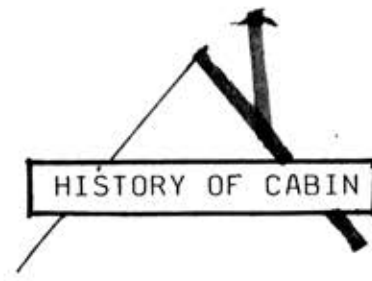


1977



Lorna Livesley Chambreau



This is Lorna Livesley Chambreau's description of building her retirement home...(cabin).

I had been meaning to digitize this hard copy book in my possession after failing to access the old floppys from her Sharp word processor. This PDF is put together from camera to Photoshop and .pdf. The pdfs are crude, but readable., and also capture the sketches. There are tif files for each page in a separate folder.

I have not proofread this collection much as the story is too much my past, Lorna's view was very much her own, and I have not felt like revisiting it now...maybe later..and if errors show up.

Feb 24 2016

- Dennis Chambreau

HISTORY OF CABIN

INTRODUCTION

I was working for the Highway Department in Vancouver, WA. I was 62 years old, and living alone in a rented duplex in a development. Dennis and Abbie and their two kids were living in Ed's old house at Alki in Seattle while Dennis worked both at Sears and finishing getting his degree in forestry. Mike and Marylyn and their two boys lived in Palo Alto, CA, where Mike worked for Hewlett-Packard.

REASON

As my rather forced early retirement loomed, my two sons insisted that my years of renting must cease. The money I had been spending on the fifteen apartments I'd rented over the years could be better used, they said. "Get yourself a piece of land." "I'll buy the land," Mike said. "And I'll build you a house," said Dennis.

LAND SEARCH

So, in January 1977, a year before the time I could see my job would be ending, I began to search for a piece of land. I was a rank amateur at this, real estate matters always having bored me. For money, I figured if I began saving and cashed in all my meager assets, I'd have about \$5000 with which to build.

DESIRE

All my life, my parents, who were raised in the Puget Sound area, had wanted to buy waterfront property there. They never did. But we spent almost all of our summers on the Sound. I grew up loving the salt water. Our family always thought the woods/mountains boring. So why did I end up buying and living in the woods?

LAND BOOM

It was a time of great inflation and real estate boom.....

soar

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The COLUMBIAN

Tuesday, March 14, 1978
Vancouver, Wash.

Northwest building costs

By The Associated Press
Soaring construction costs in the Pacific Northwest are leading a trend of rising prices for new commercial and industrial buildings throughout the region, industry spokesmen say.

Construction also is affected by rising costs of materials and the high cost of labor in the Northwest. The cost of construction in the region is the highest of any in the country, according to industry spokesmen.

"I don't know it for a fact but the Northwest could be leading the pack in construction cost increases," said Jim Grady of Peck and Grady Architects, Portland. "A very high percentage of our construction is tied to wood and concrete, and these materials are rising faster than the cost increases of most other building materials."

Superintendent Robert Blanchard of the Portland schools said the school district now has to add 20 percent to the expected cost of building projects to offset inflation from the time a project leaves the drawing board until it is completed.

Home building statistics and costs compiled by the Federal Home Loan Bank in Seattle indicate that home construction and prices of used homes in the Northwest have risen faster than in the nation as a whole. The inflationary trend is more pronounced in Portland than Seattle.

The figures show that in March 1977 the average sales price of new homes in Portland was \$54,800. By last November the average price had climbed 14.9 percent to about \$63,000.

In December 1976, the average sales price for new homes in Seattle was \$48,400. By the end of last year the average price reached \$51,700, up about 6.8 percent.

Land grab speculators and developers were grabbing up land so fast that I hardly heard of a piece of land for sale than it was grabbed up at fantastic prices. This included the few chances I had at any waterfront property, which I gave up on as beyond my means. I was mighty discouraged, but my sons kept urging me on.

LAST ALTERNATIVE

I wanted to be out of cities. The tiny little cramped city lots I might have gotten would only have brought me more of the troubles I'd suffered in my years of apartment living. At last there was nothing possible left but a woods lot up at Monroe that Don Bishop, with whom I'd worked in Seattle was trying to sell.

I didn't want to live in the woods, afraid I might be very unhappy. And everyone was horrified that I'd even think of going out and live alone in the woods. But I pointed out to them that this lot was in a development that was part of a community club of retirees, and that there were caretakers and the use of a swimming pool there. Since my one and only favorite sport was swimming, this was quite an attraction to me.

OFFER

So I called Don from work in Vancouver and took him up on his, once, joking offer to sell it to me for \$500 less than he'd been asking others for it. It went from there. I bought a piece of woods because I had no other choice.

INSPECTION

APRIL 1977

But, before I did, I had to see it, of course. So, in April, I took some vacation time, and, having several other reasons to go north again, I went and spent Easter with Dennis and Abbie. We made a date with Bishop to meet us and show us the land.

Dennis was averse to going, but finally gave in. After a long try, I got ahold of Bishop and we agreed to meet at Monroe. He said he had some extra easter eggs he'd bring and we could have an easter egg hunt for the kids.

So we went in the big old Buick Dennis has just bought. I sat in back and brought out the library books I'd brought to entertain the kids with. They seemed to enjoy. The nasty weather had cleared up somewhat and it was a pleasant trip up. But Dennis wasn't too happy about my directing him where to go. I really didn't know why he seemed so against this deal.

When we got to Monroe I was amazed that the interchange I had helped worked on was now built. At first we couldn't find Bish, and then we did. He claimed he hadn't waited long, although we were late. He had come alone, without his family. I introduced everyone without our getting out of the cars. Then Bish said, "Follow me". We did.

He led us for miles and miles and miles along very crooked rural roads, gesturing at us like a merry Easter bunny. It was pretty country, but I was getting dismayed. I had expected all virgin woods, but this was much more settled than I'd expected. First there was a very bad road, pitted. By all the floods I knew they had up here, perhaps? Then there was a better road and then a big real estate sign. Then, with a sort of flourish, Bish darted into a side road that was paved and posted "dead end" and drew up in a paved cul-de-sac. "Here we are!" he said, proudly.

I had expected it to be clear out in the forest away from cities and people. It was wooded all about, but I didn't like the real estate development aspect and that newly surfaced road made me suspicious of city encroachment.

We all piled out of the cars. I let them go on in ahead, they crashing through the thick brush, where Bishop had hacked out a very crude path. I, the city gal, delayed, fussing with two cameras, purse, and, dubiously, leaving the car unlocked. I had brought cameras intending to take pictures like I did on field trips at work. I was all dressed up, while the rest of them were in grubbies.

They all made fun of my fussings as they tried to help me across a fallen tree backed up by a pool of water. I felt a fool as they practically lifted me over it and I stumbled after them encumbered with my cameras and big purse. And I was having trouble seeing the ground where I walked. I hadn't been out like this since diagnosis of "detached vitreous" in my eye. I stumbled and gasped and when I finally caught up with them it was too dark under all those big trees to take pictures anyway.

Bish cried, "Look the other way, kids!" and he flew off and hid the eggs. Then they all dashed down to the creek, Bish slashing away with a little machete he had brought. I felt a million years old, left there. Then I began to struggle down to find them. But I got lost and mired in a bog. "Where are you?" I wailed. "Here! Here!" But it was a jungle in there. They had to come and get me. I was crawling on all fours over logs the rest of them easily jumped over. After a bit I got my second wind and tried to take some Polaroid pictures. They all gathered round to see. But the pictures came out bad and streaked. I kept and treasured them, later, anyway. They were my only pix of "my" woods.

Bish and Dennis went exploring around and Abbie and the kids went off someplace. I wanted to get in on the "business" talk Dennis and Bish were having, but

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they went off in the woods together.

We didn't tarry long in there. It was such a tangle of brush shoulder high that it was hard to get around. Nor could Bishop find the property markers he'd put out once. We all went back to the car. This time I wouldn't let them help me and bravely entrusted my boots to leap through the water by myself.

At the car Abbie produced ham sandwiches, pop and potato chips. Nobody offered Bish anything. I was embarrassed. "Mind if I--a pop? potato chip?" he asked. And they gave him some. Dennis and Bish were talking male buddy-buddy and again, I wanted to get in on it, but was ignored.

I began to take pictures. Bish got coy, then silly and then posed. Then I noticed he was getting restive and Dennis was signaling me. Bish wanted to go home. Dennis wanted to stay. "OK if we stay awhile?" I asked Bish. "Oh sure!" "And maybe sometime we could camp up here?" "Oh sure!" Bishop left and we all went back into the woods.

And then Dennis showed excitement. "This is fabulous! Absolutely fabulous!" He rushed around. "That tree! That cedar! must come down. There's more timber in here! That maple! We can build!" I felt a little alarm; was he going to cut it all down? all that beauty?

Abbie went prowling around with the kids. And Dennis went and explored the hill and came back talking like a lumber baron. "This one we'll cut down! There's a stand of Doug fir up there--and we can--" "But--but--but--" I began. But Dennis was aglow. "There's umpteen feet of lumber in that one cedar!" This from he who had bitched so endlessly about timber barons. My heart ached. This was my "greeny place" I'd always wanted. Was he going to make a shambles of all this beauty?

I'd tried to nab Bish before he flew off. "What's with the swimming pool, etc.?" "Oh didn't you see it?--well--caretakers--for twenty dollars a year--you can--" On our way out we noticed a kind of dingy little fenced-in park.

All the way home Dennis was "cutting down trees" and building ME the kind of a place HE'D like. Later, I was relieved when he agreed that he'd leave trees. When I began to talk about the details of a real estate deal, he said. "Count me out!" He wasn't interested in the business end of it.

I had wanted to drive down to the small town of Sultan before we went back, but the others didn't want to, claiming it was too far. I stopped a woman delivering mail in a car and asked how far it was. "Oh just down the road," she said. But we didn't go. The kids were anxious to get home.

NEGOTIATIONS

We returned to Seattle and Monday I returned to Vancouver and my nice apartment and my unhappy job. There I began happily roughing out sketches of the way I'd like my A-frame house. A-frames were in vogue at the time and it was Dennis' idea to try one. He said they were quicker, easier and cheaper than the ordinary kind of house. Though I'd never been in one, I liked the idea. A little A-frame tucked away in the woods appealed to my artistic and romantic tastes.

Bishop was looking into the terms of a real estate deal and was to let me know in about a week. Meantime I didn't have any luck trying to reach Mike to see if he was still willing to buy land. Unless he was I wouldn't be able to swing the deal. I then began a rough check on my financial situation and the cost of things needed. And euphoria turned to despair. What with all the strict demands of building codes I was beginning to find out, my idea of just even a little "rough it" cabin faded away. I didn't see how I could possibly afford it all. One financial problem was helping Dennis and Abbie out now and then with small loans until Dennis got his forestry degree at the U of W.

This was one reason I had to keep in touch with their situation as I kept pegging away trying to figure out ways and means. The other was that both Dennis and I were very excited about creating and building our "dream house"---IF we could get the land!

"CRITICAL PATH"

When week passed and no word from Bishop, anxiety began to build and I began calling him from work on our "SCAN" line (free interdepartmental State agencies tunk line.) (Taboo for private calls, but didn't everyone?) I was anxious to settle the deal; find out something.

I got some blows as he began to renege and dicker; said he was losing money on the deal and had another offer, etc. Ensued then a lot of dickering in which I, amateur, had no experience in. I wrote to Mike and Marylyn and presented my dilemma. Here again I ran into "second thoughts". I realized the wives were getting into the act, disapproving.

I resorted to what we could call, perhaps, a bit of extortion? Before I was transferred and Bish had inherited what was, originally, MY job, he had tried to sell me that lot, nobody else seeming interested, jokingly offering it at a lower price. At the time I wasn't even looking for land, but now, searching, I found I had written that down complete with date!

As weeks of bickering and dickering wore on, I finally confronted him with that note, feeling that, since Bish had "swiped" my job he owed me something. Another pressure on me at this time was that there were great shenanigans going on in the Highway Department "behind closed doors." They wanted to rid themselves of all of us salaried artists and use consultants. I knew my job was doomed. This made my dream of a retirement home all the more urgent.

I wrote to Dennis and explained what I had done thus far. It was all terribly trying and upsetting. Nonetheless I still clung to my little dream even to the point of going to the library and getting books and studying building and about A-frames. I also found myself looking at and pricing building materials.

The rest of April and into May this haggling and hassling went on. I now, dream-bitten and desperate, pounded on the phone with wild pleadings, only to find my formerly eager advisors and supporters now elusive, doubtful and cautious. There were renegings, talk of losing investments (theirs), hints of failure, warnings. As said, the wives, alarmed when we seemed serious, began to protect their 'invested interests'. Dennis sort of holed up. Bishop began to regret a "hasty deal". I was working myself into a nervous breakdown trying to marshal facts and arguments and find out more about something I'd never tried before.

APRIL 29, FRIDAY--Mike and Marylyn and I had a long three-way hassle on long distance phone. Mike was full of advice, injunctions, business procedure directions, doubts. This was, I gathered a risky and foolhardy venture: I didn't have enough money: would Dennis "run out on me"? would they get their investment back? what was Bish's "asking price"? had I checked other real estate possibilities? All my attempts to explain about my job and so on didn't matter. "Let's wait till summer," they said. No. Urgent!

