


Sharon’s teacher and the school principal were both interested in our acreage. We had paid \$15,000 dollars for the place less than ten years earlier. The much upgraded property was appraised at \$100,000, and we were soon packing, selling, or giving away items we could not haul to BC. Sharon’s teacher would be moving in, in August.

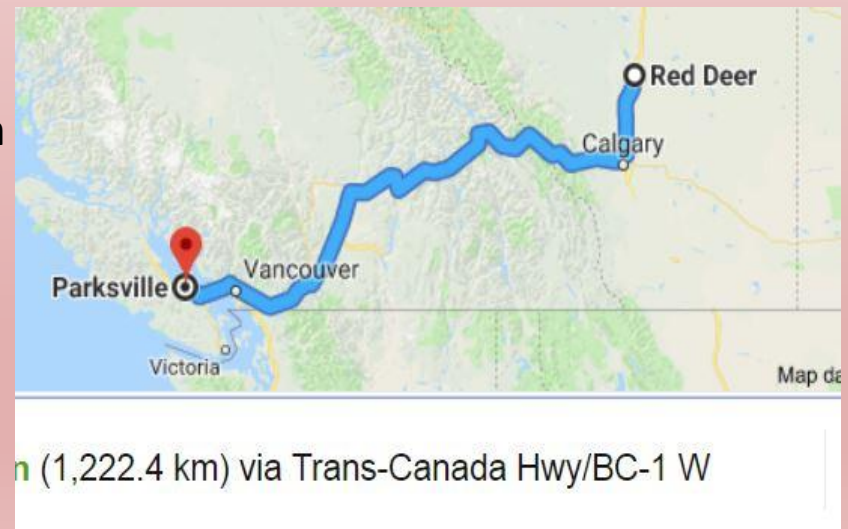
A part of the process of moving was deciding what to sell, and what to take the 1,200 kilometers to Vancouver Island. We ditched most of our tattered furniture and packed up the best of our household items.



The Satoh tractor, sweeper and snow blower were sold as Commercial Yard Services business.



That left me with the Massey tractor, heavy flail mower, rototiller and more to move. I took the tractor and flail to Red Deer station and loaded it onto a railway flat bed to be picked up in Nanaimo, on Vancouver Island. We arranged to store some equipment in a shed for pick up later. We bought an old homebuilt travel trailer to fill up and pull behind the car. My truck and 22 ft trailer were loaded way over capacity when we pulled out of our driveway to head out west.



126 HEADING FURTHER WEST



Our close friends and neighbors in the Aspeland Community had a farewell party for us and we were soon packed and ready to leave.



The morning sun rose in a cold clear sky and the tomatoes and other vegetables we had left in the garden were covered with a thick layer of solid ice. Even the gravel roads were like a sheet of glass as we headed out to warmer weather on the coast. It was time to leave. Driving into BC on the Trans Canada Highway, the steep grade and curvy, Kicking Horse Pass, nearly claimed another victim. The brakes on my overloaded truck and trailer failed and Sharon and I only just made it over the river bridge at high speed, followed by a cloud of smoke. That was a close one!

This picture was taken just before we left the homestead, the end of August 1980



The Kicking Horse Pass

We spend two nights on the road finding motels that would let us plug in our fully loaded 27 cubic ft deep freeze. After pulling our heavy loads off the ferry in Nanaimo we headed up-island.



Within a couple of days Eileen and I were taking turns going into real estate offices looking for a place to live. In a very short time, we found a fixer-upper home, on 5 acres of land in the community of Errington. This was about 4 kilometres inland from the coast.



We had booked a few weeks stay at a small seaside cabin at the south end of Parksville. After the first sunrise and walking along the beach at Craig Bay, we knew that we had made the right move. It was easy to keep Sharon and Dan amused with parks, beaches and forests to explore.





The large 2 storey home had living room, kitchen, dining area, 3 bedrooms and a big deck upstairs, and a full suite and several rooms downstairs. The previous owner had a lot of cats, and mentioned that there could be a few fleas to watch out for. There were lots of fleas waiting for us; we had to get the place fumigated as we were moving in.

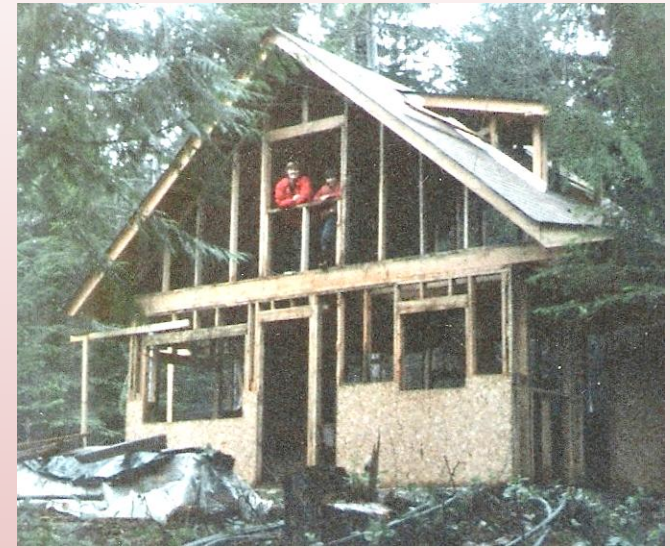
The day we took possession the owners had not moved everything out, in the downstairs suite there was a big pile of blankets and cloths. After we had looked through all the rooms we walked back into the suite and notices the blankets were moving. One of the family had fallen asleep under the pile, and didn't realise the others had moved out.



During the next ten years, we did a lot of work on the property, including a completely new roof.

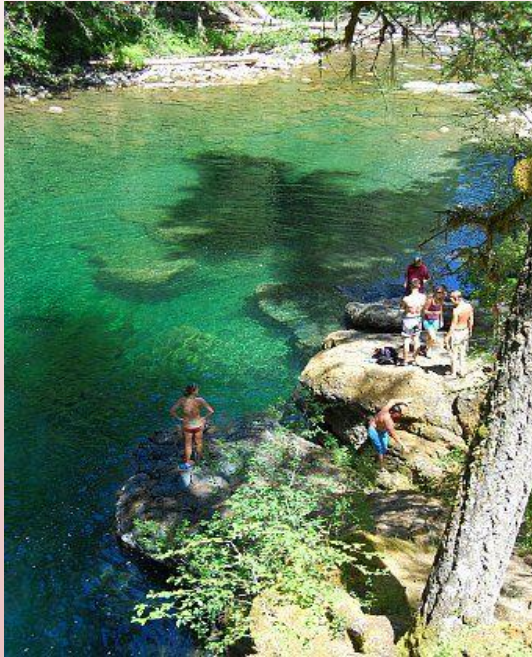


Less than a month after we moved in to the house on McKibben Rd, we bought another 5 acre lot close to Englishman River Falls. The development was having some financial troubles and the land was going cheap. Soon I had some large trees felled and cut up into lumber. I bought a cement mixer for the back of my tractor and in my spare time I was shoveling sand and gravel, pouring concrete footings, and building a septic tank on the Englishman River Road property.



I built a cottage, including the wiring and plumbing, and also finished off this cabin, which I had moved onto the property.

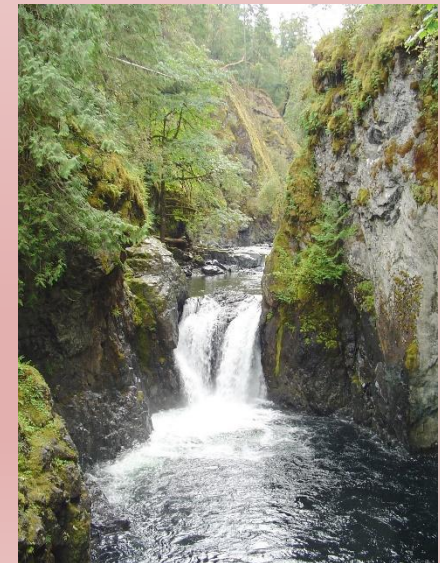




The Englishman River carried the cool fresh water from the mountains the short distance to the sea. In the summer time it was the community meeting place, to hang-out and swim in the crystal clear water. People took food, blankets, and sometimes a guitar, and spent the day down the river. The children loved the water and were soon good swimmers. The only shock was when we first went down the steep pathway, that almost everyone on the river bank, was totally nude. We soon joined the trend and after a while, it was no big hairy deal.



One young lady was swimming in the river 9 months pregnant. In a couple of days she was back down there with her new born baby. Her baby boy is about 38 years old now.





Community Hall

Errington was a very eclectic community, with some people living in nice big homes and others camped out in shacks in the bush. The old community hall was always busy with many activities from pre-school, yoga, basketball, to parties and dances. Even before we moved in to our place I volunteered at a work-bee lining the ceiling of the old fire hall with cedar boards.

Volunteering was a good way of getting to meet people. I joined The Errington Fire Dept. and was soon in training with drills and practice scenarios. Driving fire trucks, pump operation, hose work, ladders, air packs, highline rescues, haz-mat, and first aid were all in the basic training.



Errington Fire hall

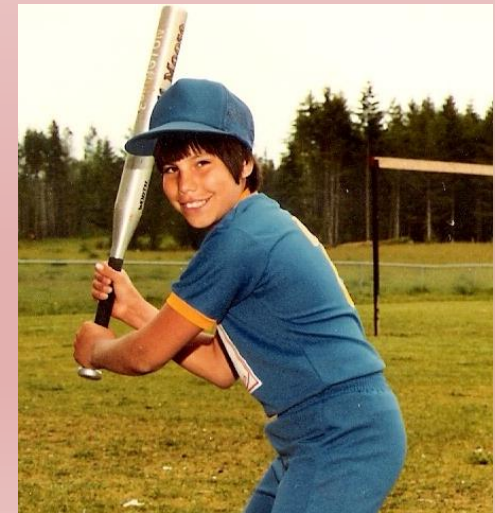
I was on the department and the board of directors for more than 15 years. My interest in fire fighting would take me in a direction that I would have never imagined after helping to fight a fire in a small attic room, with heavy hoses and air-packs crammed into the tiny space.

Sharon and Dan started Errington Elementary School in September, they settled in quickly and soon became involved in after school activities.



The neighbors had young children and there were always people over at our place and playing in the yard.

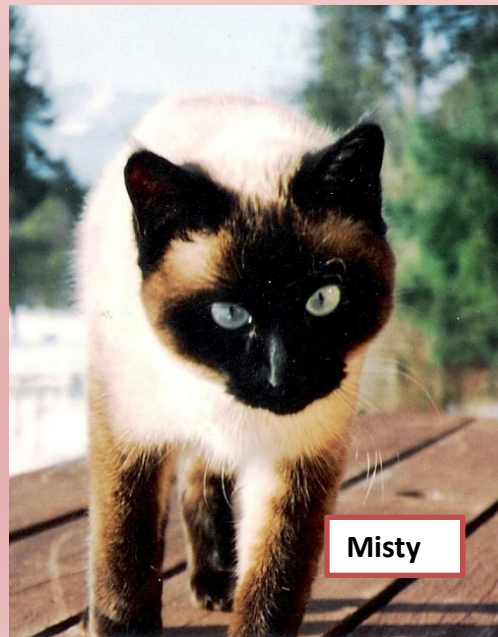
I moved in a chicken house, and we had rabbits as well as our dogs and a cat.



Tundra and Buffy came out with us from Alberta. Tundra and Lady, a dog we got after our move, lived for more than 16 years. We had other pets including our dog Sparky and a crazy cross-eyed black cat.



Trina was our last very smart and loving canine buddy.



134 ERRINGTON HOMES

Eileen kept busy after we moved onto McKibben Rd. Soon she was working for homemakers, then worked part time at a group home in Parksville. Later she was employed as program director in the Training Education Center (TEC) for adults with special needs. This involved cooking, woodwork, recycling and a host of other projects.