I called Dennis and reported this talk to him. He reassured me and said he believed I could manage somehow. He suggested that I draw up my plans in detail and perhaps we could convince Mike that way.

PLANS START

So I got out my drawing things again and went through all the notes and papers I had collected and began to work on a list of everything that would need to be done. And I began to plan perhaps another business trip north to check out on things Mike was so insistent about. But this presented problems with my already shaky job. I had used up most of my vacation time. Memorial Day? But that wouldn't give me time or access to business people I'd need to see.

As I battled this and made lists and considered alternatives like maybe just a trailer home, after all? I began to get utterly discouraged. What I was running into was that Dennis and I, in our naivete, had had visions of a tiny, simple little cabin--even to maybe no plumbing? I was willing, even romantically excited about 'pioneering it'. Little did we know about building codes and such things worse than ever before because of the land grab boom. Snohomish County was beating me over the head trying to get it into my thick skull that I could NOT build a little rustic cabin but would have to build a 'town house' complying with all the new codes set up for building boom.

NAME FOR

How and why did we start calling it 'the cabin'? About this time we were all having trouble trying to refer to, name this venture. At first it was "Bishop's land." or "Bish's land". Then it became 'the land'. In my most romantic stage I tried to proselyte the name of "Chamterre", a combination of Chambreau and "terre" (land.) (I still like it.) But I guess it embarrassed everyone for it didn't catch on. Later, Noah kept referring to it as "Grandma's woods--a mouthful, but used except when Abbie referred to it as "up there". In my dealings with Snohomish County we kept talking about a "house". It wasn't until later when a remark of reference somebody made or when I realized that HOUSE codes were being inflicted on me that I thought: Dammit! why didn't I say CABIN in the first place? But it wouldn't have mattered anyway. Snohomish County ^{did not} have easier codes for newcomers. They were out for money!

DESPAIR

MAY 77

So. The opposition was getting too much for me. Full of despair, after talking to Dennis, I called Mike back and told him I'd given up on the whole thing. What a switch! Evidently they'd talked to people and decided that getting a piece of wooded property might be a good investment, after all! But! I was not to do it shabbily! I must get a contractor and they 'might' even help me finance a lovely, modern home! I was to GO AHEAD! I was doing fine!

I hung up, not believeing or intending the 'fancy home' bit, but delighted! At least I had the

"GO AHEAD!"

MAY 13, FRIDAY-- I put in my request for two days leave at the end of the month including Memorial Day. Meantime I kept working on those plans and papers. Mid month I got packets of them mailed off to both Dennis and Mike.

MAY 1977

TRIP NORTH

I make motel reservations in Everett, for this would be a rush, business trip and I would bypass family until after business done on the two week days. I contacted Bishop, wrote letter to Snohomish County, and, on Thursday, packed, --adding a hatchet this time-- and drove to Everett, stopping of at District #1 in Seattle to see Bish and get maps.

THURSDAY, MAY 26-- I check into motel. FRIDAY, MAY 27-- Next morning I got to Snohomish County courthouse and checked information I wanted at Land Use Planning Dept. "What are your restrictions, etc. up there?" Am told "Lot #30 is rural use. You can do what you want. Set-back rules, etc. are no problem on this lot." Gal tells me procedures for getting permit et al. Permit price is based on square footage; includes inspection. Time limit to build 18 months. Can be renewed if new fee paid. You make application, then submit plans for approval. They must adhere to code. No blue prints are needed. You can do your own drawing." She gives me a very, very crude Xerox of an extremely crude plan. With this information I am both reassured and newly scared, for I have a clipping from Sunset magazine about the dire things that can happen to one if one doesn't adhere to code or tries to cheat. All this is very, very new to me.

From there I go to Monroe, stopping and having a phony interview with a real estate agent about the prices of land, etc. just to placate Mike. Then, I sort of explore the countryside and take pictures. Then I check into a very corny looking little motel in Sultan, which turned out to be nicer than the so called fancy one I had had in Everett the night before!

SATURDAY, MAY 28-- Next day I hied myself up to lot #30. There, with a ball of string I'd bought, I tried to string some property lines, hacking through that jungle in search of stakes; information I needed before I could go ahead with my plans. Bish had been very vague about where the stakes were, the lot not having been surveyed in years and it all overgrown. I could have used some help. Dennis had wanted to come and meet me up at the land, but he was too broke--had no money for gas. The brush and ferns were clear over my head, and trying too string a line all by myself was almost impossible. But, by the time I left, very tired, I had strings all over the place.

I headed back for Seattle. I had stopped, on the way up, and taken pictures of that little miniature church on Highway 2. As I passed it again, leaving the area, the sun broke out in a most dramatic sunset and gorgeous music broke out on my car radio. I took it as good omens.

I spent Sunday with Dennis and Abbie and then headed home on Monday, stopping at Fife, where a lumber yard had an A-frame on display. (I still hadn't seen one.) But they were closed--the holiday. So I took down the address to write to them about their pre-fab A-frames.

BACK IN VANCOUVER

I called Bishop from work and had him call and ask about electrical permits. This way we could save on personal long distance calls and also use our connections with state and county officials. I also sent Dennis the info I'd gotten at Snohomish County. I prepared to cash in my one life insurance policy. But I felt discouraged, financially. Up to now I had only \$3000.

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JUN. 77

The mail brought me a brochure from that lumber company in Fife. But, after further negotiations with them, I found the cost of delivery of the pre-fab would cost as much as building our own on site.

JUNE 1977 ✓

So May ended. I had done all practicable in time and circumstances toward acquiring a retirement home for me. There was nothing to do now but wait and see the developments of this trying. By the end of the month I had sent off all the information I had gleaned to Mike and Marylyn, too.

TUESDAY, JUNE 7-- In the evening I got a call from Mike: "Go ahead and buy!" They'd invest. "You did a good job! Good leg work!" Then--"Do you suppose you could go ahead with the deal without my having to come up?" Yes, I thought I could. I was sure Bishop would continue to be helpful, as he was anxious to get his money, which he was already investing in another piece of real estate property that would, in the next few years make him quite a successful real estate entrepreneur (and relieve any anxieties I had about having "doing him in".)

I was jubilant! And immediately called Dennis and gave them the good news!

I then contacted Bishop and he agreed to taking care of the necessary papers, he having done such things before whereas I hadn't. Also, the business dealings necessary were all based up there in that area and I was not able to get away again. And so began another wait on this widespread little venture.

Meantime, I had not really seen or experienced an A-frame. It was getting unsettling to plan my permanent last home from fantasy and hearsay. A-frames were losing the popularity they had had a couple of years before and were being replaced by newer fads in construction. And, they tending to be more for recreational housing, there were few in the urban area where I lived. So the minute I heard of one, I went to investigate it.

I found only two in the Vancouver area. Though they were both very expensive and beautiful outlays beyond my means, I got more and more excited about A-frames at the sight of them. They were both inhabited and I went to call. One I never got in to see. The dwellers were not at home and never answered the note I left asking for them to phone me and make an appointment when I could come and see the inside. At the other I found half-boozed up contractors working on alterations and they quite willing to let me look around and chat. I had a long talk with them and learned a lot. I left really excited and 'hooked' on A-frames.

EUPHORIA ENDS

It didn't last long. delays, doubts and troubles began to creep in. Differences in the goals of we three builders, Mike, Dennis and I arose. Mike's idea was for me to 'spare no expense'; get a pre-fab and 'get it set up in a couple of weeks'. Dennis had pioneering ideas of cutting trees and making lumber from them to build with. I, besides being in a hurry and having very little money to use, clung to my dream of an idyllic little rustic cabin nestled in a grove of UNCUT trees. During this time I toyed with the idea of using my money to just buy the land MYSELF and use it as an investment or just someplace where I could go camping and just tell 'em all to go to hell!

Also the 'code lords' of Snohomish County had THEIR ideas of what I should and must do. Dull, dull things like septic tanks and so on. All very discouraging.

Too, we all began to have setbacks in our personal lives. Bishop had some depressing job worries. (As did I.) As did Dennis and Abbie. Abbie lost her job, so Dennis had to give up his plans for summer school and go job hunting, which meant he wouldn't have time to build the cabin. Mike and Marylyn were too far away and too immersed in their own lives to, really, give more than passing interest to all the complicated 'tempest in a tea pot' we were going through.

So June passed with no progress made even though Mike had said, "Go ahead. Let me know and I'll send the checks."

JULY 5, TUESDAY. EVENING-- Bishop phoned me at home, all excited. "It's all set up! Just send \$45 (for the title research Mike insisted on) and the deal's all finished! They'll draw up the papers!" We talked excitedly.

Then, still excited, I called Dennis and Abbie, and then Marylyn (Mike not at home) and we all jumped with joy, all the nit-picking things current and ahead forgotten for the moment. "It's going to take SOME TIME," Dennis said. (Little we knew!) The month wore on. What with paper jugglings via mail and all--diversely scattered and busy people trying to get in touch by long distance phone--the month wore on----

I was rather anxious to go up to the land and camp out and check on some things and get acquainted with it, but Bishop thought it might be better to wait until the title papers were cleared.

WEEK END JULY 9-10-- Dennis reported, in a later phone call, that they had gone up that week end and that Dennis had found some property stakes and laid some lines out.

GLOOM

A few days later Bishop called me at the office. He was all upset. He'd made a deal to buy a duplex in Everett and needed the money from the land fast and he hadn't heard from Mike or gotten any check. A few days later, another call from him. Since I hadn't heard from Mike, either, I gave him Mike's number. A week later, we still had heard nothing from Mike. I called Mike. Yes, Bishop had called him, but missed him. He was just then writing the check; that he'd just gotten the money from the credit union. This was a surprise to me; that he would have to go through his credit union. First I'd heard of that.

Each day I expected glad news, then. That everything was all done and settled. But, no. Another week dragged on before I learned that Bishop had, indeed, gotten the deed and would be going into Everett to settle about the title search.

A few more days dragged on.

It became a period of deep discouragement. I had thought all this would be settled EARLY summer. No. It seemed everything took so LONG! I agonized whether I should hand in my retirement notice, it, too, going to take a long time. But decided I'd better wait. We were in the midst of possible pay raises and ,God knew, I needed the money!

GLEE

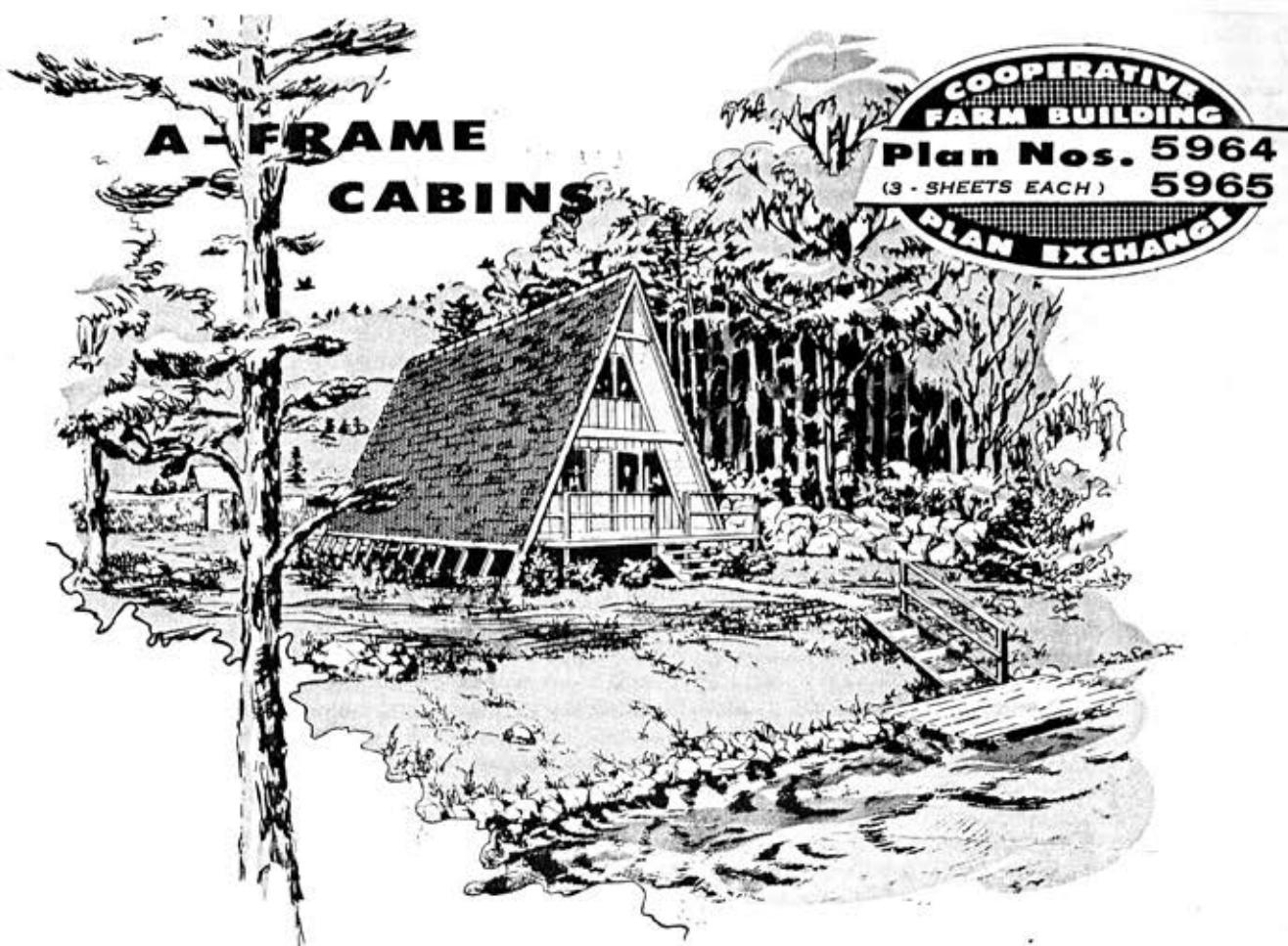
JULY 1977

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27-- Everything broke. In calls to Bishop I found out that everything was all settled. In jubilation I called Snohomish County to see what proce dures necessary to do "perc" tests. These were the first soil tests to see if the soil could absorb the run off from a septic tank. If it couldn't, no septic tank; no building. Informed it might take several weeks what with inspectors busy and all, I went ahead and handed in a request for a week's leave, about all I had accrued since earlier trip.

That evening I called Dennis. "Have good news!" "So have I!" he said. Seems he'd, at last, gotten the very cheap (\$6) A-frame plans he'd ferreted out through his college connections. Found them via Oregon Extension Service. So I told him my news. And away we went! "Shall I buy a lamp? An axe?" I asked. "Yes! Yes! Get a propane lamp! They are the best!" We were so excited!

The next few days I began to talk to all the guys at the office and began to learn about tools. And then I went shopping. And was dismayed at how much they cost. But I bought an axe and, defying Dennis, some big, battery-operated flashlights. The propane lamps were terribly expensive, and, reading the directions, I decided they were a bit complex and dangerous for someone as inexperienced as I. I decided the flashlights would be qui cker and easier to blind intruders with--if and when I went camping up there. Then I went all through my apartment sorting out things to take to camp with. It was such fun! I was off and away!

So. It seemed as if July ended in one of those times in life when everything seems to fall in place suddenly. Even thing s not pertaining to cabin also got wonderful!

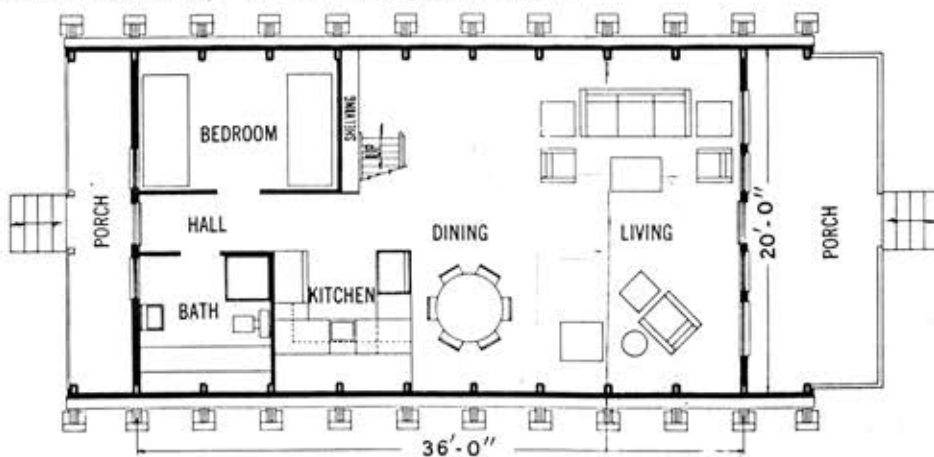


A-FRAME CABINS

**COOPERATIVE
FARM BUILDING**
Plan Nos. 5964
(3 - SHEETS EACH) **5965**
PLAN EXCHANGE

These two cabins (24-foot and 36-foot A-frames) are designed for recreational purposes in mountain areas or at a beach. They can be built by three or four people who have reasonable ability in the use of tools. Someone with a knowledge of concrete work may be required to place the footings. The frame itself should present

no problems; nor should erection of the end walls, roof, and interior partitions. It has been assumed that electricity will be available at the site to permit the use of power tools and to provide for lighting, heating, and cooking.



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SCALE IN FEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Miscellaneous Publication No. 981

Washington, D.C.

Issued November 1964

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402 - Price 5 cents

Cover of brochure Dennis got from Oregon Extension Service. This our base plan from which we made our own revisions.

NR 77

END OF JULY my sister, "Tiny", in California called me and wanted to know how our land deal was going? She and her husband were the only ones in the family to show any interest in our venture, perhaps because they the only ones who'd tried (successfully) a similar venture. I was able to tell her good news!

AUGUST 1977

NEXT PLAN

FIRST WEEK OF AUGUST- I'd made arrangements to leave that week end and go up and camp on the land for a week. I owned no regular camping equipment and I hadn't camped out since summer camping trips when I was a child, but I was excited and very much enjoyed buying and sorting out the things I'd need. Dennis was to meet me there and he'd start working on digging the perc holes when he could, he having his job to tend to, too. This was one of the reasons for my camping out there: so someone would be there when the inspector came. In case I haven't made it clear we were in a hurry! Come fall Dennis would have to sign up for his courses at the U and wouldn't have time to build, and here was the summer half gone!

That first week of August was sort of frantic: lots of phone calls to make and people to talk to and things to do. This was sort of an experimental trip and sort of catch as catch can timewise. None of us had any definite plans, schedules or agreements.

Phone calls. Dennis said Abbie wouldn't be going up. Bishop. He and I were having a lot of job problems; big upheavals in Highway Department. Besides, I got a little annoyed with him: seems it was taking him forever to get those papers and title insurance business attended to. And he kept telling me his woes about the Everett property he had invested in. I could have cared less, too immersed and excited about my own first land purchase. However, by the end of the week, he had gotten the paper work taken care of and we had our title!

Meanwhile, at the office, Bruce Auld began to take an interest in our project. Seems he sold wood stoves. And he began to tell me a lot about them and chimneys and so on. He was my first experience of men who view trees only as money. "Ya got CEDAR up there!? (Cedar, at the time, was very fashionable and valuable) Wow! Cut 'em down and sell!"

GLEE

In preparation for my trip, I took my car in and had it overhauled at one of my job-related garages. When I lamented about what seemed a huge bill, Rick, the mechanic assured me "It's a good little car!" That made me feel good!

And I happily took my new axe and hatchet and splitting wedge to be sharpened. All these new, unfamiliar tools I had bought for Dennis. It was fun! And I spent long untangling and reeling line to mark property lines with. And I kept getting little bright ideas for camping conveniences. I was very happy.

And more so when I got my first landowner's thrill: a letter from Sultan Estates Community Club: "Welcome to Sultan Estates. Please remit \$15 dues."

TRIP NORTH

FRIDAY AFTERNOON: I closed up my office and just walked out, gloating.

SATURDAY: I spent many hours meticulously packing all that gear in my car in my super-orderly way. I get so kidded about. ("You're just like your father!" my mother used to say. "Such a perfectionist!") So? I was delighted that it all went in with room to spare. I'd even bought myself a new sleeping bag. I'd never owned one before! I sat and contemplated my packed car and thought: Is this--goodbye to all my years of "Career Gal"! Of trips in posh motels, of dressy clothes, of plenty of money to splurge with--from now on I would be a bum in the woods! Hurray!

SUNDAY, AUGUST 7: I drove north, stopping, as usual at Toutle Creek rest area. Here I took my usual little stroll in the woods grove. Here, a year ago, I had stopped and wished--oh so badly!-- that I had a little piece of woods like this. Now I had! But this time I was too sore beset with problems and things to tend to to tarry and day dream or gloat. FOUR MONTHS we'd been hassling this land deal! I had to get going.

I went on, stopping to visit aunt Alice, and got to Dennis and Abbie's late afternoon. I was very tired. Seemed like it had been a rather hectic trip. I fear I was not too eagerly interested when Dennis began pounding at me about A-frames and lumber.

CAMPING TRIP ON LAND

Purpose of the trip: it was to be a fast business trip based on the fact that one had to take what appointments one could get with the inspector for perc tests. He was to be there early Tuesday afternoon. Dennis had to dig three holes and make them work before that. Neither of us had had any experience with this before. We had only very bad Xerox copies of puzzling directions from Snohomish County to go by.

I also had some necessary business to tend to: check out Sultan Estates Club; go into Sultan and find out about lumber; go to Snohomish County courthouse in Everett and find out about driveway regulations and check some other things out.

I'd hoped Dennis could finish the perc tests and we'd be free to go shop and look around and discuss plans for cabin and so on. I also, tired of the city, had hoped to have time to just sit and work on cabin plans and enjoy the woods. I was, frankly, glad Abbie and the kids weren't coming. Dennis and I could get more business things done without domestic interruptions.

I had brought a cot and just planned to rough it and sleep out in woods, but seems Abbie's family had a big, old "Palmetto" tent they could borrow and they insisted they'd take it up and set it up.

THE WEEK AS PLANNED

THE WEEK; as I had it planned out: Monday Dennis and I would go up to the land early, about 8? and set up camp. Dennis would work on perc holes while I cleared out creek and worked on house plans, and so on. We would go in my car. Abbie would come up later in their car with the kids. The first night out on land would be a celebration: Tuesday Abbie would take over minding camp and food and kids while Dennis and I got ready for inspector at 1:30 p.m. Dennis could dig while I cleared out the almost dried up creek so he could get the water he needed for the tests. I could help hack out paths where he needed to dig and go for water and so on. By 2 the job would be done, inspector gone, and Abbie could take the kids swimming in the club pool. That would give us a chance to rest up and I could clean up camp and start packing up stuff for Abbie's early morning leaving. That evening we'd have one last celebration night. Wednesday, Abbie and kids gone, Dennis and I could work together: decide on our plans, location of the cabin. Then, when Dennis did his work stint, I'd be left alone and able to finish working up those plans, so I'd be able to have answers for all the questions he kept buggin' me with. And maybe I'd have time for a nap and first solitary enjoyment of woods. Evening, Dennis and I would have peace and quiet to discuss, plan and enjoy. Thursday I'd dress up and Dennis and I would go into Sultan and Snohomish County and check into things and talk to people and shop for things we'd be needing. Evening, we'd have time for a good, relaxed talk. Friday: Dennis could run down to the store (for food, etc.) and I'd have time to nap, work, enjoy. Should be a nice relaxed day. Saturday: Abbie was to come up and bring a lunch and we'd break camp, take the kids swimming and return to Seattle. Sunday I'd go home.

That was the week as I planned and envisioned it. Ha!

THE WEEK AS IT TURNED OUT

I arrived at the kids' Sunday evening hot, tired, after a long trip and a chaotic visit at Alice's where I'd run into a bunch of relatives that I had to clean and cook for. At Dennis and Abbie's I ran into an evening of domestic bickering and an uncomfortable night of them tending Noah, who was sick.

More shocks and setbacks when I found Abbie and kids were going up with us after all and nobody even GOT UP until ten the next morning. Then followed a long and disorganized session of bickering and packing up "everything but the kitchen sink". We didn't arrive at the land until two p.m.! And all still bickering and chaos, the kids unhappy because we said we had too much to do and nobody could take time to go supervise them at the pool as the rules dictated.

There were other difficulties before we even got there. Abbie promising the kids a swim meant that I would have to contact Irene Brown, the club secretary, when we got there and pay club dues so we could use the pool. Irene had said

she'd be there, but this meant more delays in our rush job. Abbie and the kids going with us didn't bother me too much. I figured be a help to have someone cook and tend food and, Abbie, of course, would mind the kids while Dennis and I worked. As to food, I had bought and packed a lot of instant and canned foods to eat, so--no problem. Lorna, the so-organized one, was in for a shock.

Since our time was so short and it our first as-owners descent on the land, I expected them to be all packed and eager to go Monday. First, seems they were not at all ready and were in no hurry to get there. In fact they seemed reluctant to go? I waited and waited and waited as they packed about everything they owned, it seemed--toys for the kids and so on. And Abbie flew around getting food, though I assured her I had some. But seemed they wanted certain things, and a weinie roast and all. Finally, we were ready. We took both cars. Sarah rode with me.

The weather that week was very, very hot. That, and none of us having really tried this sort of thing together before made tensions and differences high. Monday we didn't really get anything accomplished. The kids didn't like the woods and fussed and fussed to go swimming. They never did get to go that day for the rest of the day we spent lugging stuff in, bickering over where to put the tent and things like that. Everyone was cross and at odds. Dennis didn't like the lamps I'd brought. And I didn't like---oh well --

The night was hideous. Nobody got a wink of sleep. They insisted I sleep in the not-all-that- large tent with them. I didn't want to, for Noah, at that time, snored most hideously. (Later he was to have to have a tonsil operation, but we didn't know then.)

I took my "banana" chair in to sleep on, old bones unable escape gravity that easily, once down. It was a folding lawn chair all too easily, and lethally apt to fold when not asked to. The rest slept right on the slanted, damp, root-lumpy ground in sleeping bags.