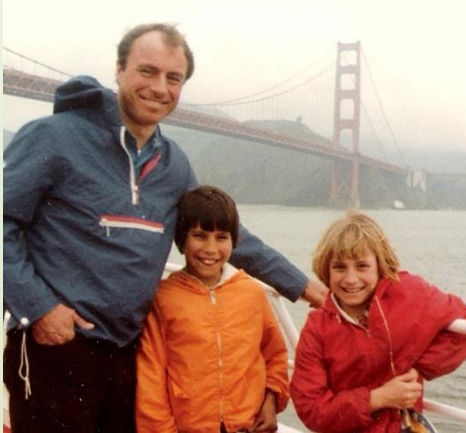
Another career change was as an independent support worker before getting a Ministry of Social Services position in family support. She covered a large area, and took regular trips over to Lasqueti Island to help families cope with difficult situations.



After a great deal of fundraising a group of about 18 TEC people flew down to Disneyland in California for a few days. They had a good time and some of the individuals still remember the trip.



During the next years we did a lot of traveling. One trip the four of us went down the coast to San Francisco, Los Angeles, Disneyland, San Diego, up to the Grand Canyon and Los Vegas. We went with Eileen's sister Chris and Derek to Jamaica and Barbados in 1987.

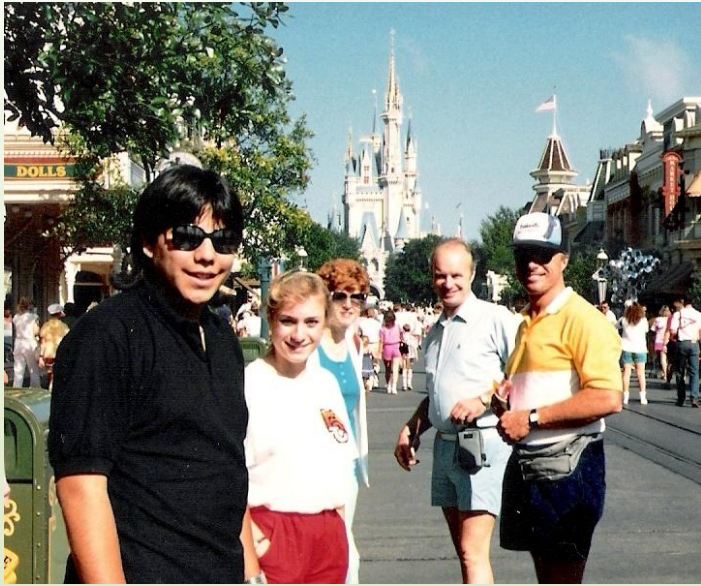


Eileen, Sharon, and Dan went to England in 1984.



We also went several times to the Hawaiian Islands. Our first Cruise was to the Caribbean. Cancun Mexico was our destination in 1991.





In 1986 we took Sharon and Danie to Florida, and met up with my brother John and wife Angela. We visited Disneyworld, Epcot Center, Kennedy Space Center, Fort Lauderdale, Miami, and Key West.



On McKibben Rd we were making progress getting the place fixed up. The outside work can be done all year long, so many projects were moving ahead. I built a garage and a large wood storage shed, had a pond dug and developed a circular driveway. The real work for local parks, businesses and hundreds of acreage owners was non-stop. I never needed to advertise and soon bought a bigger 4 wheel drive tractor.



Mum and Dad bought us a weeping willow tree



Roofing the Garage



We bought a small boat and regularly went out fishing off the coast. We caught salmon, cod, and red snapper. It was good to cook up a plate of fresh fish after a days work and an evening out on the salt chuck.

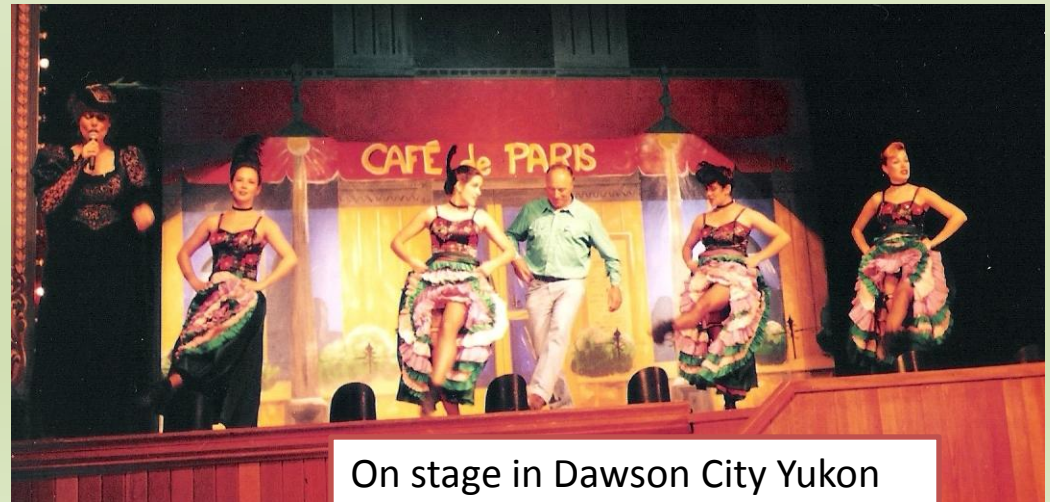


We were regularly involved with activities in our community. The person with the blond wig driving the tractor is one of my many disguises.





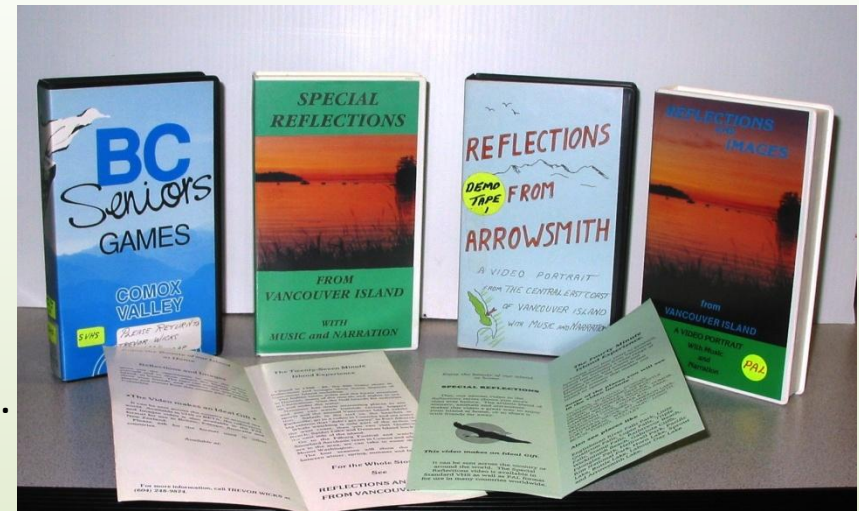
Eileen's old square dance dress almost fit me for the 'Hi Neighbor Day' parade, and the Halloween dances were always a riot. One spring concert we took a box of live chickens on the stage, and let them run around while we sang 'Old McDonalds' farm and 'I've got a hole in my bucket.'



On stage in Dawson City Yukon

140 ERRINGTON HOMES

After we moved to Errington, we had a challenge to find appropriate gifts to send to England for birthdays and Christmas. Video tapes of our lovely island would be a really good option; however, the only videos we could find were advertising golf, or resorts etc. I bought a camera and made my first of many documentary videos. A good project of post production in the slow winter season.



Altogether I filmed thousands of location shots during the next years and sold thousands of tapes. Videotaping weddings and many other activities including the BC Seniors Games with 20 + individual events, the local Brant Festival, therapeutic riding, salmon recovery, and a mining protest video. One setup at Christmas, in a large shopping mall in Nanaimo, I had sold so many tapes, and filled up the too small cash box. When I finally made it home I had well over a thousand bucks jammed into every pocket and stuffed into my t-shirt.

My business was really active with a wide range of work all over the Oceanside area. As well as landscaping larger areas, land and vegetation management, building driveways, riding rings, snow clearing in winter, etc. I did a lot of projects for the Provincial Parks system. Newcastle Island Marine Park is situated off the Nanaimo waterfront. I packed food and a tent onto my tractor.

Similar sea truck to the one we used



A sea truck carried me over to the island, after landing on the rocky beach, I was soon mowing the fields, camping areas at high speed. I usually mowed the whole 20+ acre park in two days.



In 1986 our lives took a turn when Eileen was rushed into hospital with a complete intestinal strangulation. After two emergency surgeries and the removal of most of her small intestine, she faced weeks in hospital, months of recovery and permanent dietary and digestive complications. After this settled down, Eileen upgraded some college courses and started work in the school system in child and youth support. Each year a large group of students were taken to Hornby Island to an outward bound camp.



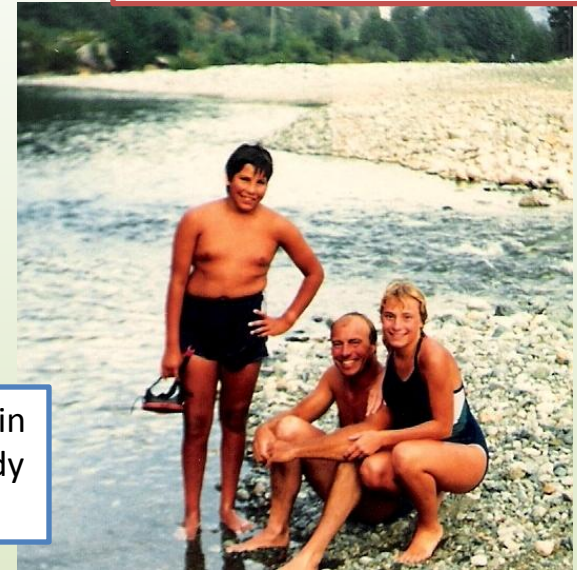
Helping children was a great passion and after many years in area schools Eileen retired in 2006 with a big party and many friends and colleagues.

The 1980's while on McKibben road , Sharon and Dan matured to young adults. We had many adventures and explored lots of places on Vancouver Island.



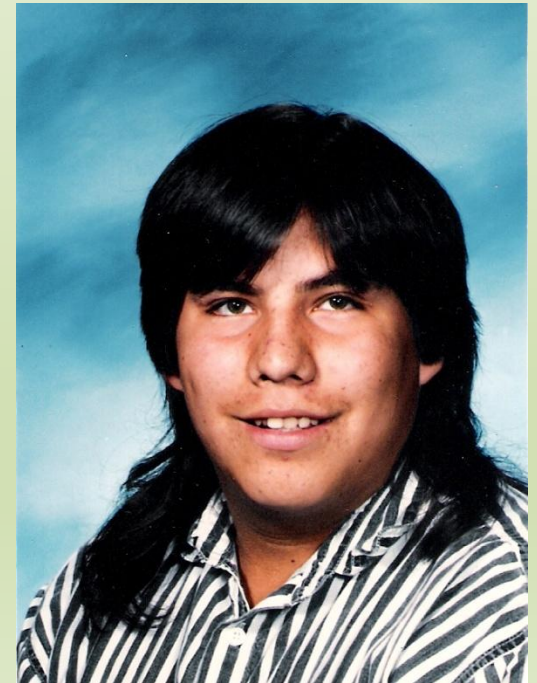
Just after we moved in with Buffy and Tundra

Soon it would be time for big changes.



Swimming in the Kennedy River

All dressed up for Rick and Wendy's wedding



144 ERRINGTON HOMES

In the spring of 1991 we had lived on McKibben Rd for ten years. Sharon and Dan had moved out on their own and that house was too big for the two of us. The yard was looking good, so on a Sunday morning I found a big piece of plywood and painted a very colorful FOR SALE sign. The paint was still wet as I walked to the road with the sign, two stakes and a sledge hammer. A car came to a screeching halt in the road. The driver said "If you're selling your property, I'm interested!"



Within a few days we had several people interested in our place, and we made an easy sale. Around the same time we also sold the five acre property at Englishman River Falls. After placing an add in the local paper, we had one person look at it, and made us an offer. Within a few days of deciding to sell we were homeless again, it was time to start looking for a new place to live.

I came home from a very busy day at work, Eileen came running over to me with an anxious look. A ten acre property on Middlegate Road was for sale and we had one hour to make an offer.



This is after I had started the clean up of many loads of junk to the dump

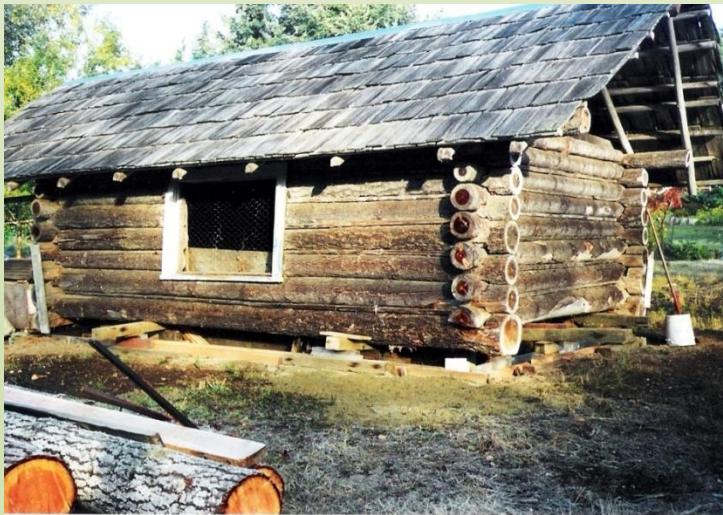
I had worked on that place a few years earlier and knew the two houses needed a lot of work. However, the property had a lovely view of the mountains, really nice soil, lovely forest, and a big pond. We were in the car down to Middlegate, looked around for a few minutes, came back home and phoned the realtor just before the hour was up. In a few minutes, he phoned back to say our offer had been accepted. We were not homeless anymore. **The Real Work Begins**



The small house was built for the owners Mum, and was very nice inside



We lived at Middlegate Road from 1991 to 2007. The projects, renovations, rebuilding, landscaping, additions and improvements were non-stop. The experience was very rewarding and we worked on every part of the ten acres, including fencing and planting trees.





Starting the excavation under the house



Complete new roof over the old one

One of the bigger projects was building a basement under the house and adding a large addition over the new bedroom; my tractor just fit under the house to dig out the fill.



Pouring the basement walls



The windmill pumped air under pressure into the big pond

We lived in the small house until the big house was renovated and then later rented out the smaller house.



Within a few years we had the place looking good and we had many visitors,

community events and even a district garden tour. There was always lots of wildlife around; deer and birds, bears, and even cougars. We had built trails and developed a series of ponds down toward Morrison Creek.



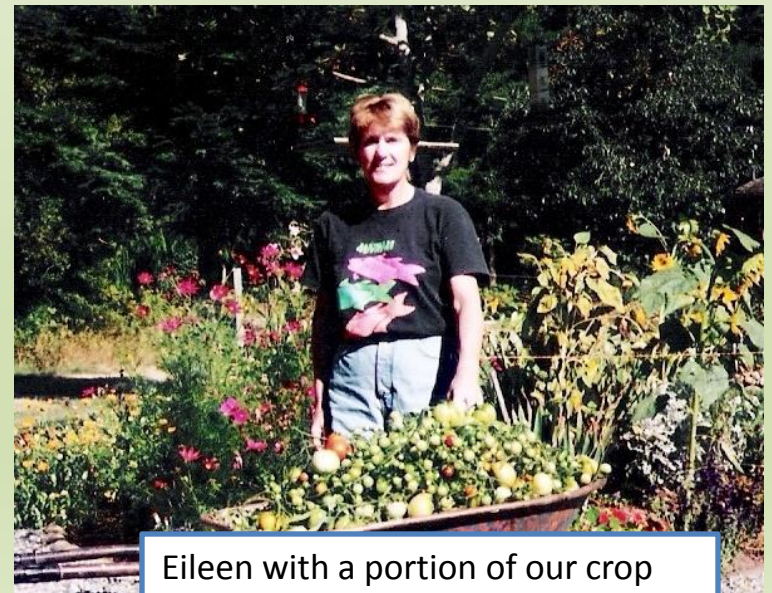


The stunning view of the mountains was a treat and the new addition took advantage of the scenery with big windows facing south and west. Some of the finishing wood was cut and milled from the ten acres. We had an unlimited supply of firewood and the new basement had an efficient woodstove that heated the entire house.





I mixed up a lot of really good topsoil, compost and manure. The vegetable garden was very productive and old apple, pear and peach trees produced hundreds of pounds of fruit. We kept busy in the summer picking and preserving all kinds of fruits and vegetables. In the fall we picked all of the vegetables and stored them in the finished basement. Our free range chickens produced lots of eggs and we gave away dozens of eggs to friends and visitors.



Eileen with a portion of our crop

Although it doesn't snow every year in Errington, sometimes it did provide a blanket to make it feel like winter. When this happened I was kept busy clearing snow all over the area. If I showed up early in town after a snowfall, I could be busy all day. At that time there were not many machines equipped to clear snow. It was interesting to see all the animal tracks on our property.



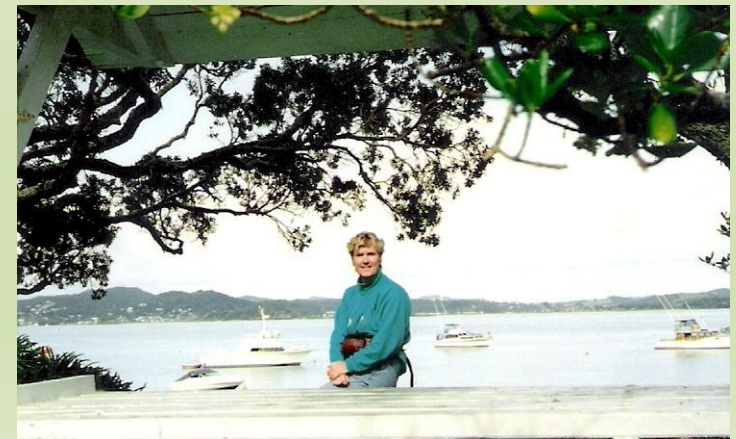
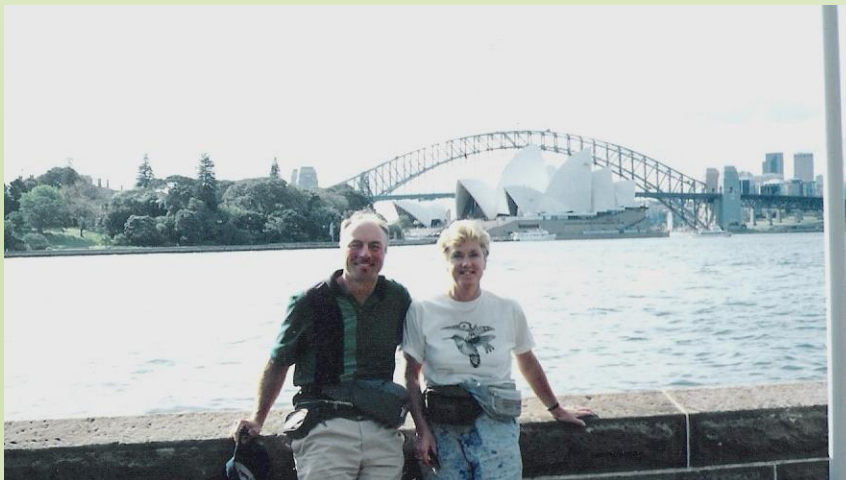
In November 1992 we took a six week trip to Australia and New Zealand. Direct to Sydney, then over to Auckland, all around the North Island



We saw many of the sights in and around Sydney. Eileen's Dad had shipped steel over to build the bridge.



On the trip around the North Island of New Zealand, we visited many interesting places and we had lots of unique experiences.





A farm stay near Rotorua New Zealand, was another life experience and we kept in touch with our hosts for many years. They later visited us in Canada.

Kay drove us around to many of the sites.



John and Kay had a dairy and sheep operation. One day the community had a sheep round-up. I guess they thought I would be squeamish about castrating the male lambs.



After a tour of Wellington NZ we took the inter-island ferry to the south island and a train to Christchurch. After a few days looking around the area, we flew to Melbourne Australia,



Wellington NZ



Ferry to South Isle

It was neat to see the little penguins waddle ashore at dusk on Philips Island. A train and bus trip north took us to Canberra



Melbourne





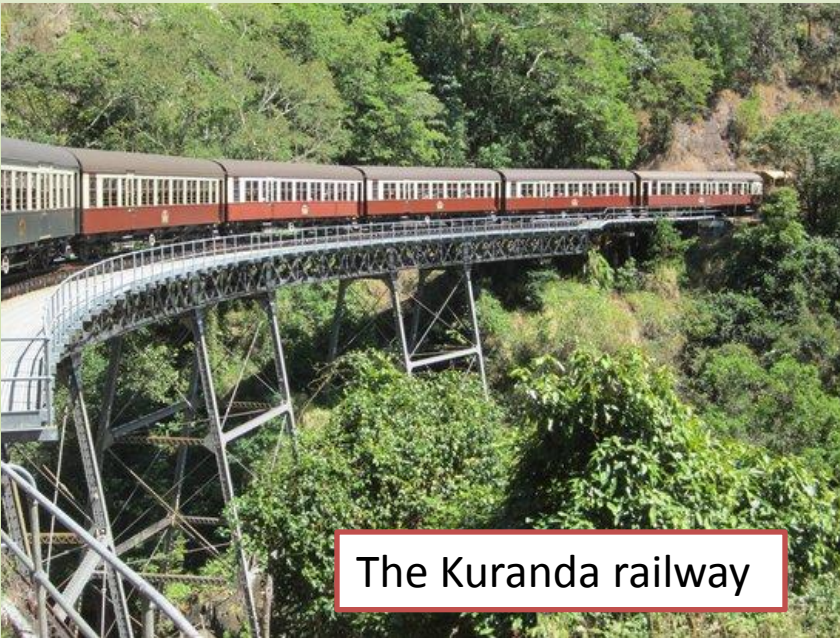
Canberra is the national capital and one of a few totally planned cities in the world. We sat in the parliament and did much more there before we were off to Brisbane for more adventures. An experience we will remember is a bus trip around Fraser Island with its massive sand dunes, tropical jungle, clear lakes and dingoes on the beach



156 TRIPS GALORE



Our adventures in Australia included several boat trips, a five day yacht trip, the Great Barrier Reef, and seeing big fish and lovely islands. We stayed on Magnetic Island near Townsville and an area up by Cairns. We headed home for Christmas.



The Kuranda railway

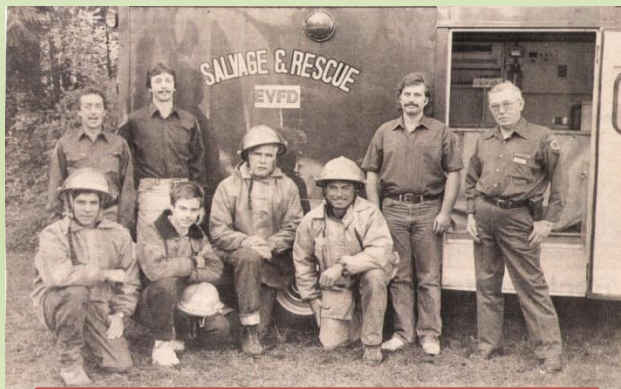


After several years as a volunteer firefighter in Errington I came up with brainwave that changed our lives for a while. The Firejector was a two year involvement with patents, prototypes, testing and demonstrations. Two universities and the Canadian technology

The Firejector uses water mist to extract flames, heat, and smoke out of a burning structure.



center in Ottawa, were some of the interested parties. A German company enticed me over to Europe on two paid trips and a big offer, and then proceeded to rip me off. The Firejector principle works fine, but I concluded that I was not cut-out for that kind of lifestyle and that entering a billion-dollar industry takes a lot more than a good idea.