The snug family snoring I wasn't used to, me a loner. And the kids insisted on having a light on, so they used my battery lamps (that had to last me all week.) The kids were scared all night. And so was I. All those spooky wood noises.

When I thought them all asleep I kept reaching out and turning my lamp off. Abbie would reach out and turn it on again. Unable to sleep, I tried to sneak out once. My "banana" cot collapsed and threw me down on top of them all. Later, a little more experienced, I crept out of the tent, thinking it was dawn, only to find it moonlight. I snuck back in again. And waked them all up again by falling down on all of them again, it was so dark. (What!? no lamp!?)

THE PERC HOLES

Tuesday. next day. We were a real cross bunch. Dennis was obsessed with trying to get those holes dug before the inspector. They were an AWFUL job. We had no water. Dennis had to lug buckets uphill from the creek in all that heat, crashing through the uncleared brush. The mud wasps drove him crazy and got in his way thinking he was building them new apartments. I was frantically trying to keep the one little hole in creek full enough of water to keep up with demand. I was also trying to record the absorption rate with an alarm clock, the only thing we had use. The sweat was pouring off Dennis as he ran wildly up and down the hill fetching water and frantically waving the wasps off as he tried to dig.

Then. When the inspector came, a nice young man with a tic in his eye, he said. "No good. Hard pan. Have to do over--move farther up the hill."

SWIMMING

Meantime, the kids were driving us nuts wanting to go swimming. Somewhere in there I managed to skip away and go over to Irene's (whom I didn't even know) and pay my dues. She had a lovely place, a little modified A-frame, complete with all the amenities. She was well dressed and well groomed. "Are you--CAMPING!? But that's against the rules!" But she took my check and I left feeling like the lowliest tramp.

Then, when we finally did get the kids to the pool, seems there were rules against long hair (which they all had) Have to have bathing caps, which we did not have, and none available. Abbie was furious! I managed to get a little angry with the people there--that pool caretaker kid and all. With a little "diplomacy" plus threats we got them in the pool and left them there.

And flew down to the store to get food. We didn't really need, but Abbie wanted special things.

THAT EVENING: There was a big hassle about having a campfire, I scared--dry woods, etc. But, seems they wanted to roast weiners for hot dogs. Everybody was mad at each other. They finally roasted weiners on camp stove. I had gone to store to see if I could find bathing caps. None. But I bought the kids a towel--they didn't have any-- and personal flash lights. (Old stingy Lorna--notes say I had to get into my reserve money to buy these things.) The kids wouldn't go to the toilet in the woods. Dennis took time out to build them a toilet. All were hot, exhausted, dirty. That night I slept outside on the cot, scared to hell, while they all fussed and stewed in the tent.

WEDNESDAY: I got up early and sneaked down to the car. There I dressed and worked around clearing a bit for a driveway in and cleaned my car and sorted stuff. The caretaker's wife, Mrs. Mc Nabb, strolls up with her dog. We settle it about the swimming pool rules. "Oh, I guess they can go in--this time," she says. I go back into camp to a period of comparative peace. Abbie fixed a good breakfast on the camp stove they had brought. She and the kids left for Seattle about mid-afternoon--seems Noah was sick. She ignored my warning that there was transmission fluid leaking out from under their car.

After they left, I thought things would simmer down a bit, but--no. Dennis was obsessed about getting those new holes dug. And I had to help him. And--seems he was worried about his family and very glum. He sent me (four miles one way) down to store to phone them. I, unfamiliar with rural phones flubbed it--unable to get.

That evening he and I had some drinks and I fixed some dinner from my canned goods and things calmed down a bit. We fell into bed, he in tent, I outside on cot, hoping I could get up the next day and get a chance to figure on those plans he was buggin' me about: "What did I want? Where?" etc.

THURSDAY: was very, very hot. I had hoped Dennis would go with me when I went out to hassle people, but he wouldn't. He wanted to work. So I got dressed up and left, taking list of tools he wanted. I came back very disillusioned; it would cost \$80 just to run a little driveway in off that obscure county road, things demanded by CODE ! And Dennis was cross because I'd forgotten to get him some bug spray. That evening we got drunk and aired a lot of family "dirty linen" from the past.

FRIDAY: I still hoped to get some time to relax and get those plans and sketches drawn up so I'd have some answers for Dennis before Abbie and the kids came back. But Dennis was cross, sulky, hung over. He wanted to start dismantling things and start packing up. So I had to help him take the tent down. He was impatient that I still couldn't answer his questions about where I wanted the cabin, etc. We got to arguing. And then he insisted on taking some measurements. So we flew around trying to do that. Hard work, what with climbing over the brush and all.

At the same time I was trying to get stuff organized and ready to carry out and clear the folding picnic table they'd brought for the lunch Abbie was to bring. It was all very trying and frantic. And then here comes Abbie and the kids sooner than they had said and all excited and ready to go swimming! Abbie had cut the kids' hair off--(after I'd settled that long hair ok with Mrs. McNabb!) She had brought a very fancy lunch--french bread and makings for "poor boy" sandwiches. Very nice, but difficult to prepare with so little room and in a hurry. She insisted the kids eat before they went swimming at which they balked and declared they wouldn't go swimming! So there!

Ensued a frantic lugging out of half-organized boxes of stuff. And I got in trouble because I wouldn't let Noah play with my new \$6 tape. Everybody was about fit to be tied. Hot. Tired. Hurried. And then---and then---

They had a flat tire on their car--and Dennis had to change that!

At last they all went off to the pool, even Dennis, hot and filthy as he was. We'd forgotten about the shower down there we could have used--IF we'd had time? I began to gather up the last of the mess, I, too, hot, exhausted, dirty. The garbage, needlessly excessive with all its modern throw-a-ways; beer and coke cans, junk and fast food wrappings. I put it all in plastic bags I'd brought. We'd have to dispose of it somewhere on way back for there was no accomodation for garbage in Sultan Estates.

Finally it was all done and I went down to join them at the pool, hoping to be able to sit in shade and rest a bit before starting back. But no. "Let's go!"

they all cried. "Now wait a minute!" I objected, so they all frolicked in the Pool a little more. But I no sooner sat than bitten by a big fly. That did it. "Let's go," I said. We all trooped out to the cars.

"Let's stop in Monroe and I'll buy everyone a cold drink," I said. "I'll drive Lorna's car," Abbie said. "Well--uh--ok," I said.

THE EXODUS

We stopped at the A&W drive-in on our way out of Monroe. We still had to get rid of that garbage somehow. While Dennis and the kids fussed around about ordering, Abbie and I sneaked around to their dumpsters in the back with the garbage.

Just as we rounded the corner of the building fire sirens screamed and fire engines and police cars screeched to a halt right beside us, who were ILLEGALLY dumping garbage! Abbie and I, giggling hysterically and trying to hide our sack of garbage, ducked back. Seems, of ALL times, there was a blaze in one of the other dumpsters! Dennis just took the garbage sack and tromped around and threw it in the dumpster. And then---we criminals hit the highway for home.

IN SEATTLE it was a lovely, peaceful summer evening. As the family plunged into their usual domestic activities, I fell asleep and slept for two hours.

SATURDAY, NEXT DAY- Instead of going back Sunday, I left that day. I'd had it. I left Dennis \$60, all I could afford to, to buy gas and what tools he might need, for they said they were going back up, sometime, later, and cut some trees down--whenever they could get away again.

So that's the tale of the first camping trip on OUR land!

BACK IN VANCOUVER

I returned to my job. Dennis was job hunting. Summer was about over, yet things like the perc tests and so on would have to be done before the rains started.

THE "PERC" HOLES

Our try was too frantic and rushed. I believe Dennis managed to make two more holes further up the slope, but neither of us could stay to wait for another inspection. I spent the rest of the month trying to contact Roy Kelm, our friendly and cooperative inspector, from my office in Vancouver, using Scan. He was out in the field so much he was very difficult to get in touch with.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 16 I did manage to get in touch with. He said he'd try to get up there and dig and see where the water table was: that he's keep in touch, and meantime for us to go ahead and send in for our septic permit. I asked him, slyly, "Can we build a privy?" (Outside toilet.) He laughed, "No no! You can't do that!"

Meantime, a rough drawing of our septic field had to be submitted with our request. With help from library books and technical books available to me at the office, I began a study of septic systems. (Ugh!) and spent most of the rest of the month drawing up one of my meticulous scaled plans. I sent copies to both Dennis and Roy.

I enjoyed working on the plans, though. It's the kind of thing I love to do. And I was lucky that I had plenty of time to sneak it in at the office, they having withdrawn all work from me preparatory to "proving" to Headquarters that they really didn't need an artist. And I had the use of my nice drafting machine and access to books and advice. I'd also set up a working desk at home and spent many hours working there.

THE REST OF AUGUST

was another delay waiting on Bishop and the title insurance. I spent a great deal of time on Scan calling him about it. It wasn't until the end of the month that we got that settled and paid for; my paying Bishop and then Mike paying me.

As I worked on all these cabin plans, realizing how much expertise I was getting, I had a happy thought: Hey! when I get to cabin (surely by next summer?) I could earn some extra money drawing up plans for all those people that are building up there! [[I put this in in view of how things eventually turned out. Read on!]]

I had, also, been sending off for A-frame plans, any that I could get cheap I could, perhaps, steal from. But I learned something: architects send out brochures with the scales deliberately reduced to sizes impossible to steal from!

So I was busy and happy and very excited, working out my little dream on paper. But I began to notice a change in attitude in people about this venture of mine. It seemed as if suddenly everybody lost interest and didn't share my enthusiasm as they had up to now. Bishop became a bit short and disinterested, absorbed in his own new venture. The guys in the office began to act bored, the excited interest they'd shown before being replaced by more and more criticism. Later in the month this eased off.

And by mid-month there seemed a renewal of interest. Bruce Auld gave me advice about how to cut and "buck" wood. Oh the things I was learning! I kept in touch with Dennis and passed on these tidbits of information. He had gone back to work. This was good for them and bad for the cabin venture, as it meant he had less time for it.

We wanted, of course, to get as much done as we could before winter--to be ready to build in the spring. As the rains began, I began to yearn for one more fun-and-get-out-of-town trip. So, Labor Day coming up, I began to set up another camp-out trip. I put in for annual leave for that time. Here again, I ran into resistance. The office stalled and stalled on approval, but finally gave it to me.

TRIP PREP

THURSDAY, AUGUST 25-- Leave approved, that night I called Dennis. He had gotten my septic drain field drawings and congratulated me on good work! He said he hadn't been able to get ahold of his friend (Godfrey) to borrow a chain saw, but he thought he'd like to go up in spite of the rains and do some clearing the next week end. So I told him to go ahead and rent a chain saw, though I was appalled, as I was about all construction costs, at how much they cost to rent.

I then set out excitedly shopping for camping things; a "woodsman's" shirt, camp cooking equipment, instant foods, lamps. I spent a happy afternoon sorting and organizing my purchases.

I'd arranged for the whole week off. The kids had left the tent up there. The plan, as I understood it, was that I'd arrive at their place on Sunday and we'd all go up and they'd have Labor Day to spend there. Then, when they had to leave, I'd stay on. With this in mind, I bought a lot of easy camp food--enough to feed us all.

THE BEGINNING

Sunday, the next night, I called Dennis. Sarah answered, all excited. "Daddy BLEW the trees down! It was NOISY!" When Dennis came he explained that they'd been up there and he'd cut 7 trees down. "You BLEW the trees down?" He laughed. "Oh I kidded the kids. After I made the cut, I stood and blew on them till they fell! The kids really thought I'd blown them over!"

He'd cut down 5 alders and 2 cedars, one of which was small and rotten, the other a double one. And he was glad I'd bought the wedge for him as he'd needed it on the latter. Seven trees! The first tree felling. My heart sank a little as visions of the whole woods cut down popped into mind. He'd rented a chain saw; figured he'd need it for two more days of cutting and then it would take them about six more days to clear. He'd fussed some more with the perc holes, but hadn't gotten around to clearing a path or driveway in as we'd talked about.

The tree clearing was, of course, for the cabin area. "What did I want done with the wood?" "Well, leave the cedar. The alder--firewood?" "Yes, Abbie and the kids had already stacked the alder, which he had "bucked" for firewood."

I was a little jealous of missing the fun of the first tree felling. "Well, I'll be up! I want to see!" I said. "Oh, I'd rather you'd wait till it's all cleared (did he think I'd be in the way with all my meticulous camping?)--and oh, Abbie won't be going. She's going to Yakima. Family wedding. The kids and I will go up Saturday and Sunday, but we'll have to go over and get Abbie Monday!"

This was quite a blow. I'd counted on being together and having some help lugging stuff in. "Uh--I bought a lot of stuff to make camping easier--". "Oh?" he cried, delighted. "What?" "Oh--sterno--flashlights--". "Oh." he said. This was one of our continuing differences: they liked to camp with major comfort equipment; tent, camp table, camp stove, propane lamps, radio and so on. Whereas my aim was to travel light and easy--a "one-man" trail pack.

We gloated some more about getting some trees down and then we hung up. And I marveled to myself: they did all that and NOBODY GOT HURT!