Early EVFD with some of the crew



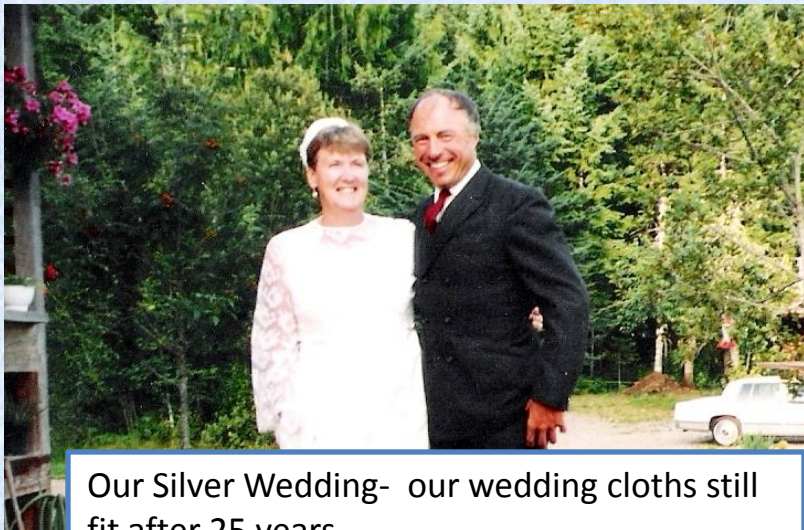


Venice



Tulum

The early 1990's saw Eileen and Sharon on a European tour including Venice, Munich, and Paris. On another trip Eileen and I climbed old ruins and explored the Mexican Cancun and Yucatan.



Our Silver Wedding- our wedding cloths still fit after 25 years.

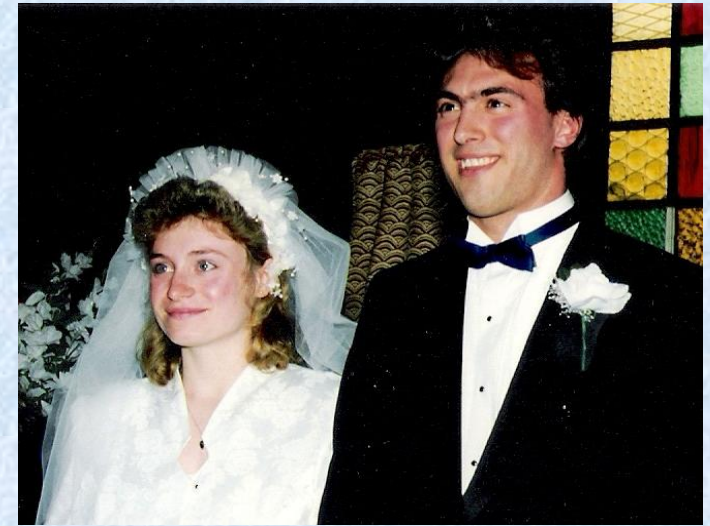


Chichen Itza

In 1993 Sharon and Shawn were married in an historic church in Parksville.

They had two children,
Chelsea 1998
Jasmine 2001

Sharon and Shawn
separated in 2014 and
remain good friends.





They lived about 6 kilometers away in Hilliers on a nice 2 ½ acre lot, in the country. Our grandchildren were encouraged to explore nature and ask lot of questions. They spent a lot of time playing in the wood and building tree forts.



Early education was a combination of public, Waldorf, and home-schooling. High school was in Qualicum Beach, which was a ten minute drive from home.



Community drinking water well

I had been working on, and exploring the land in the area for several years and had seen some really concerning changes to the land and water. I became involved in several groups and activities related to land use and water issues. Hundreds of people went on our watershed bus tours and attended meetings and presentations.

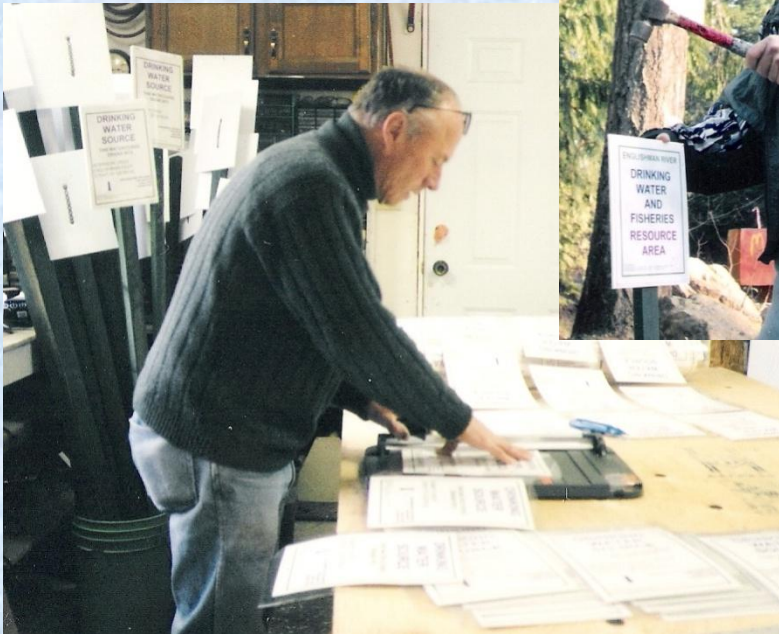


162 TRIPS GALORE

Drinking water supplies and declining fish stocks are very important to manage. Informing the public and politicians, mapping streams and creeks, and installing hundreds of signs were only part of the actions on water. I attended and made presentations at several workshops and conferences. Eventually I was meeting with health and government officials.



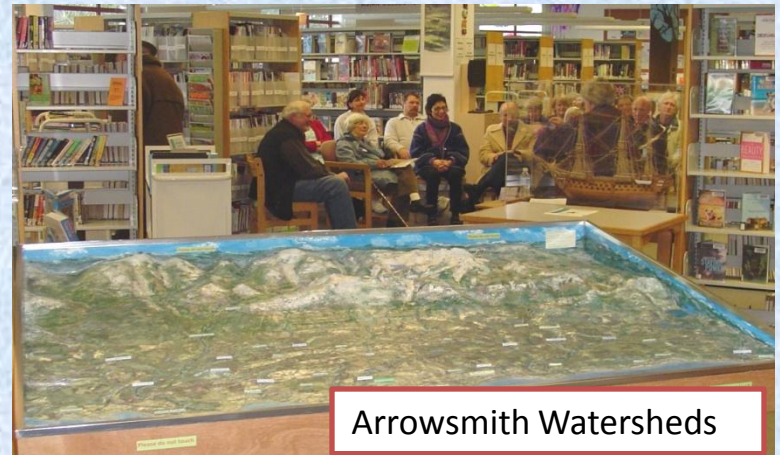
The education was incorporated into school curriculums which was good.



The water interest developed into another project - building scale, 3D maps. In the next few years I was commissioned to make about 20 of them for water and a range of interests.



Building the 3D base



Arrowsmith Watersheds



Port Alberni model



Whistler - Blackcomb



When Eileen's parents moved to Canada in 1982 they bought a small older house in downtown Parksville. When Gil passed away in 1990 Joan arranged for us to buy and maintain her house, so she had more spending money. Over time I fixed up and built onto the house and also built a significant workshop.

As she got older and less able to live alone, Mum Oliver moved into assisted living. I did more projects in and around the old house and eventually sold it in May 2013.

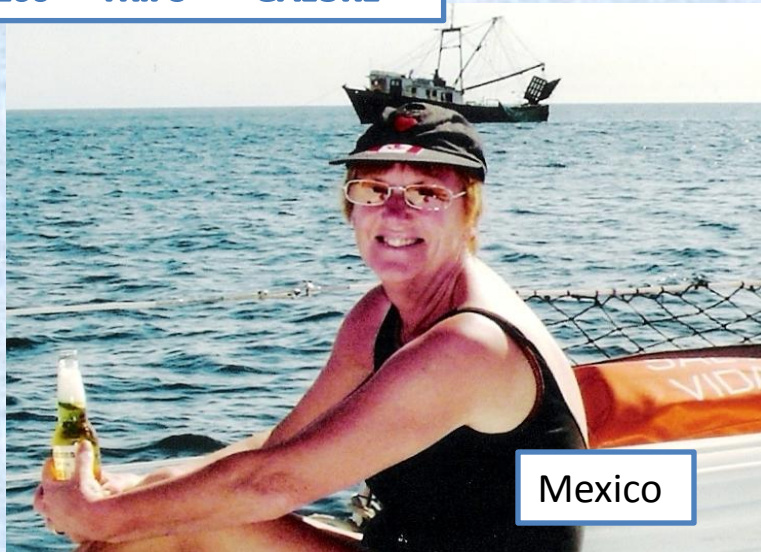




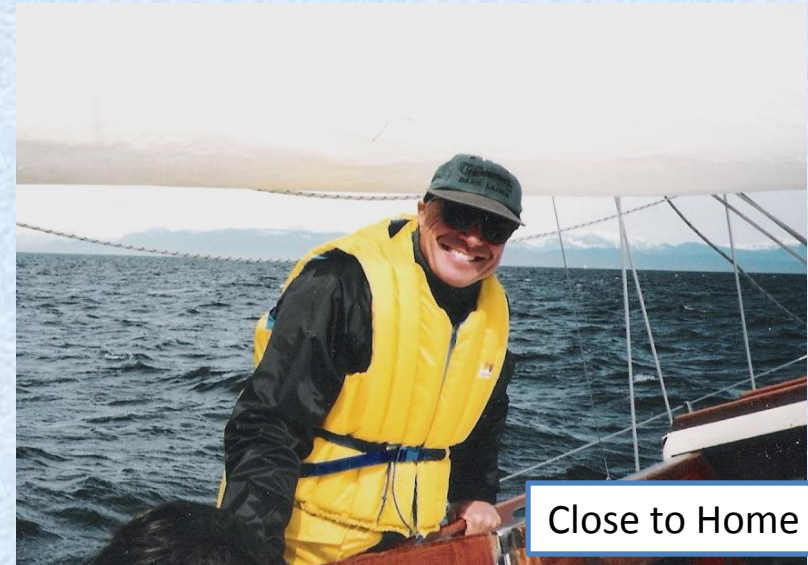
It wasn't all work and no play. One time I hiked the 75 km West Coast Trail in just over 3 days.

Climbing mountains, hiking and several multi day kayak trips took me to some very interesting places around Vancouver Island, Gulf Islands, Broken Islands and the Clayoquot.





Mexico



Close to Home

Water activities and travel have been a very important part of our lives. We have been so fortunate to have seen many amazing places and activities from the water.



Australia



Cuba

Eileen and Trevor's travels over the Years



We have traveled to many parts of England

We lived in East Anglia



We have been up to Edinburgh Scotland and Wales Over to the Continent several times



We have traveled by road and train in France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Luxemburg and the Netherlands

We travelled from Rome to Venice then on a cruise in the Adriatic and Mediterranean visiting Italy, Greece, Croatia, Turkey and the Islands



Many flights to Britain and Europe we sailed from England to Canada

Many flights across North America and cruises in the Caribbean through the Panama canal and on the west coast of North America Mexico and Alaska

Our adventures have taken us to many parts of the world. Hard work and careful planning, gave us the opportunity to see places that we could have only dreamed of when we were young.



We cruised and visited Tahiti, Moorea, Bora Bora, and the Hawaiian Islands

Our cruises and holiday have taken us to Mexico, Costa Rica, Columbia, Cuba, Jamaica, Honduras, Panama, Puerto Rico, Barbados, Aruba



Our first long drive was across Canada, from New Brunswick to Alberta. Since then we have seen much of the country.

We have travelled in many states in the US and Mexico



A trip to New Zealand and Australia in 1992 we travelled in by plane, boat, train and car and snorkeled on the Great Barrier reef



One of our many travels took us to Ottawa, Lake Placid, New York, Boston, up the east coast to New Brunswick and our old haunts, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Quebec and back to Ottawa.



My work situation was very interesting to say the least. Every day was an experience, with never two days alike. I operated, hired and directed many types of machines and equipment, using thousands of truck loads of material in the process.



PASS THE PITCHFORK: WE'RE MOVING OUT TO THE COUNTRY



**BEGINNERS GUIDE TO
A RURAL LIFESTYLE**

By Trevor Wicks

After working on hundreds of acreages in Alberta and BC, I concluded that many people could use information and awareness before moving onto a larger area of land. I wrote the text for a book, but never finished the dozens of graphics.

Contents at a Glance

Part 1: An introduction to the country life

- 1 What is an acreage
- 2 Defining a rural lifestyle
- 3 What type of rural lifestyle suits your interests
- 4 Experiencing the country without a big investment
- 5 Matching a rural property with your needs

Part 2: Property information

- 1 The components that make up a rural homestead; Site plan, home site plan, utilities and services
- 2 Real estate terms
- 3 Governance and land use regulations
- 4 Ask many questions
- 5 Property information chart
- 6 Checking buildings: structure, water supply, waste water, electrical, heating, other
- 7 Preliminary building checklist

Part 3: Special situations

- 1 Hobby farm requirements.
- 2 Home based business.
- 3 Looking to build you home on raw land.
- 4 Making changes too suit your needs
- 5 Environmental considerations

Part 4: Moving in and fitting in to your neighborhood

- 1 Making a deal
- 2 Before moving in
- 3 Moving in.
- 4 Meeting the neighbors.
- 5 Learn about the community.
- 6 The responsible country resident.
- 7 Reduce your impact.

The community decided to build a full set of marimba wooden instruments. Some of the work was done in my workshop, as I had a lot of tools. The Marimba tradition has grown into a great musical experience for young and old.



Eileen's sister Chris playing



Sharon and Shawn Playing in Parksville



Errington music camp



In December 2002 we booked a trip to England to spend Christmas with our family. The evening before we were to leave, we had our cases packed and planned an early night. A wind and rain storm hit with a furry and the power went out.



We sat in the dark, when all of a sudden there was a massive explosion. Our neighbour had used a lighter to check a barrel of gasoline. All hell broke loose, we both rushed and helped with two families and children. The adrenalin caused Eileen to have a cardiac event leading to intensive care, ambulance to Victoria, missing the trip and weeks of recovery.



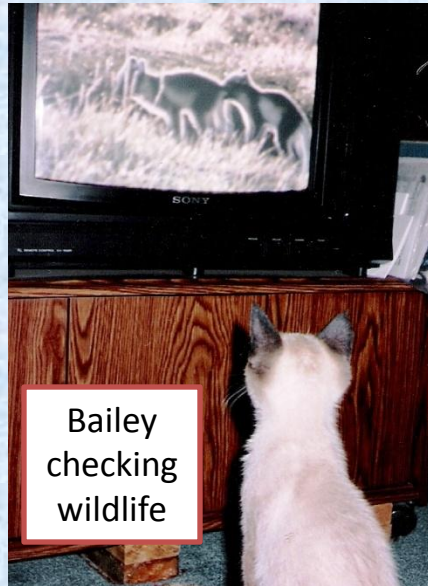
The small plain was loading, as we drove down to Victoria.

The health effects from that event lingered and caused Eileen to take an early retirement from the school system.

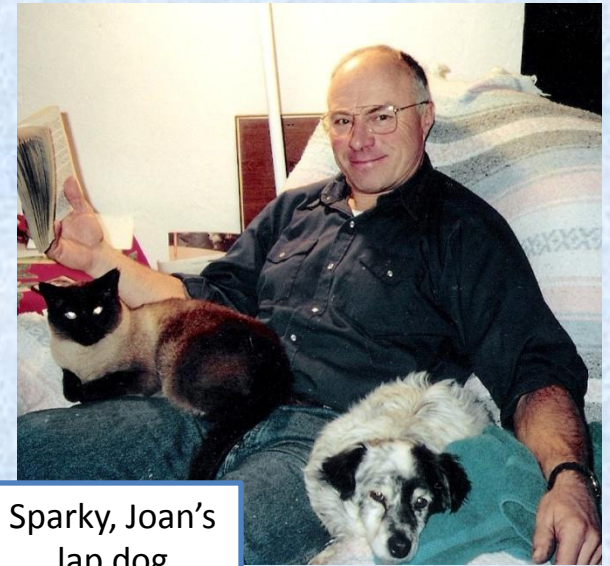
During the 16 years we lived on Middlegate road we had several more four-legged friends.



Lady



Bailey
checking
wildlife



Sparky, Joan's
lap dog



Deerly
beloved



Trina our buddy



Jake visiting from next door

174 TRIPS GALORE

Since we moved onto the acreage near Red Deer in 1970 we had owned and improved about 25 acres of land. In the spring of 2007 we decided to pull the pin on acreage life and move into town.



The 10 acres on Middlegate Rd. was on the market for about six weeks before we had an offer at the asking price. Here we go again, looking for a new place to live.



The completion date for the sale was May 31st. We had to scramble to empty, clean and make ready two houses, two garages, a large workshop and four other buildings in a month.





The scene from the new house was similar to the view we had at Middlegate Road



The agent who we dealt with said he would take us for a drive around Qualicum Beach to look at houses. After looking at 5 places in 90 minutes, we made an offer on one of them. 524 Hawthorne Drive seemed to fit, however, it was not available until October. The large workshop I had built in Parksville saved the day. It was soon full of our stuff and we were to be homeless for 4 months - a good time to take a cruise to Alaska. Just after we started the cruise we had a very urgent message from our realtor. Change of plans. If we could sign a document faxed to the ship, we could now move into Hawthorne Drive on July 1st.



176 COUNTRY MICE MOVE TO TOWN



The trees, shrubs and gardens at Hawthorne needed a lot of work. My chainsaw was soon busy with many loads of branches to haul away.



I had just sold my big tractor and all of the equipment, so it was time to get a toy Kubota.

Hear we go again, on a much smaller scale, fixing the place, to how we like it.





We lived at Hawthorne drive for nearly 9 years and as usual we made a lot of improvements inside the house and in the yard.



I re-graded the entire yard, building retaining walls and fences on three sides, adding many raised beds, rock walls and a greenhouse. Soon we had lots of flowers and veggies from the garden.





Our garden at Hawthorne was always interesting and changing with the seasons





We harvested hundreds of kilos of food from the garden; enough to save some for later.



180 COUNTRY MICE MOVE TO TOWN

We painting inside and out, even the pathways and the roof on the workshop needed to be replaced. Fortunately I had assembled a lot of tools and equipment and had a large stack of sawn wood from trees I had cut down. This wood was used in the construction projects, including raised garden beds.





I designed and built a sun room/conservatory at the back of the house to replace an aluminum canopy. We used it all year round as it was on the south side and in the sun.



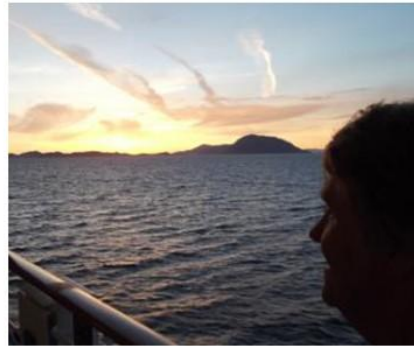
182 COUNTRY MICE MOVE TO TOWN

We needed to take a break and do some more traveling. Time for a cruise



We had a great time with Sharon, Shawn and the girls on a return cruise from Los Angeles to Puerto Vallarta Mexico.





We took several trips up to Alaska

North to ALASKA



Pilot coming on board



Skagway and Glacier Bay





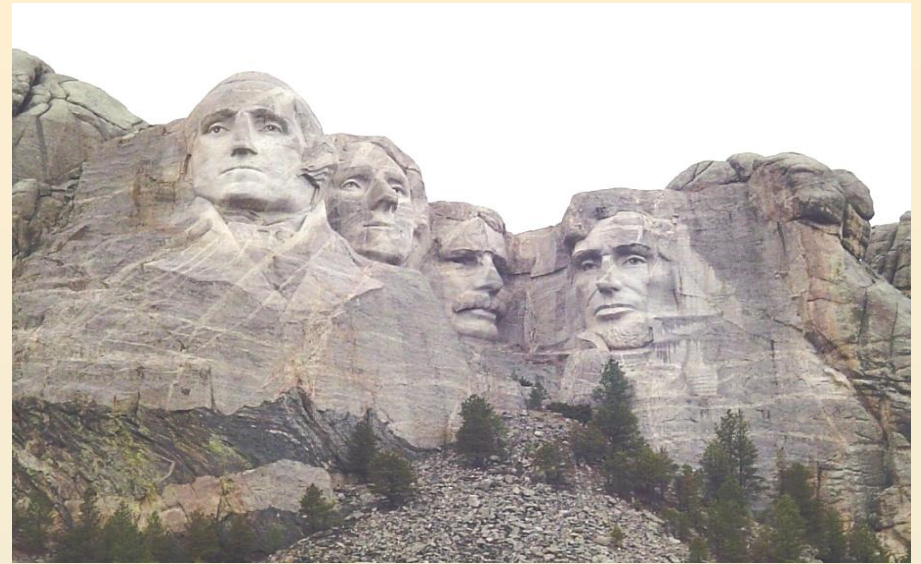
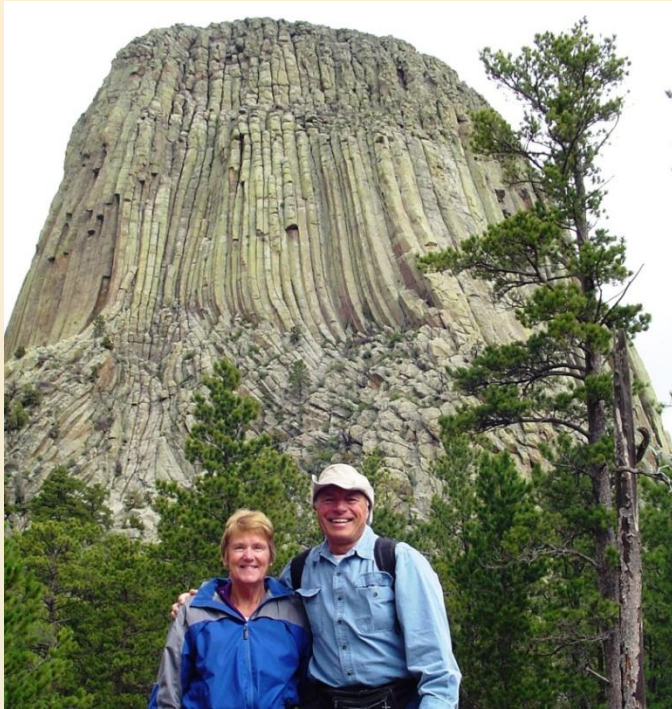
From Seattle to Alaska





Brother John and Angela came over for a visit and we went on another cruise.





We traveled to the central US, visiting many very different and interesting places





Yellowstone National Park



The 2011 trip took us through several states starting and finishing in Denver Colorado





A shorter US adventure was in the Pacific North West down the coast to Northern California.





Then it was time to visit 'the old country', our old haunts, York and up to Scotland





We had time with relatives and family from the north of England to the south coast



Catching up with the news that we had missed out on over the last 30 years.

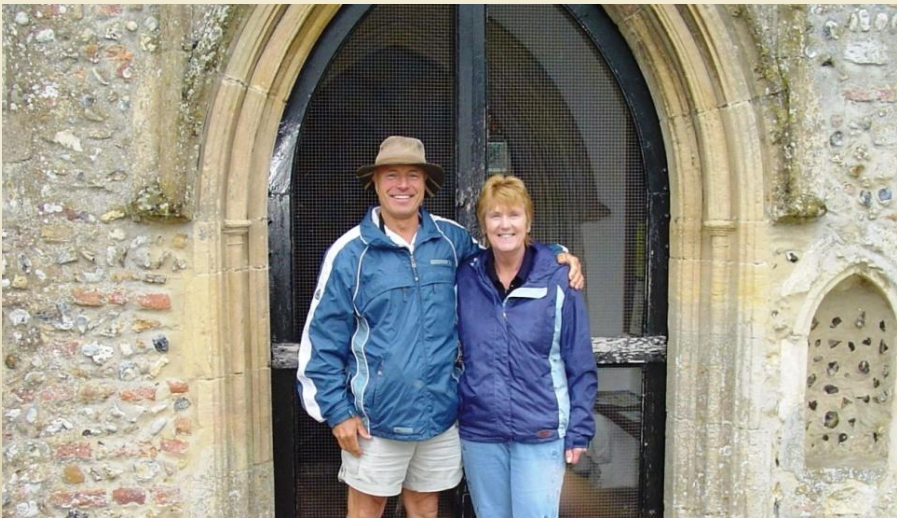




A tour around the south coast.