MONDAY, AUGUST 29--Next day, at work, qualms started again when Bruce told me he wasn't selling wood stoves anymore. When I lamented that I'd thought that problem solved--getting a stove-- he said, "Oh well, I can take you over to Portland some noon and you can pick out what you want. Don't get anything cheap, not under two hundred dollars. They'll just blow up on you!" (\$200!? I'd figured on about half that.) Doubts starting creeping in again. What with the change in the kids' plans and now this, maybe I'd better postpone everything for awhile? But--things on my list--I plodded on with--

I called Roy Helm. WE'D PASSED THE PERC TEST! Of course I called the kids again that night and we jubilated again! We'd passed the first hurdle in permits! "I feel like a (gorilla?)," Dennis said, "with my new job at Sears and cutting down trees and taking Noah to the Fair in Monroe Saturday--". Whatever word he used, he sounded joyful and excited.

I continued my camping stuff shopping and working on plans. At the office my friendly guys in Landscaping insisted I'd need a machete to cut down brush with. I demurred, scared to death of using one after all the accident reports I'd read of guys using them. But they insisted and sneaked one of the Highway ones for me to borrow and take with me. A machete! I really felt like I was changing my life style!

SATURDAY I spent packing, though my spirits dampened by the incessant rain that had started the last few days. Camping out in a tent in downpour and run off on that slope was n't quite what I'd had in mind.

SUNDAY-- It was still raining, but I was ready to set out about 9:20. It was the beginning of the gas shortage scare and I had anxiety about being able to find a gas station open, they having started to close on Holidays and week-ends. And the car, so heavily packed, the gas would go down fast?

I stopped in Puyallup to see aunt Alice, running into the same unhappy family brouhaha that I had before. I left there about five and got to the kids' about 6:30. I stayed there all night, Dennis being there alone and profusely apologetic about not being able to go up with me and help me to take stuff in, but he had to, and did, leave early the next day to go to Yakima and get his family.

SEPTEMBER 1977

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 4--LABOR DAY:

I set out for what Noah had started calling "grandma's woods". I was unhappy the kids couldn't come, too, and was hungry and almost out of gas. I finally found a gas station open. I got a hamburger. Then, still unfamiliar with the freeway route up there, I got lost a bit, but finally made it into Monroe, where there was a long wait to get onto SR 2--all that Holiday traffic.

THE LAND

1:45 p.m. when I got to the cul-de-sac. Everything looked very dry. There were people about this time. Again, the Holiday? Dennis had not had time to do any more than rough in the new path we'd decided on. I went to work immediately, having long awaited this fun job, though the machete being very dull took a lot of the fun out of it. It was almost 7 before I sat down to rest, exhausted. I had hacked a path and lugged all that stuff in, my back starting to go crick! crick! toward the last. Hard work, but fun!

I sat in the woods in the gloaming and rested, gloating and savoring. Dennis had warned me it was a mess, but, as I walked in, it looked quite as before to me, only the thrill of evidence of clearing--cut logs lying all about. I felt very grateful when I went and looked at the huge pile of wood Abbie and kids had stacked--and more so when I lifted one and found out how heavy they were!

The sun had blinded me as I lugged stuff in, but it was shady and silent and still in the woods grove. It was so quiet I could hear my wind-up clock ticking and only the birds and, far away, dogs barking. And then there began to be shots all around and they kept up and kept up. Was it hunting season? How long could they shoot? For, at 7:10 p.m. the shots were still reverberating around. Dennis had said he'd seen a grouse around. I hoped it'd still be there after all that shooting. Later, it stopped and the silence was awesomely beautiful after all those years of living in the din of cities.

I woke about 2:30 a.m. to find my new battery lamp about to burn out. And it was damp! and chill! I got up and put on more layers of clothing. The tent wasn't very comfortable. They'd put it on sloping, uneven ground. Chill with the tent flaps open, but lamp flickering and too dangerous to light candles in tent, I let it be and slept.

TUESDAY, 7:30 a.m. I woke, cold and stiff. There were sounds of--logging? and a mind-blowing shrill whistle going on someplace. Getting breakfast, I had a long struggle trying to figure out how to work that "Sterno" canned heat. I never worked so hard for a cup of coffee in my life! Little tiny birds came right up to the picnic table, as if to visit. Out beyond the trees the sun was shining. It was just beginning to creep into the woods.

It took me a long time to fix breakfast. The kids had wanted me to keep and use their camp stove, but I didn't know how to use it and I was afraid of fire hazard of that volatile gas in the woods. I did get the Sterno to working but it was SLOW! I tried to take some pictures, but the flash on my camera wouldn't work. People had kept asking me what I was going to do up in the woods all by myself? I now realized, ruefully, that just solving domestic needs would take up a great deal of time! Things like--after breakfast--where do I go to the toilet? I tried a mossy log. It FELT good, but realized there'd have to be a better solution.

I had rearranged the kids' camp to suit myself. Someday we'd have to have a fire pit. I wondered where the best place for it would be? Water I'd had to bring in with me. It would be very precious.

I worked on making a tiny fire pit and devised a little grill for my canned heat. But everything was so wet; my camera, tools, and so on. I rather lost enthusiasm about camping. I wanted to clean out the creek, but it was blocked off with logs Dennis had cut down. There was so much I wanted to do! But, by afternoon all I'd done was clear out a little better path in from street and I was exhausted.

I had put out injunctions that I wanted all trees and brush not necessary to take out left. But there was one little vine maple that obstructed the path. I broke my own rule and cut it down, but I did leave one, though. Because it delighted me forming an A-frame arch over the path (we were using at that time) into what would be an A-frame. I tried again to take some pictures, but gave up. It was just too shady in there and my film supply too near gone to experiment.

I worked hard. Later, bringing in my cosmetics and clothes a glimpse of self caught in mirror jolted me. What a dirty disheveled mess I was! And HUNGRY! I put water on to heat. But, it didn't. I took a "spit" bath anyway, stripping naked there in the woods. Fun! I ate some cold soup and a cheese sandwich, wolfing it down. Then cleaned my face, combed my hair--and felt better, though I was sore and tired!

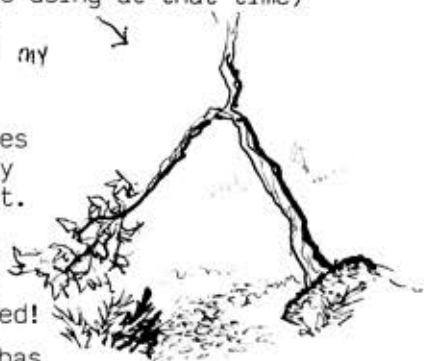
During all this I discovered--slugs! And big flies. One has no privacy from a slug, I found out. Nothing deterred them. They were all over everything, my clothes--they even "chased" me when I tried for some toilet ladylike privacy. It was then I discovered they'd eat ANYTHING! I started to battle and bury them, but then caught myself: no.no. I was only disturbing the ecology chain. So I left them. But they still made me shudder.

I tried to build a fire. But things were all too wet and I was too tired to go out to the cul-de-sac where there was drier wood. It was strange; when I got out my Vancouver newspaper to build a fire, I found I had lost all interest in "the world outside". I had come here to get away from all that. And it had already happened?

Later, weary of the cold and damp and craving sun, I went down to the car, where there was sun and crawled in the car and slept. Then I went back in and, though muscles aching, I sawed, beat, axed my way down to the creek, cutting a new path. Why the creek obsession? Well, I needed water for (it said) the slug bait and for fire dousing. Also I was curious to see it. It was exciting! We didn't know we were going to have a CREEK on our property!

THE CREEK

I was proud of myself after cutting that path. Wow! Watch out for grandma! She can wield a hatchet and slash with a machete with the best! I went back and got boots on and waded clear down that creek until I came to a log-dammed-over place. A jay went with me and scolded at me. It was fun to clear the mud and trash out and hear the water begin to gurgle and the sandy bottom appear as the water cleared. Then I worked upstream until I came to the old cedar loggers' bridge Dennis had been so excited about discovering. Exciting to have "history" on our property! Fun! But--panic! I was lost! Somewhere in a bog--no idea where I was or where camp was--until --I looked up and found I'd made a complete circle and was back by camp!



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I was weary and hungry, but I'd wanted to go down and clear out the cul. Sound of kids and a car down there made me go down to investigate. Next thing I knew I found myself working down there, cutting down and using small trees to block off Bish's old path and encourage our new one. All this hurrying to get done before it might rain.

Back in camp I worked frantically fixing slug bait and struggling to build a fire that refused to burn. It was dark now. I had changed the battery in the lamp but decided I'd better save it, so I lit a candle in the beer can holder Dennis had devised and fixed and ate some cold stew. Then--there was a crash up in the woods, and, yes, for the first time I began to get a little lonely and scared.

I did manage to get a fire going and cleaned up camp and then just sat till the fire went out, gloating at all I'd done that day, and wondering, when a FROG croaked why I hadn't. (croaked.) with all that unaccustomed work. I went in the tent and fell asleep.

WEDNESDAY--I woke about 8. I had gone to bed about 10. The night wasn't bad at all. I woke up once, legs cold. But put a heavy sweater over them and slept warm and comfy and sound. But I woke sore, stiff, cramped and HUNGRY! I was distressed to see it had clouded over. The thought of being there in the rain filled me with panic, so I creaked around trying to get me fed and all before it began to rain.

I struggled and struggled trying to get that canned heat and little grill arrangement in the firepit to working. Finally! after a trip down to creek I came back and water was boiling. I put some more canned stew on and ate--my first warm meal in two days. The creek I had found running clear and gurgling versus that stagnant bog. I was proud of what I had done "for it."

As I ate, worrying about rain, a ray of sunshine fell on my chair. Was it going to rain or not? I couldn't tell. It was still cloudy and foggy--or something.

I took stock of what was yet to be done. My main purpose this trip was to get some clearing done, especially a more convenient trail in from the cul-de-sac while the weather was nice. The next day, Thursday, Roy Kelm, the inspector, was supposed to come. That meant I'd have to be cleaned up, dressed up--or presentable at least. (At this time I was still a "city and career gal", remember, and one just did not meet the public or do business in "grubbies".) Then, too, I wanted one day to do some drawings, take measurements and all the things I had told Dennis I would do so he'd know what I wanted and he could go ahead. I also wanted one day to just enjoy the woods and "blow the stink" of the city out of me.

I had imagined this as a lovely, fresh air, healthy sojourn, yet here I was--for SOME reason--feeling AWFUL! stiff, sore, ill-feeling and yes, constipated. The slugs and I had not come to an understanding about my privacy rights. And my hands were all red and swollen. I decided to limit myself on heavy work that day. I'd clean up camp and finish cul and that's all I'd do. Perhaps a rest, though I hated to take time out, would make me feel better.

3:45 p.m. I came back from the cul and fixed some hot food. Oh! it tasted good! It hadn't rained yet, but kept looking threatening. The sun had come out in only breaks. I finished the cul, though I thought I was going to die I was so tired. I sawed branches, made a ditch for water run-off. I made a broom out of sticks, having no other, and cleaned out the car-loading area with it, sweeping gravel into from off the cul.

I was angry to find trash and broken beer bottles and beer caps around in the cul--signs of trespassers? Also hunting season was about to start: would they invade here? It was part of my idea in cleaning it all up to make it look more inhabited and perhaps scare them off?

I noticed, as I worked, that the vine maple was turning color. Dennis said it would. That should be really pretty.

I measured the driveway, roughly, using my "broom" as a tape, to see if, someday, there would be room to get the car in further. Decided there would be. Plenty of room for car and the storage shed I meant to buy and put up there at entrance for tools. As for tools, through using the few I'd brought I cleaned out the car and packed them. That much less to carry at leaving time.

I proudly surveyed all I'd done and went back in to fix my lunch. And pleasure there, too. Although the foam plastic ice chest I'd brought hadn't kept my vegetables fresh, a can of beans and brown bread and tea heated on little stove tasted awfully good. And triggered a movement that made the slugs happy, too. I felt better.

It was rather cold and gloomy and I was sleepy, but I did want to get things sorted and cleaned up and I did hope to get at least some sketches done before dark. So I ignored sleepiness and fought fatigue and got camp all cleaned up and everything covered and battened down in case of rain.

5 p.m. I was just about through when crack! Rumble! Boom! Thunder boomed and rolled, on and on. I rushed everything loose into the cold, dark, damp tent wondering unhappily if I'd have to spend the rest of the day cramped up in there, batteries on lamp giving out and Dennis' injunctions about no candles in tent! The thunder boomed and rolled deafeningly, but, as yet, no rain. Lightning crashed and cracked. I rushed out and moved the table complete with all my stuff and food on it under the shelter of a tree. Then realized it was right in line with that menacingly leaning alder Dennis said had to go. (Oh well, I'll tell them I wanted MASHED potatoes! Ha ha.)

Still no rain? I wandered down to the creek, not thinking to be afraid, though thunder claps still deafened me. Crack! A branch fell. I jumped. I looked. It had fallen right where I'd just walked! The creek, now freed, laughed with me--gurgle, gurgle, chuckle, chortle. What a happy sound! When cleaning it I had been going to clean out all the rocks until I discovered that it was they that caused the happy sound. And surely the sound of a gurgling creek will enhance the value of the property? Ha ha.