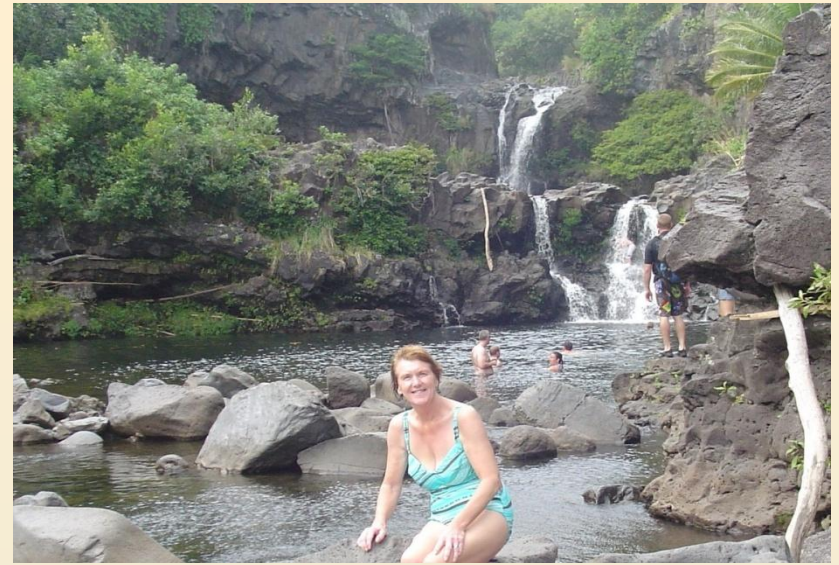


Eileen loves collecting rocks. I'm sure some of these made it home.



Ellingham Church where we were married



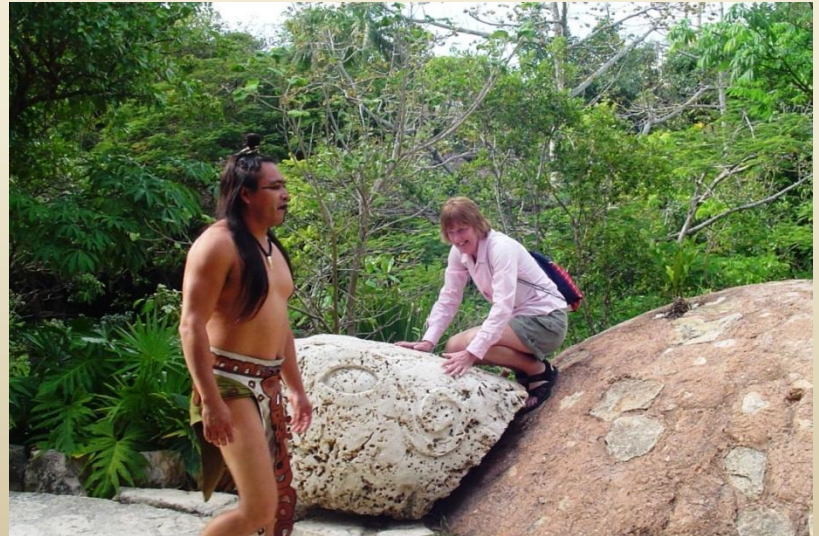


A visit to Maui one excursion took us all around the south coast of the island and the interesting, winding road to Hana. The tropical jungle contrasted with the high dry volcano.





Back to the Yucatan on the Caribbean side of Mexico, lots variety, even swimming an underground river through limestone caves



194

BUCKET LIST



Three old relics from the past



Stumped on Texada Island

Wood carving at
Campbell River



Paddling in wildfire smoke





We took a bus trip to the Tulip festival in Linden Washington





Chicago to New Orleans





St Lewis, Nashville, Memphis



Deep South States





Gator country



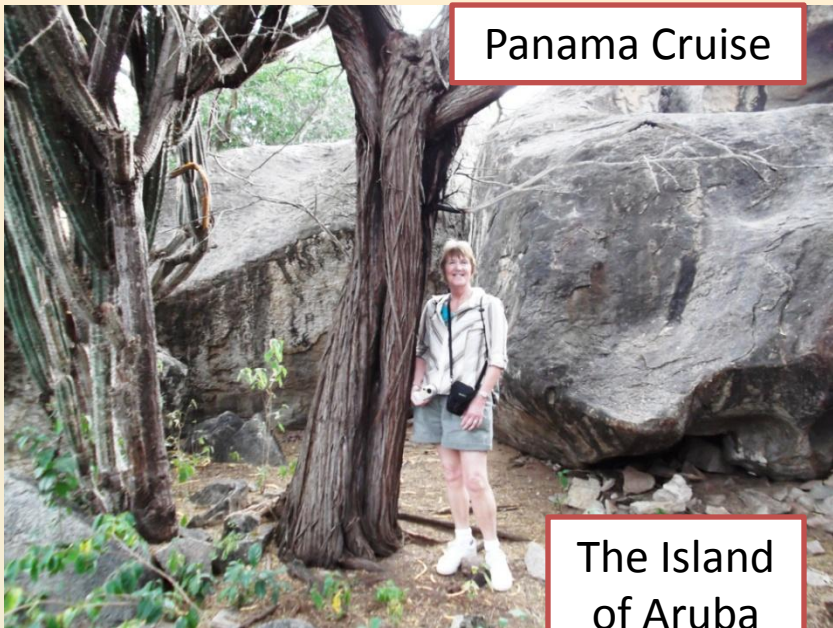
Graceland



The train they call 'The City of New Orleans'

Mississippi
stern wheeler

Panama Cruise



The Island of Aruba



Cartagina Columbia



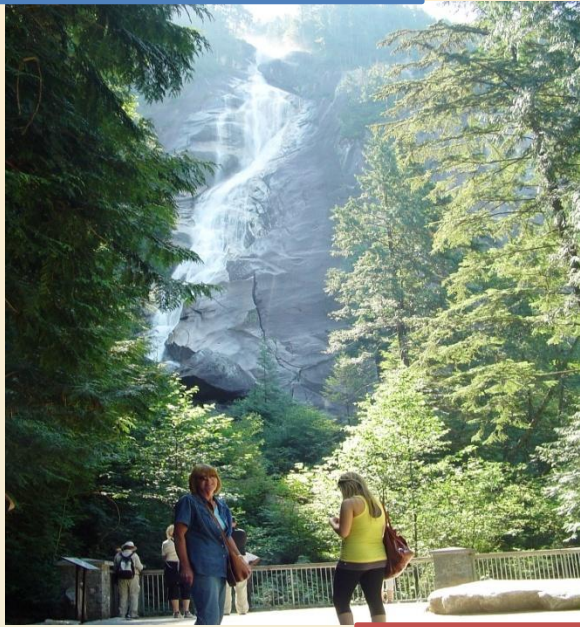
Panama canal



Costa Rica rain forest

200

BUCKET LIST



Whistler BC

Heading to Alberta



Pemberton forest fire



South Pacific Cruise

BUCKET LIST 201



Moorea off Tahiti



Bora Bora



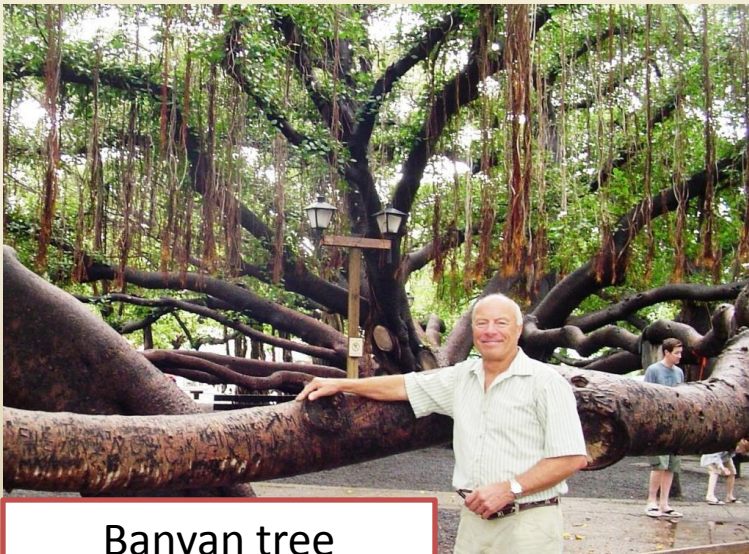
Oahu, Hawaii



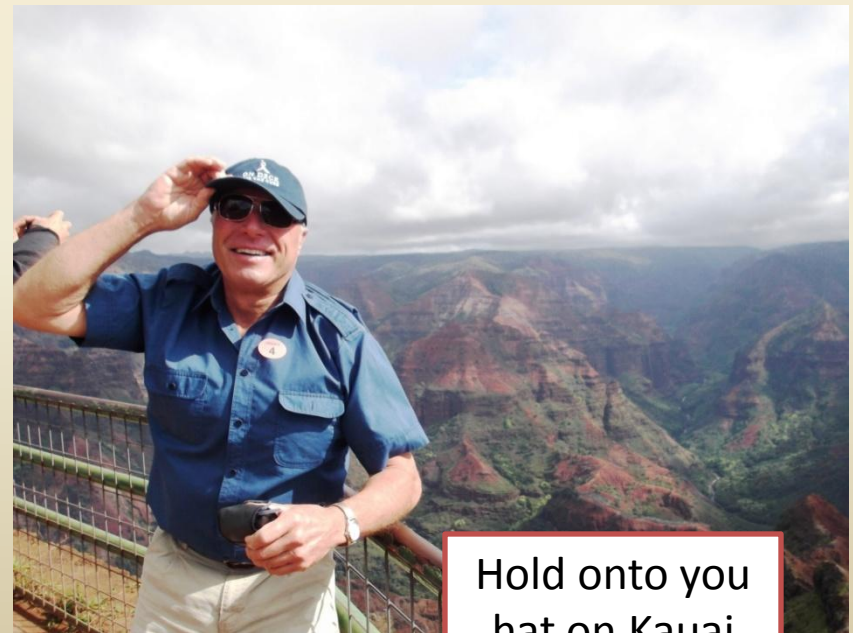
Fresh lava on
the Big Island



Pineapple
treats



Banyan tree
downtown Lahaina



Hold onto you
hat on Kauai

A trip to Cuba showed us a different way of life

BUCKET LIST

203



Hard working people making the best of a tough situation



204 OLD RELICS, THE MED & NEWFIE



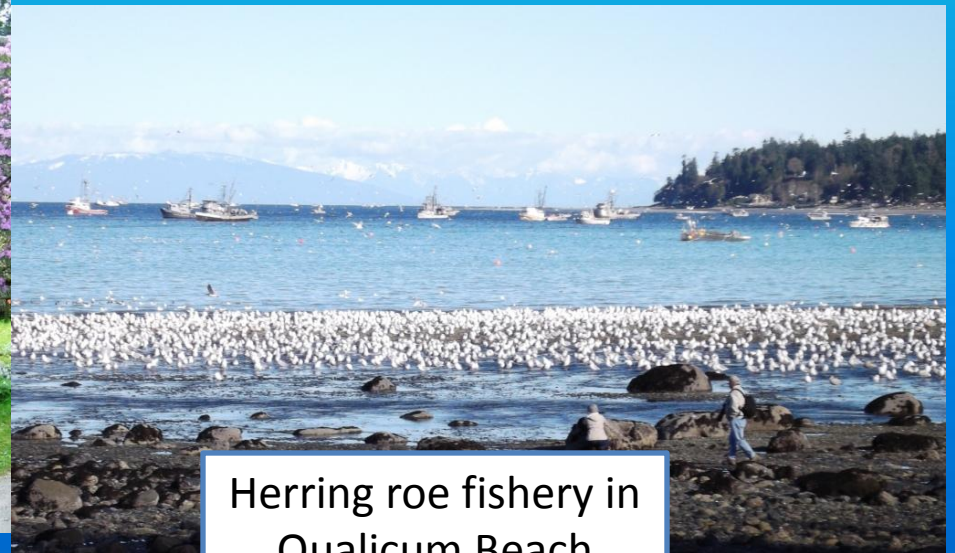
Parksville kite festival



An old relic in the woods



Milner Gardens in spring



Herring roe fishery in Qualicum Beach



Our 50th Wedding Anniversary lunch with the family.