I climbed back up to camp. I was so very tired, but all the chairs were stashed in the tent. The thunder still went on. I clambered into the tent and began to rearrange things in case I had to hunker in there. I had no sooner done so than brilliant sun broke out in spite of the continuing thunder. Ah well. I decided I'd better finish up in there and make a bed while daylight and could still see.

The thunder began to fade and the sun still shone out there. I looked at the clock. 6 p.m. The storm had lasted just one hour. It over? I'd move back out, but then a pain assailed me so bad I just had to lie down for awhile. Feeling better I creaked myself up and damp and chilled even in the warmest clothes I'd brought. I went to all the trouble to move the table and chair back out for it was so pretty out there! No sooner done than the sun disappeared!

Meantime there was a strange noise--a rushing sound. The creek? No. Then I saw the alder tree tops wildly waving and felt the first gust of wind. But still it didn't rain though I needed some more slop water and had put a receptacle out to catch rain.

I sat outside anyway, watching the capricious shifts of wind and wondering perhaps if it wouldn't be better to give up and get out of there and let the storms roll and the bruised land heal. But I was loathe to, for I'd found that, instead of this confrontation with the woods making me end up hating it, I loved it even more! And Dennis and I had both already learned and accomplished a lot. Why I hadn't even hurt lil ole me with those big "macho" tools! Only once had I almost whacked my (unbooted) foot with the hatchet. And the moments of fear and loneliness were only minimal. Everyone had been horrified: "You mean you're going to camp in the woods! Alone! For a week!?" Well, I was doing it and I was enjoying it. I decided to stay.

Especially when the sun came out again and the sky turned blue and, later, pinkish as the sun began to set. There was almost a cathedral-like light there in the woods. And everything got very peaceful and silent. I could hear my clock ticking in the tent. The alders leaned "buddy buddy--A-frame like" on each other. Looking up, the sky pink and blue at the peak of the foliage-laced perspective triangle, everything seemed angled except the tall, straight cedars. I was sorry I had to sleep in the tent instead of outside.

I watched a (bait poisoned) slug die, noting that they even DIE slowly. And I was sorry I'd baited them, for I saw now--they are the GARBAGE MEN of the woods. The wind went shhhh! in the treetops. I was very content even though my leg muscles were cramped with unaccustomed use. Shhhh! I crept in the tent and fell asleep.

THURSDAY--The sun woke me about 7:30. A ray of sun fell dramatically on my little white scale model of the cabin I'd made and brought with me. I felt it a good omen. And I felt lucky about the weather. Another nice day and it hadn't rained at all, although it was very chill there under the trees. I put on more clothes and snuggled up. Later I'd go down to the cul and get warmed up--later.

But anxiety about the inspector coming at no set time finally roused me out of bed. I heated water, "bathed" and dressed. I took pains putting on makeup for the first time in several days, ate, and by eleven, I was ready for Roy. In preparation I got out papers and plans to sort and organize. They were all wet and soggy.

Then, restless, and getting a bit lonesome, I went down to the cul where I did some measuring and got warmed up a bit in the sun down there. By two he still hadn't come. In the meantime I'd crawled into the car and dozed off for awhile. Still no Roy. I went back into camp and ate. Went out again and did some more measuring. I was now angry. I had some last minute errands to do, some things to get at store, some talking to caretakers to do before I left the next day. My long trip back I was beginning to think of with dread. I decided if he didn't come by 5 I'd go ahead and do my errands.

By 3 p.m. Roy had come and gone. He seemed a very pleasant young man, easy to talk to, but he left me depressed. I felt I'd done rather a bad job negotiating with him. For, alone so long, I found myself feeling shy. And, horrors! I found I had no voice when I first started to talk! He had said he'd send the permit which would run out in a year but could be renewed for \$10 more. This, when I told him we weren't going to be able to start till the next year.

Among other depressing things he told me: if we were going to need a pump, it would cost about \$400; that the alder trees would have to go--that they were dangerous; that the chimney wouldn't draw if we didn't cut the trees down. Also that it was too damp in there--we should let the sun in. He left me depressed. I hadn't counted on all these new expenses and "gottas".

After he left I just grabbed my purse and set out for town. I had to get water, last minute supplies, talk to caretakers and let them know I'd be leaving and find out a few things.

The drive down was very pretty. The mountains and scenery were breath-taking, making the ugly little town of Monre seem even more dingy when I got there. And then I got annoyed at the lack of cooperation from the natives on information I wanted. Garbage? Dunno. Fire permit? Dunno. Where can I get water? Dunno. Nor could I find any of the items I was looking for like Sterno. "Sorry, they didn't stock them." I gave up trying to fill my water jugs at a faucet in a service station because of a gang of rough neck young people lounging around there. I went back without water. I felt like crying. On top of all the depression Roy had left me with, all this. Somehow my idyllic camping sojourn was all spoiled.

It didn't help much when I stopped at the caretakers on the way back to find she didn't even know who I was, and went to look up to see if we really were owners up there. She also seemed a little vague as to why I had stopped to let her know I was leaving. "Oh, people just go," she said. When I asked her about hunting season she was equally vague. "Oh, they come in here for grouse sometimes--" (A grouse had flushed when Roy and I had stood talking.) She let me fill my water jug and I went back to camp.

LAST NIGHT IN CAMP. I would have to evacuate camp the next day. I sure wished I could evacuate my gut before that. I went down to the crude little toilet Dennis had made for the kids. Crack! Crack! It broke down with me and I catapulted onto his toilet-paper-holding stick. It ripped a gash in my hip. It should have "scared the---- out of me". It didn't. My first injury! And what an ignoble one! I stumbled back to camp, bleeding. And found I had no band-aids.

A bit desperate now--I still hadn't gotten the property line measurements and drawings done I'd come to do--I opened the small bottle of chablis I'd bought for a last night celebration and sipped some as I fixed the last of my canned food ready to heat up later. Then I went and crashed around in the brush taking some hasty measurements.

After which I went back to fix my dinner. The wine helped, numbed the weariness, but also didn't help? for, reaching across my flimsy cooking arrangement, I stumbled on one of my fire-pit rocks and fell and cut my face and hurt my knee --and my dinner went flying off into the dirt! That did it. I left the camp mess, wine and all, and clambered into tent and fell on cot. I woke once, at 4 a.m. Went out and put my hair up in curlers by flashlight and fell back into bed.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 9--MY LAST DAY OF FIVE CAMPING ALONE--I woke later than I'd wanted to--about 8. I felt fine! Checking, I found that it was not a rock I had stumbled over but one of those exposed roots Dennis preferred we not cut because "it hurts the trees." (From now on we do, though. Hurt the trees? Or me!?)

I heated water, bathed and dressed both me and my wounds, glad to see I hadn't cut my face, after all. And then, for a toilet, found me a comfortable log, notched it out a bit with the hatchet, got a magazine and--victory! Not even any slugs! I felt better.

I took my time packing and cleaning up camp. Dennis had said they were coming up on the week end. I wished I'd asked him if they meant to stay overnight, for I could have left some of the stuff there. As it was the garbage was going to be a problem. Again it would have to go with me until I found a dumping place. (Even though I'd asked nobody told us that there was a public garbage dump beyond Sultan.)

Packed. Ready to go. But I took my time leaving. The sun was shining. This was my last chance to enjoy it a little. I wandered all over, down to the creek, which gurgled and laughed, but on which fall leaves were already beginning to fall. A falling leaf hit me on the head as I leaned against a mossy alder trunk--scaring me. I wept a little. (Goodbye! Goodbye! God willing I'll see you in the spring!)

I got in the car, started the engine and set my face grimly toward civilization--and all that traffic.

I had to drive 18 miles before I found a designed public garbage can. I got back to Seattle--to the kids' and spent the night there.

BACK IN VANCOUVER

SUNDAY, SEPT. 11--Home again that Sunday night I called both Dennis and Mike. Mike: "I think you made a good investment! It's real pretty up there((I'd sent him pictures?) Just be sure you get all the permits." Dennis: He said they'd gone up again and he'd cut and Abbie had piled wood till we had three times the wood to what we had when I was there! And he said Noah said, "What a nice grandma!"(to clean out the creek?) I hinted that maybe Abbie didn't like it up there? "No! No! She loves it! Gives us a place to GO!"

At their house: I'd warned them that I had changed their camp somewhat. And when I'd mentioned that I'd moved their yellow plastic garbage sack hanging on a tree in plain sight to a place out of sight--"More esthetic!" Dennis looked amused. (So many different ways of looking at the same thing!--just as I was NOT amused at seeing how they had left all those tools we were investing in out to rust.

Back in Vancouver--I got all excited! A piece of land! Think of the things we could plant! I began to plan how I would transplant my ivy and houseplants up there and began to buy things like asparagus roots and so on. I also went to the office and looked up slugs in those excellent books the landscaping guys had. Slugs are relatives to oysters! and clams! Ye gods!

As to business; my first property tax notice was in mail when I got back. Didn't bother me as it just matched the dividend check I'd just gotten. I had told Dennis, in all seriousness, that, since Mike owned the land, I would will him the cabin for his work. At the time it seemed like a very simple and good idea!

I dropped in at the office again to return the machete and to gloat and tell. Somehow I got on the wrong side of an excited conversation amongst the guys about how much MONEY one could make by buying land as an investment in these inflationary times.

"How much cedar ya got up there?" "Oh--" I made a guess. "And how big?" I showed with my arms. Their eyes gleamed. "Ya know how much cedar's worth now? I was offered \$100 for ONE, AS IS," Bruce crowed. He was studying our land plot. "How much land ya got up there?" "Oh, half an acre." "Mmmmm." "Well--we can always sell it," I said lamely. "How much you pay for it?" "\$4000." Jerry let out a

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whoop! "I think she made a hell of a good deal!" he cried. I didn't even know what they were talking about. It didn't make much sense to me. I was more interested in building a--homestead?--than a profit.

SEPT. 14, 1977--ANNIVERSARY OF MY 12th YEAR WITH THE HIGHWAY DEPT. After I got back from camping, I found things at the office much changed--a shifting of "top brass" and a new supervisor for me. And there began to be a crackdown on me, that, without going into it, forced me into a time of sick breakdown and the realization that I had to hand in my retirement notice, though I had hoped to stick it out while longer to have more money for the cabin. What was going on was what they called RIF (reduction in force) and "attrition". What it meant was that anyone whose usefulness was doubtful or showed any slightest signs of reasons they might choose or have to leave the job was "encouraged" to leave. (Oh? the doctor says you have a terminal illness? How sad. Then tomorrow is your last day, isn't it?)

I called Dennis and told him. He didn't seem too upset about it. He went right on with his plans to start putting in the foundations and didn't seem to share my alarm that we'd be fined if he went ahead and started to build without the permit. "I'll just go and tell them I'd going to", he said. I, frantic with other troubles, and feeling impotent in the intricacies of the male world let it go.

OCTOBER 1977

With winter approaching nothing more was or could be done about the cabin. I began to work on my retirement plans, trying for April. Dennis signed up at the university and, with his job, was very busy. During the month I bought a big construction wheelbarrow, which pleased Dennis, and a splitting axe and wedge. Seems he had broken his axe. We three, Mike, Dennis and I kept in touch by phone, all busy with our own lives and troubles.

NOVEMBER 1977

When Dennis and his family came to my place for Thanksgiving, Dennis reassured me about the electricity and plumbing for the cabin. "Simple! Mere details!" he said. "Uhhhh--" "No problem!" he insisted, as they left. "Guess what!" Abbie giggled. "Maybe we'll have Thanksgiving at grandma's house next year-- in the woods!" "Hooray!" I cried. We hugged and kissed.

DECEMBER 1977

We all spent Christmas separately, due to problems of weather, finances, and difficulties in getting time and means enough to travel the long distances involved. I, stuck away from everyone in Vancouver spent Christmas alone.

SO ENDED 1977

Somewhere up north the rains fell on a half acre of woods at the end of a deserted street that boasted only two dingy, deserted-appearing little mobile homes on it. the rains fell on the woods as they had been doing for--lo! these many many years.

"Do you like the sound of rain on the roof?" Dennis had asked me at one point. "Love it!" I said. "Well, you're going to get plenty of it in the cabin!" he said.

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JANUARY 11, 1978-- I gave notice on my job that I would retire April 1-- "All Fools' Day", as I kept joking. The rest of the month I was involved in the battles, conflicts, contentions, complexities and red tape of severing with a bureaucracy. As for the cabin, I began to work on assembling and cashing in what assets I had to finance building with--war bonds--that sort of thing. Then tackled and nearly got swamped in the mess and gobbledegook of social security and state retirement.

THE STOVE

I paid another property tax installment and bought a wood stove and a smoke alarm, a new gadget now "de rigueur" code if one had a wood stove. Buying the stove turned out to be one of the longest, most trouble-fraught transactions I had ever encountered.

With the MidEast oil embargo bringing on an "energy and gas crisis" wood stoves were just beginning to be resurrected out of the past. There was now a "hot market" and myriads of entrepreneurs in the act. This rather complicated my original plan of just picking up a little second hand "trash burner" such as was left in that house in Yakima mother had bought.