We started singing at community events, seniors homes and down at the waterfront on nice summer evenings.



Sunflowers galore in our backyard garden.





A typical Qualicum Beach Sunset

The US Climate modification program is in high gear

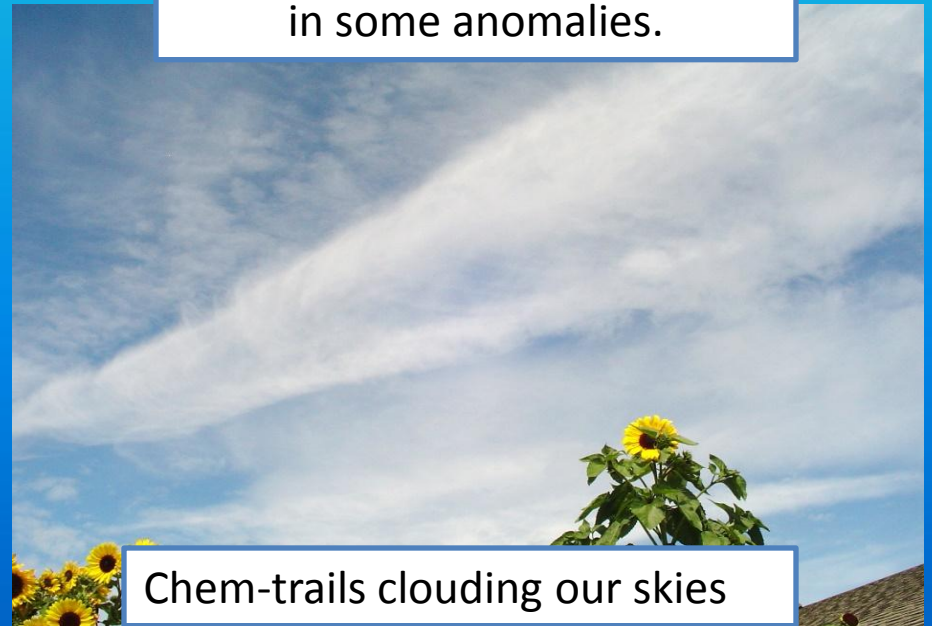
OLD RELICS, THE MED & NEWFIE 207



Occasionally I take photographs of unusual formations in the sky.



Obviously aircraft are involved in some anomalies.



Chem-trails clouding our skies

208 OLD RELICS, THE MED & NEWFIE

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I often wake up in the
middle of the night
with another
brainwave, idea or
innovation.

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Independent
Water Website

www.ouroceansidewater.com

The purpose of this website is to provide information, resource material, links and an opportunity for input. The area of interest for this website is the area north-east of Mount Arrowsmith including the communities of Nanosee, Parksville, French Creek, Qualicum Beach, Dashwood, Errington, Coombs and Hilliers. The Arrowsmith - Oceanside area of the Central East Coast of Vancouver Island, BC Canada, has a population of about 35 thousand people. Within this general area there are about 130 regional, municipal and private water systems, and several thousand private wells.



Qualicum Beach shore deer

Browse all topics [click on headings below](#)

During this time I developed two websites

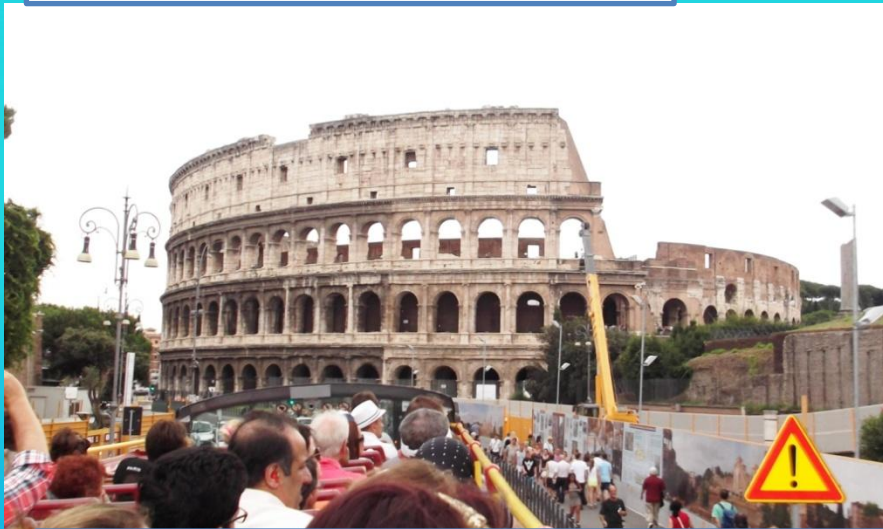
When I was 16 years old I donated blood for the first time in England. In 2015 I was acknowledged for 150 donations; I have ten more than that now.



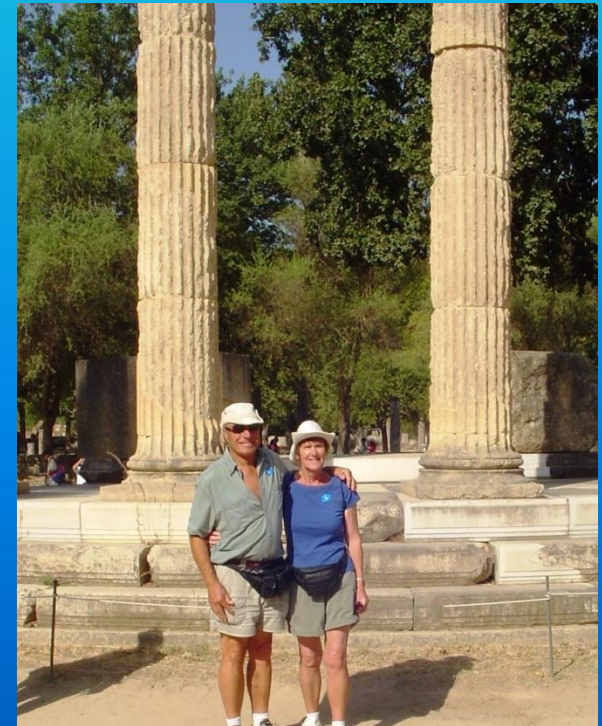
In 2013 we decided to take our last trip to England and Europe. We flew into Rome for a few days, onto Venice then cruised the Adriatic and Mediterranean before flying to Amsterdam, and England where we stayed for a couple of weeks.



210 OLD RELICS, THE MED & NEWFIE

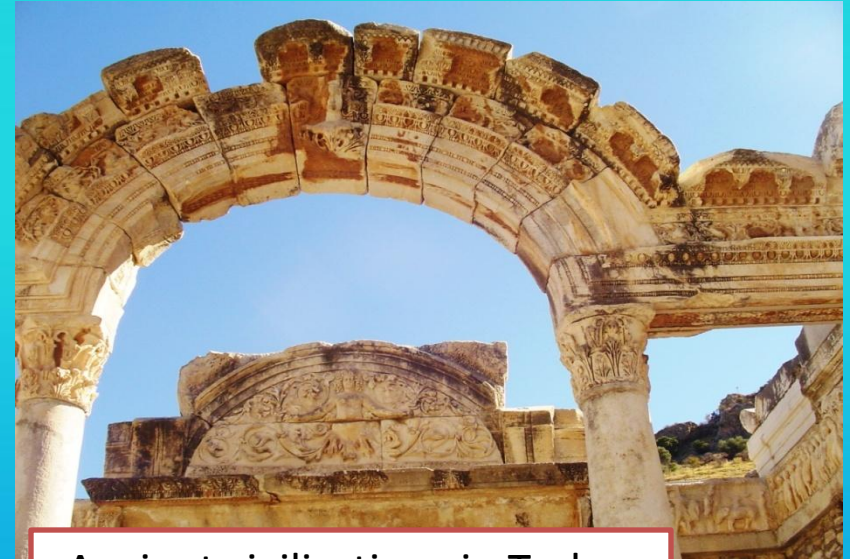


We roamed around Rome, wandered the Vatican, explored Dubrovnik and limped through Olympia





Katakolon



Ancient civilizations in Turkey



This massive stadium at Ephesus was built almost 3 thousand years ago



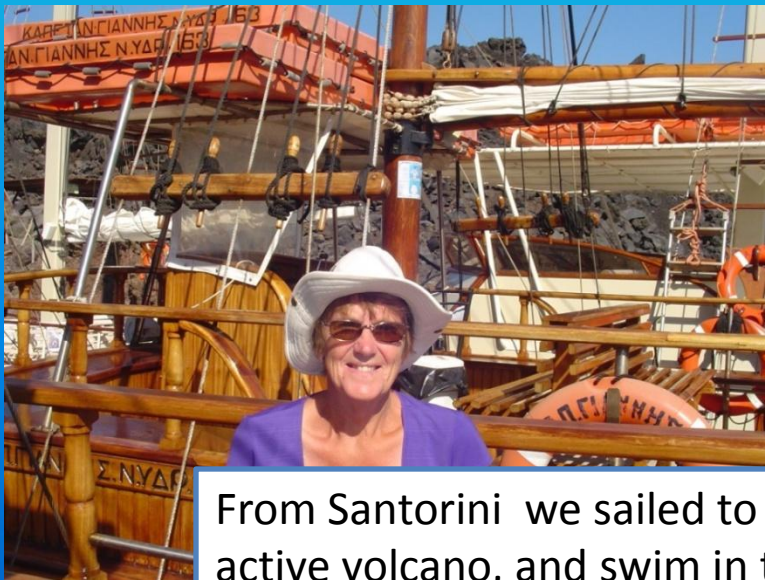


Greek islands,
Athens and the
Acropolis, Naples
and Pompea were
some of the many
places we visited.

The cruise ship we traveled on was the Ruby Princess.



The unforgettable scene below was taken from the ship as we left Venice.



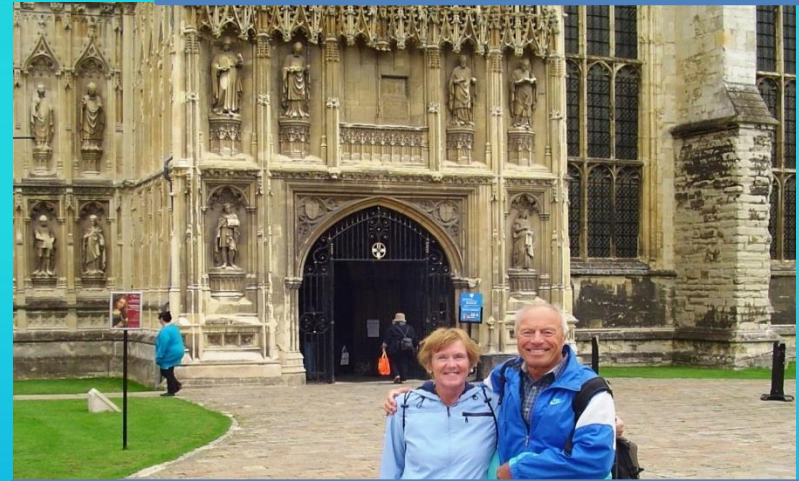
From Santorini we sailed to hike on an active volcano, and swim in the Med, warmed by bubbling hot springs.

214 OLD RELICS, THE MED & NEWFIE



Back in England we visited and connected with relatives and friends. My brother John and wife Angela celebrated their golden wedding. Eileen is standing at Ellingham Mills where we first met about 50 years earlier.