Like everything else about the cabin, I knew nothing about what I was getting into. I began a long research on wood stoves. Once the word got around I was looking, I found there were two office-related contacts who were anxious for my business. The trouble was that they were both a couple of rather untrustworthy guys competing with each other in this pretty shady new wood stove boom. As the lesser of two evils I chose dealing with Bruce Auld, a rather flighty guy who worked at the office where I worked. He began a rather disjointed "training" of me and advice about buying stoves the fall before. It seems you don't just go out and say "I'll take that one!" The chimney had to be DESIGNED! (And did I run into trouble with an A-FRAME!) And intricate measurements and codes had to be considered.

And so I went into a month or so of learning and battling out drawings. At first it was fun, and then it got confusing and discouraging. Bruce was very hard to work with and all too often "unavailable". The idea was that he was "a free lance salesman" for a firm in Portland and "someday we'd just fo over and pick out what I wanted." He was recommending a particular kind of stove he himself was interested in buying.

FEBRUARY

We'd gone over one noon and picked out the kind he had recommended. He put in an order and I gave him a check, again gulping at costs twice what I'd figured on. Now, it seems he couldn't take the check. For some reason it had to be in cash. Later, of course, I found out what kind of games he was playing, but all new to me at the time.

Meantime I'd worked and drawn up some of my meticulous, to-scale plans for stove, chimney, "combustible distances", etc. etc. Bruce approved them after a show of "engineer" quibbling.

Near the end of February he told me, "Your stove's here! Where do you want it?" How exciting! I thought he meant it was there in town, in Vancouver. No. We ended up making a wild trip over to Portland and picking it up in his pick-up, I taking my own car. Then I was to meet him at my place where he would deliver it AND "Don't you think you owe me a bottle of brandy?" he asked and told me what kind to get (not cheap!) So I went to the liquor store and on home where Bruce was waiting.

He unloaded it all by himself--that heavy thing, while I held my breath. Bruce was a big six-footer, handsome, middle-aged man but I was still alarmed as his face got redder and redder hassling that thing. (Please don't get a hernia!) But he got it into my big garage in that fancy triplex I lived in.

And then we sat in my kitchen and had several drinks and checked out the parts, celebrating. The parts of the stove, I mean. No. I'm sorry to disappoint you but he didn't try to seduce me, nor would I have let him. He a "wandering eye" "ladies' man", but also a family man--a bit young for me--and besides, I didn't like him too well. We sat and talked about his daughter and my apartment. We had a nice chat. And I was glad when he left. I gave him the rest of the bottle.

So! I had my stove! It was very exciting!

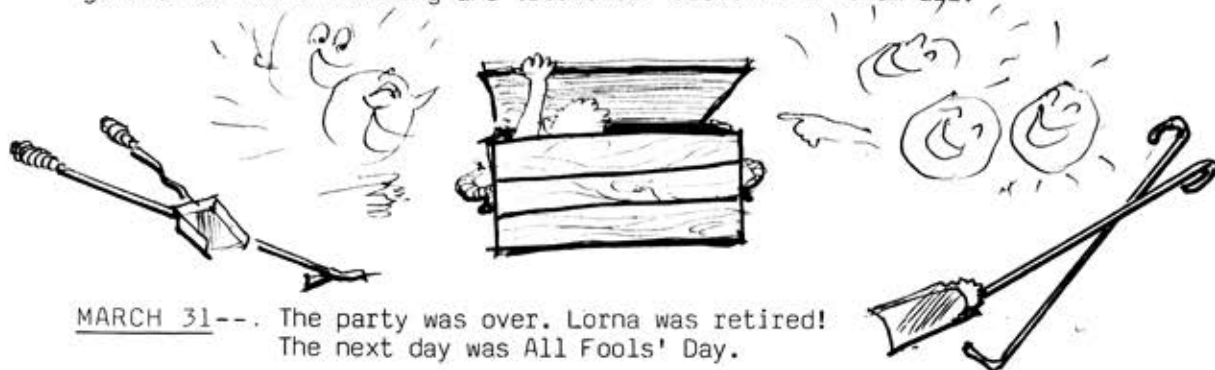
But that was only the beginning. There had to be a chimney, too. But that is another story!

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MARCH

The office gave me a big farewell party, complete with a catered little A-frame cake, an artistic undertaking I appreciated after my A-frame model making. And then the photographer's camera didn't work! So I have no pictures of that or (thank heavens!) the results of the free-flowing liquor that day. They had presented me with a large, white cedar wood box Pam's husband had made. "OH!" I cried fresh back from a largely liquid lunch, "a coffin!" And I jumped in and pulled the lid down. Hilarious! How they laughed at Lorna in her coffin! That wood box with its rope handles and the set of stove tools they gave me to go with it was a touching and treasured souvenir of them all.



MARCH 31-- The party was over. Lorna was retired!
The next day was All Fools' Day.

The only thing that remained was to build the cabin!

CHANGES

APRIL

SUNDAY, APRIL 2-- I phone Dennis. He tells me due to measurements, property lines, etc. cabin has to be faced the other way from what I'd designed and planned it. This meant that what was to be front, facing street, would now be the back and the back, service end of building would be the front. This made me very unhappy after a year's work of detailed planning. Nothing like a spinning cabin on a five-sided lot! It was "back to the drawing board."

The next week I started to wind up my affairs concerning my new retirement. I waded through old personal papers and so on until I got discouraged and upset and phoned Dennis and made noises about calling the whole thing off. I didn't see how we would ever get the building permit. And for him to go ahead, as he wanted to, and build it without one would, I'd found out, be illegal and subject us to fines I could ill afford.

Dennis was furious! And chewed me out. "After all I've done!" he cried. I also told him I had \$5000. "You do!? Hey!" he cried. "--but I may have to dip into it." "Why?" "Oh---for living---". He didn't seem to understand.

The next night, simmered down, I phoned again and apologized, via Abbie, Dennis being unavailable in the bathroom.

Mid month, after receiving birthday cards from them (indicating all was forgiven?) I phoned again and all was OK. I told Dennis I'd be up the end of the month to see about permits whether he was ready for me or not.

Meantime, the rest of April, I spent settling my affairs and finances; going through papers; seeking and finding a lawyer and making my will; and other stressful things pertaining to retirement and a drastic change in my life and life style. It wasn't a very happy month. At one point I considered postponing the trip since there were things that I'd have to get back and finish up--like Social security--that would make it a rushed trip. But I had promised old Auntie Alice that I'd come and see her and Dennis that I'd try to do something about the building permit. I was committed.

TRIP PREP

SATURDAY, APRIL 22--I began to prepare to leave on Monday; finished up odds and ends, wrote notes to people to warn them I was coming; got car checked out; started to pack, etc. I decided, finances not currently hurting, to stay one night in a motel, which would free me from the burdens and dependencies of being a guest and give me more freedom to think and organize.

MONDAY, APRIL 24-- changed my plans from Monday to Tuesday leaving and decided to take my little model of cabin I'd made and show it off. I phoned Dennis, who was out in his garage making forms for the cabin foundation supports! He said Abbie wouldn't be there--off to Yakima and her family where birth of a new baby. And "I sure could use a drill!" Dennis said. "They're on sale! I'll pay you back!" "Go ahead and tool up!" I cried. It was time to build.

TRIP

TUESDAY, APRIL 25-- I set out for Seattle, stopping in Puyallup for a --this time--quiet visit with Auntie Alice. I told her I'd be back Monday and stay all night. When I got to the kids' all was quiet, too, just Dennis and kids. We had dinner and a quiet evening, Dennis showing me the foundation forms he was making.

WEDNESDAY--After a good sleep we got up early and Dennis off to work and the baby sitter came, freeing me. I made a call to Bishop and got off for Everett by 10:30., arriving an hour later and began a search for a motel. I found a nice cheap one near a good little restaurant and not far from town. I could even charge it on my AAA card. All was just right.

Despite tired by then I hied myself over to Snohomish County Courthouse to make an appointment for the next morning.

BUREAUCRACY

At the permits counter there was only a sulky young girl who showed no interest at all in the papers I'd brought. She even left the counter and went over to a desk where she just sat and pouted, ignoring me. It made me so mad! For I'd been to the courthouse many times before on Highway business and I'd expected a more VIP reception. No way. All my drawings and plans, so laboriously done-- "Oh you don't need those", she said showing no interest. And everything I asked her she just said, "I dunno."

"That copy of code you sent me," I said snottily, "was such a bad xerox I couldn't even read it." "Oh we have better ones now." But she made no effort to give me one. Instead she gave me a very short, crudely xeroxed form. (Was that all I needed? After all my year's work? only this simple form?) "But what will I put down as owner?" I asked. "My son, really, is the owner--" expecting some bristling about that. "Oh put yourself down," she practically yawned. "Really?" I filled in as much of the form as I could. "Can't I just mail this in or bring it back in the morning?" I asked. "Naw," she said, "ya gotta pay the review fee." I wrote a check and left, mad as hell! All that work and that long trip up and it only took a few minutes!

THURSDAY--I woke in the motel unrested and disgusted. My Fun! "Career gal"! trip was turning out to be a most unhappy misadventure. I'd told Bishop I'd come down and visit and stay all night in their new house in Edmonds after I'd completed my business in Everett. But first I had to set out this day to find out where to get and then get the electrical permit.

I sat in the motel room and puzzled over maps until the cleaning woman insisted on getting in. I checked out of the motel, went to the restaurant and ate and set out having no idea where that permits place was. I had asked and been told but had been unable to find it on maps. Some remote place outside Everett they'd said. The weather had turned rainy and cold and I was chilled and uncomfortable in the spring clothes I'd taken a chance on wearing.

I got terribly, terribly lost. When I stopped and asked people no one seemed to know where the place was. When I only ended up caught in construction work in some remote road, frustrated and furious, I retraced my route clear back to the freeway and into Everett and tried again. Lost again. I finally found the damned place but not about until 2 p.m.

At least the women there were nice and friendly and gracious and very helpful. The fee was \$30, which I paid, but I was distressed to find that was only the beginning of electrical fees and permits we'd need.

I went out to my car wondering if I'd ever be able to find my way back to the freeway and on to Bishop's in Edmonds where I'd never been before. I laughed wryly as I, part of whose job it had been for years was to draw maps to show people the highway routes had to ask a man parked next to me if he'd draw me a map to show me the way. He did.

While I was lost in the wilds of Everett suburbs frenziedly searching for electrical permit office--a newspaper headline: "Snohomish County P.U.D. rates just went up 20%". I could have cried. All these frustrations and delays while costs skyrocketed.

I could have cried, too. While lost way over there in Everett boondocks, in MONROE was ameeeting I would dearly loved to have gone to. Posted in Snohomish County courthouse was the notice of a meeting of County Land Use Planning Dept. to be addressed by Ian McHarg, my hero! the famous man who had started all this land use planning. *His book I had bought and studied so avidly when my dearest friends--the guys in Landscaping Dept. in Seattle District # 1--and I had worked so hard with Snohomish County on this new concept of land use planning and conservation. He was in town! A meeting I could have gone to and heard him! And here I was wasting time wandering around lost and asking people where I was and how could I get to where I wanted to go and getting only "I dunno" answers!.

I made it to Edmonds all right. But I was too early. Bish wouldn't be home from work yet. I killed time buying some little gifts for his boys and then dared to go into one of those outlandishly extravagant Wood Stove Shoppes that had mushroomed since the lowly wood stove became the prima donna of the market place. I had simple questions I wanted to ask about wood stoves, but I only felt meek and stunned at such a glut of luxuries.

I stayed all night at Bishop's. Then, the next morning, had my first taste of being a retiree as I left at loose ends as everyone flew off early to jobs and schools. I drove back into Seattle, where I ran into the same problem: nobody would be home at Dennis and Abbie's.

RETIREE

I parked in my old "crying place" at the ferry landing in Lincoln Park and sat there for four hours in the cold and rain, resting, remembering, getting organized, thinking.

The trip was sort of a disillusion. I had intended a "career gal" convincing presentation as I'd had to do in all my years of free lance commercial art work hunting: drawings, arguments, "charm", facts, rapport, winks, compromise, money to be paid on line--no "speculation"-- a real portfolio presentation SELL JOB. Instead I came up against indifference, sulks, pouts--peasants; inefficiency, chicanery and poor work. I sighed. From what I'd seen Snohomish County was certainly not prepared to meet the challenge of their sudden discovery as THE Utopia of land development.

I went to the kids' and spent the week end there. "Did you get the permit?" Dennis asked me. We snarled at each other, both tired.

SATURDAY, APRIL 29--Seeing the property again was, of course, one of my main objectives for that trip. I'd waited all winter and sorely needed fresh inspiration. We planned on going up Saturday. The weather had been miserable all week. I had faith the sun would come out: it had to---for me! didn't it? Dennis and Abbie didn't show much enthusiasm about going up, but I felt it imperative that Dennis and I proceed with our plans and business. I just had to have him show me and tell me what progress had been made.

This meant it would be easier if the whole family didn't go. We could get more business done that way. They'd all gotten soaked in the rain up there the previous week end Dennis said he felt like he had a cold and wasn't about to go up there in the rain again. And they were all getting upset that Noah seemed to be getting sick again. But I announced flatly that I was going up anyway. I had rain gear with me. So plan were kind of up in the air when we went to bed.