We visited many historic sites including Canterbury Cathedral

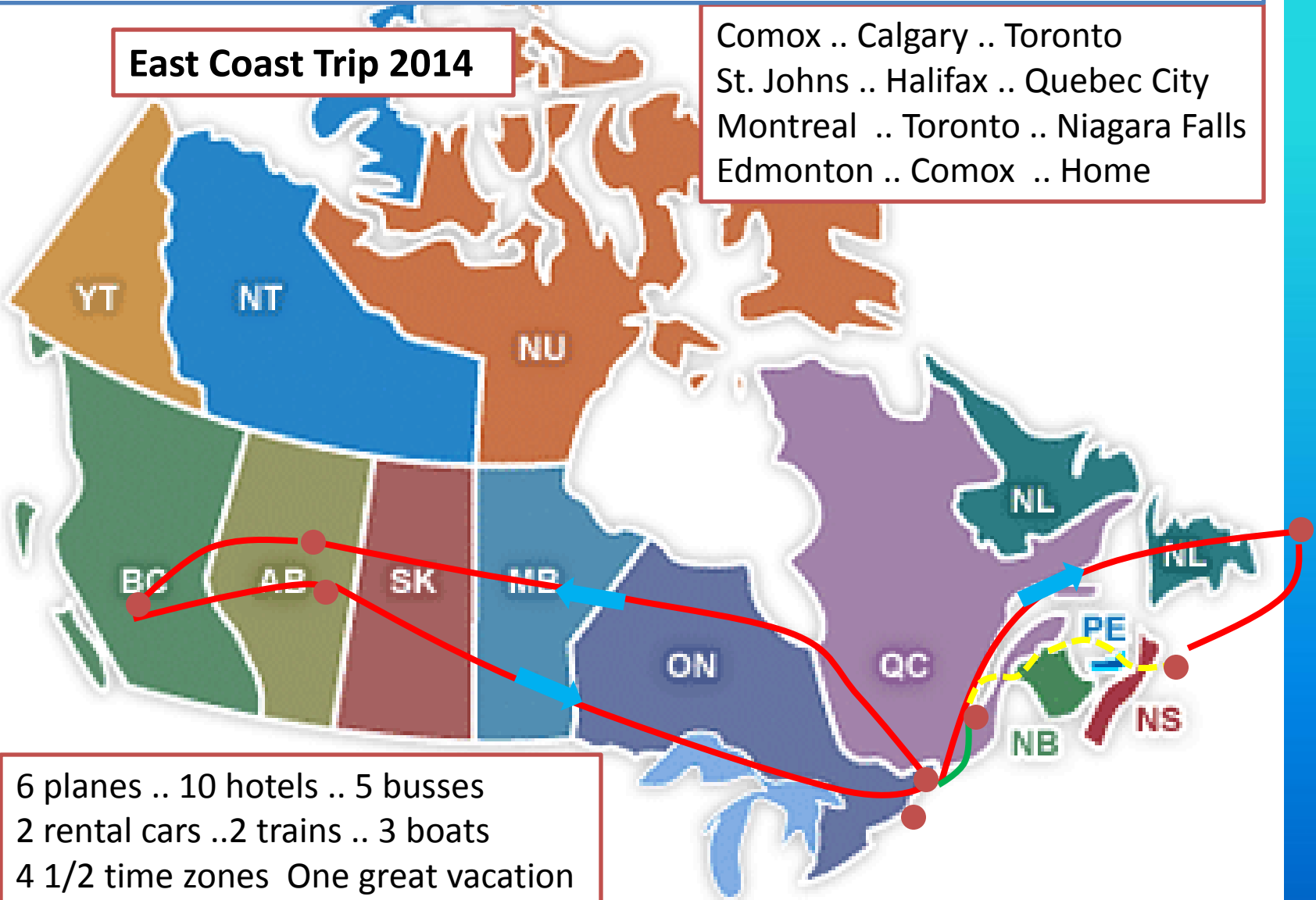
We took a bus trip to visit the English south coast and a day trip past the white cliffs of Dover, over to the French coast.



We had never visited Newfoundland so we decided to make the trip an adventure

East Coast Trip 2014

Comox .. Calgary .. Toronto
St. Johns .. Halifax .. Quebec City
Montreal .. Toronto .. Niagara Falls
Edmonton .. Comox .. Home



6 planes .. 10 hotels .. 5 busses
2 rental cars .. 2 trains .. 3 boats
4 1/2 time zones One great vacation

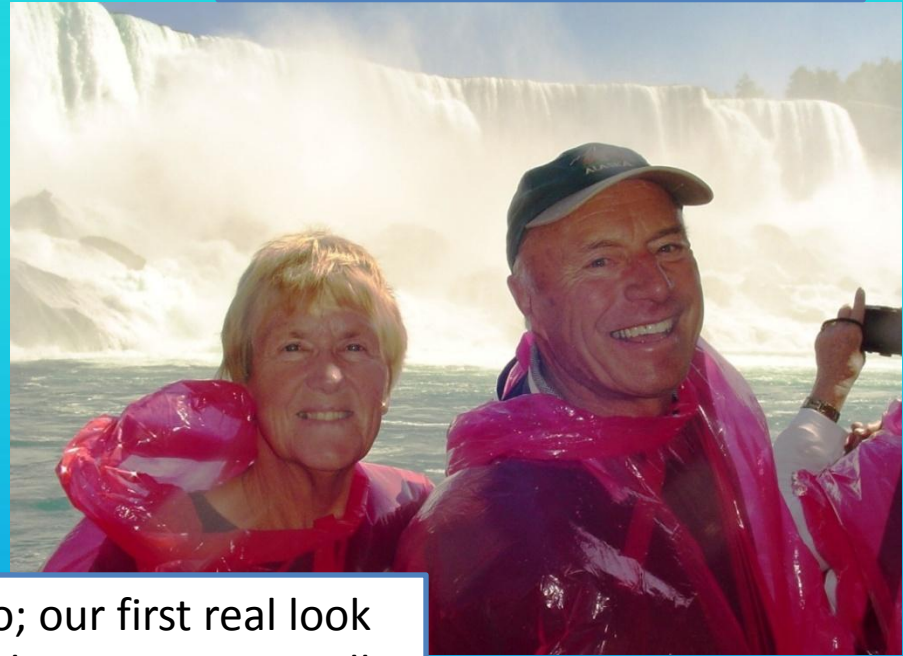
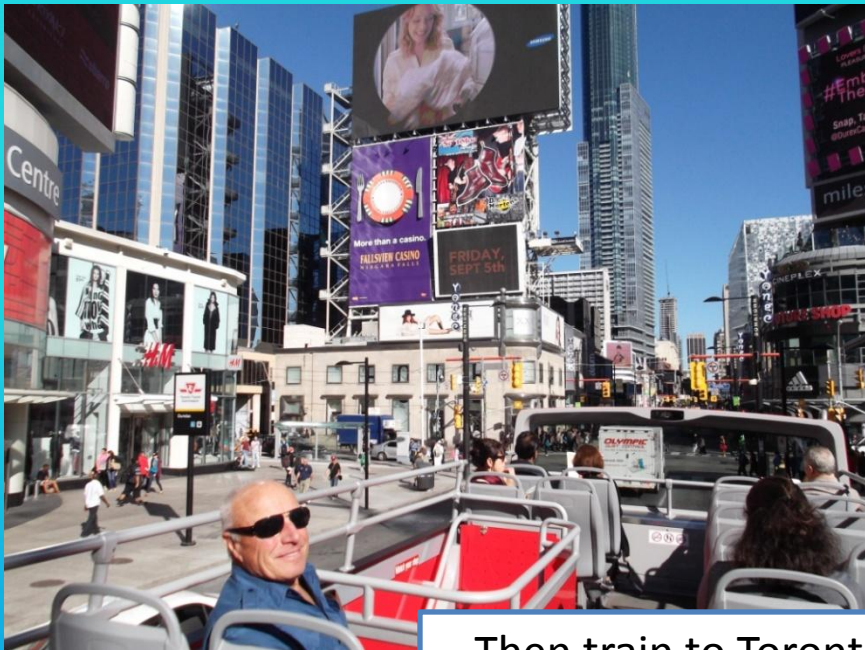


We drove around the east side of Newfoundland and the south shore of Nova Scotia.

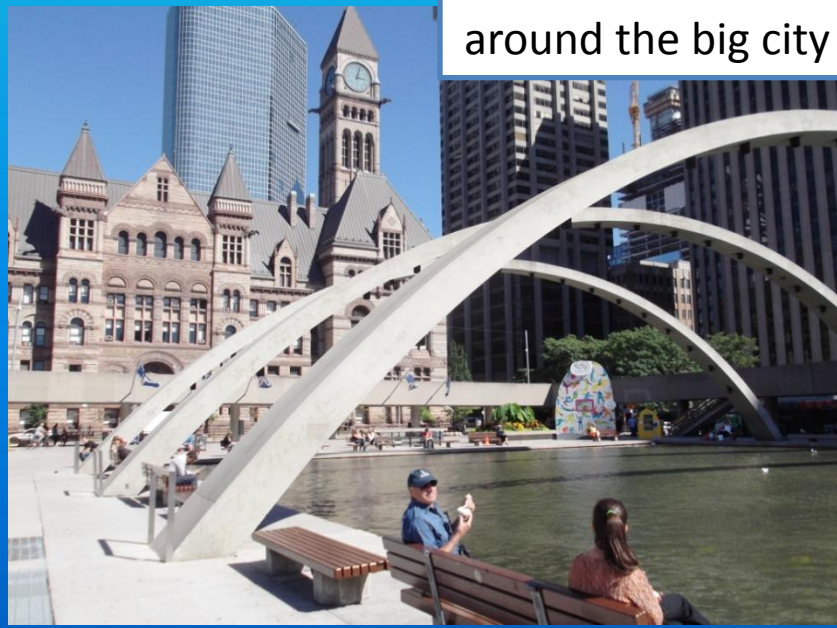


After visiting St. Johns' area and up to Bonavista, we flew over to Halifax and traveled the south shore of Nova Scotia. Next we took a bus through New Brunswick, along the gulf of St Lawrence to Quebec City.





Then train to Toronto; our first real look around the big city and on to Niagara Falls.



220 OLD RELICS, THE MED & NEWFIE

In March 2016 our plans to downsize were implemented, our daughter Sharon and our two grand-daughters moved into our house on Hawthorne Drive.



We moved into a strata development in Qualicum Beach. The front of the properties are well maintained, our back yard was overgrown and needed just a little work.

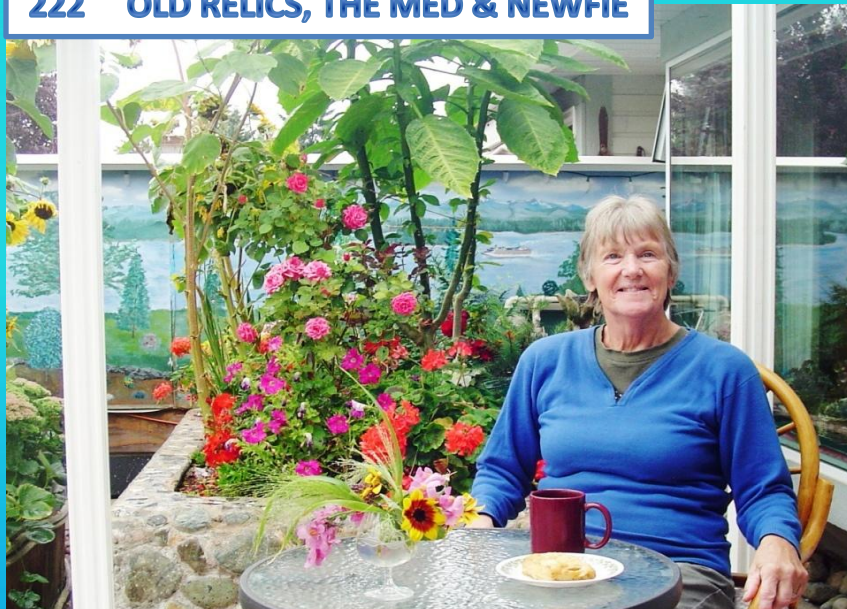




Within a few days of taking possession, I was reforming the back yard to suit our needs.

Old bath-tubs and good soil make very productive container gardens.





The addition of a glass canopy, greenhouse and painted murals makes a pleasurable vista.



**This is our Story up to the Spring of 2019
Hope you Enjoyed it**