In the night Noah was screaming sick and had an earache in the morning. I was unhappy about it for the sun had begun to come out and I very much wanted to go. I'd told Abbie I'd let her drive my car; I was tired of driving.. I don't know what happened, but suddenly we were all going. They'd changed their minds. A last minute decision.

There was no food to take. "Shall we just buy hamburgers?" I suggested rather reluctantly, for my money was about gone. Dennis rather meekly asked if we could all go in my car and I agreed. So we did. Abbie was now in a good humor. She drove and Dennis crammed into the back seat with the kids.

* "Design with Nature"--Ian McHarg

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MAY 7 8

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It was a pleasant enough trip up--the kids amazingly quiet. Abbie drove well, but so SLOWLY, everyone honking at her while she cussed them. "Don't you even go 55?" the speed limit at that time, I asked her as, even when we got off the freeway she was still snail-pacing. "Oh WE always decide there's no HURRY," she lilted, which struck me as odd because I'd never noticed that they drove slowly.

All was fine until we arrived at the land--the cul-de-sac. I was excited, anxious to see what they'd done. Then Abbie lost her contact lens and, after a long fruitless search everyone was cross and touchy. Noah complained he didn't want to be there and Abbie agreed with him and said she was hungry. It was so bad I asked Dennis if Abbie didn't like it up there. "Oh, she's ok if she has something to DO," he hedged. Rather snappishly I asked Abbie why she didn't take the car and go get some hamburgers or something--that she didn't have to stay there. "OK!" She was suddenly blithe and went whipping off with Noah in my car, Sarah choosing to stay. Only too late I realized all the tools and my cigs were in the car.

But Sarah and Dennis and I had fun. After checking out where the clearing for the cabin was to be and settling a few things, Dennis began to work on the driveway and Sarah and I pitched in and worked busily on other things. It was fun!

But we were starved! And I wanted my tools and my cigs. It seemed that Abbie was gone forever. She finally came back, never saying where he's gone. Next day I found my gas inexplicably low. But she was now in a blithe and bubbly mood and dispensed a lot of junk food she'd bought. All was fine then. She seemed to be enjoying herself and she and Sarah helped me "lay out my house" with sticks and stones, the way we used to "make houses" when we were kids. Dennis was still working on a driveway clearing. We tested and found we'd be able to get the car in.

Then, though it had turned out a lovely, sunny day and was still early and I hated to go, we were all tired and decided to leave. We decided to drive up the highway a bit, Abbie driving again. All were in good spirits at first, but then, after a fruitless search for falls reputed to be there, everybody got snappish and we gave up and headed for home, all grumpy and quiet and kids going to sleep.

But I was very pleased with what I'd seen. I felt that it was going to be all right. The new position of the cabin would be maybe better. And the kids had really cleared the place out. It looked bare and open compared to before. I was encouraged; excited.

BACK TO VANCOUVER

The next day I set off home again. On the way I stopped at Fife where I'd seen that A-frame at the lumber yard there. A chance to check? But it was gone. The yard was moving. They'd taken it down. Again a chance to see a real A-frame gone.

I went on to stay overnight in Puyallup where we made a sad trip to Orting to see my cousin, Charles, dying of Parkinson's disease.

From there on the long, weary way home. It seemed as if my business trip was not so much business as fraught with family and personal involvements.

Other post-hoc thoughts: I began to realize that I wasn't going to have as much control and authority about having things done my way as I'd envisioned. And--differences in purpose and use of cabin emerging as it became more fact. And Dennis' tendency to plan and build to his own preferences instead of mine. But, then, I reassured myself, I would have the same troubles, or more, in HIRING a contractor who would fight my "silly" wishes even more. I felt lucky I had such a willing, able--and free! builder. The domestic concessions were a small price to pay. I would be able to do things MY way when I moved in and took possession! Like about next year!? Exciting!

MAY

BACK IN VANCOUVER--I phoned the kids the week-end of May 6. Abbie said Dennis was up at the land alone, digging and working on the driveway, getting planks put across that county drainage ditch at entrance where County claimed we'd have to put in \$80 worth of clay pipe. (It wasn't that big a ditch!)

Meantime I got out my stuff and set up a working desk in my apartment. Dennis' having to turn the cabin the other way and adding another "A" or two made obsolete all my carefully scaled year's work on plans. I now had to re-do them to submit to Snohomish County for permit by mid-May, Dennis urging me on as he had limited time he could work on cabin.

I worked on them off and on, battling all those myriad phoney scales and having to translate them again. I started on the plumbing plans first; it the hardest (and dullest!) Also I no longer had access to xerox and would have to do each copy neededone by one, by hand. My deadline I was heading for was the next Thursday. But I found it was almost too much to have to do in that time. And, for me, unfamiliar with all this stuff, it was a self-taught crash course in construction. I began to wonder if they'd give me a reprieve until Monday?

DESPAIR

We had hoped to get things done that summer, but the next spring would be a more logical time to move up there. Only Dennis would be tied up in school then. And I couldn't quite see myself suffering through a winter in the woods in rain country in a half finished house with no stove.

TUESDAY, MAY 9-- Two long calls to Dennis. Found out I didn't have to get the plumbing plans and drawings done yet. That let me off the hook a bit. He had been doing wonders! Had most of the foundation holes dug! He'd called P.U.D. and they wanted more money for things. (I began to feel scared!) Abbie wanted me to come up for Mothers' Day. Dennis sounded so proud! Said he moved the dirt from the holes to down under the cabin; said it looked like a real construction site! Abbie taunted him about clearing out the woods--doing what he hated other people doing so. "Oh that only applies to other people, not to me!" Dennis said he'd rejoined. A very encouraging talk.

Well, if I could get all that stuff done and xeroxed by Friday, maybe I could head north again, though I absolutely hated driving the freeway on week-ends--and Holidays.

CABIN PLANS

I had a two day hassle with a "ship's ladder" to loft as shown in the plans we'd bought, which didn't show any detail. I had to figure it out for myself. I was working 8 hour days and till midnights on that stuff, trying to finish it up so I could get to the office and xerox by Friday if I was to go to Seattle again. And I hadn't even unpacked from the last trip!

I made my deadline! I got it done and xeroxed. I phoned Dennis Saturday night and said I'd be coming. He was very excited.

This trip up was to take all my drawn up cabin plans and try to get the building permit so Dennis could get going on the building in the short time he had left to do so. After the brush-off I'd gotten last time, I decided on a different approach. I'd go to Al Grieve, one of the guys from District #1 who had liked and championed me and who was now Ass't. Public Works engineer there in Snohomish County. This time I'd see if I could use some pull in getting in to see someone besides dumb flunkies.

TRIP NORTH # ???

SUNDAY, MAY 14-- I leave for Seattle. Overnight at Dennis' and Abbie's.

MONDAY, MAY 15--

THE COURTHOUSE

I got to Snohomish County courthouse about 10:30. The sun had come out and I was very glad Dennis had found my sunglasses. Seems I'd left them on a stump up at the land the last time! I parked in their confusing, inconvenient basement parking there with all those big signs warning of a 2 hour parking limit--"or else!" and then I set off upstairs to locate Al.

At Al's office the girl was very nice, but I waited and waited and waited--an hour altogether--until I began to wonder if Al was giving me the brush-off? Then Dick Andrews, a nice young guy also from Seattle office came out. "Hey! Hello!" he cried. When I explained why I was there he got Al, who said the girl had neglected to tell him I was there!

He took me into his office and was very nice. We sat and chatted and caught up on a year or so's news and gossip about mutual friends. Then he got on the phone and tried to contact some of his friends down there in Permits. No luck. They were all out. Finally, he got a bit mad and yelled at them, "Get me SOMEONE!"

A pause. Then--"Got a friend here who's caught in your maze," Al said into the phone. "OK. OK." And then he told me to go down and ask for Scott.

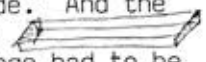
By this time it was getting on toward noon and the halls of bureaucracy were fast emptying. In Permits again I waited and waited, scorning the girl who had been so non-helpful the last time and trying to nab someone more important. Finally, ignoring Permits, I stepped over to the Fire Marshall's counter and a woman there finally got them to dig Scott out for me.

I expected to be taken into the office beyond where I could spread out my plans and drawings, but this Scott, a nice middle-aged guy, said, "Let's do it out here." So I spread my stuff out on the counter in the public office and began to show him. Then he said, "Let's go back into the office."

There he called some other man over and I began to puff up as they seemed very impressed with my drawings. "A lot of know-how here!" they cried. And "That's a nice little cabin! Will be worth about \$12,000!" I felt even better when they said the building permit would be (only!) about \$98. And I'd found out from the Fire Marshall woman that we wouldn't need a fire/stove permit; that would come with the building permit. "But we'll have to go and see (-----) she's in charge of Plan Approvals now."

And he led me, rather gingerly, it seemed to me, into another office where a cold and arrogant Career Gal beauty sat. Our dislike for each other was immediate. Scott was frantically "selling" my cabin. But it did no good. She took the plans, flipped the pages, and, without even looking at them, put them down and said, "No! You can't build that! It won't meet code!" "She doesn't like A-frames," Scott kidded. But she found that unfunny.

I don't know how long we battled there. I was crushed. What poise and assurance I'd gained slipped away. She was cold and unrelenting. Scott battled for me and against her, trying to reassure me I could figure out some changes--like a different stairway. She had arrogantly thrown out the whole loft (my artist's studio life-long desire!) because the stairway "wouldn't meet code." And the foundations--Dennis' single unit supports--No. Foundations ~~had~~ had to be (traditional) square forms. And some other major change had to be that meant a complete re-design. In fact she threw out the whole A-frame design.

Not only that, but I'd have to get a STATE OF WASHINGTON LICENSED ENGINEER to re-design the foundations and put his official seal on it. She finally "compromised" that much. If I could do all that and bring it back to them, they'd review it again. (Months and months! and \$\$\$ and \$\$\$!) 

I had to get out of there before I murdered that gal. Scott followed me out. Full of sympathy and reassuring suggestions; "Oh I could re-do that stairway--sure I could!"

----- WOES -----

I left that office hungry, mad, and upset. It was well into noon hour now. But, since I wouldn't be back here soon, I set out in the building to get some other information I needed. I went back up to the 5th floor and the gal was nice and gracious about showing me a contour map. But, when I stopped in at graphics, where we artists had once collaborated in our state/county work there were no familiar faces. I was very rudely brushed off by new young men working there. All I got to see was that they were still working on the same 1990 Land Use Plans we'd all been working on for 10 years!

I stood and waited and waited and waited for the fool elevators. I sure wanted a drink! and a self-indulgent spree lunch! and a place to cry. I began asking strangers where there was a good restaurant. People weren't much help until one nice young man told me of a place.

I waited for the elevator, absorbed in my new sorrows. Oh no! I'd completely forgotten about my car and the parking limit! (What did "impounded" mean?) Then, of all times, as I got into the elevator there was a huge, silent cop with a gun, just staring at me. (I'll have to go to the police station? And I'm supposed to be back at the kids!)

I raced to my car.

In that fumes-stinking basement I found my car chained to a big barrel. There was a sign on it: "This car is impounded." I went over to the young attendant and started telling him a sob story. "Well, it's \$2 you have to pay." "But I only have a twenty!" I wailed. He started counting out piles of quarters, then--"Oh well," he said, "I'll pay for it. It's just a trick to make people remember." (Whew!) And he unlocked my car and let me go.



I found that nice restaurant and, as I waited for my lunch, gulped a double martini and tried to figure out how in hell to get back on freeway? I felt like bawling. Poor Dennis! I had finally gotten a bit of the VIP treatment I'd bragged to Dennis I thought I could swing and I thought my professional work deserved, but--Poor Dennis! He is going to be so! mad!--our cabin doesn't "meet code"--and the half begun foundations his is so proud of--they won't allow--and all the extra money it's going to take to hire an engineer---

It was almost 3 p.m. before I found my way back onto the freeway and wended my sorrowful way back to the kids' house on Admiral Way in Seattle.

...on the way--as my head cleared--echoes of that scene back there---in the Plans Approval office--Scott had taken me in and summoned a supervisor--Walt---??? (have his name somewhere). It was he who was so officious and nit-picking about the code, though, as I said, Scott tried to fight for me. He was Sr. Inspector--Walt. But seems he had to go or wouldn't spend any more time on it and it was then we had to go and hassle Linda-- (that was her name). What Scott had said to her as we went in was "Oh she LOVES A-frames!" It took me a bit to realize he was being sarcastic. And I had rejoined, after the bad news, "Well, my son's six foot three and red-headed and I hate to go back and tell him what you've told me!" It sounded like a threat--and I MEANT it to!

When I got back to Alki with my bad news, Dennis wasn't home. And Abbie was tired and cross from a day of minding kids. I told her, and then, later, I took the kids down to the beach, leaving her to break the bad news to Dennis--she better acquainted with his moods than I?

Later, Dennis didn't seem too upset, but all three of us went into a blue, blue funk, so bad that I brought out a pint of whiskey I had and Dennis produced some leftover V.O. they had. It was not a pleasant evening. As tongues loosened, they seemed to blame me for this development, intimating that I created personality problems with my "career gal" ideas about myself and claims to "pull", etc.

I could not then--or ever?--convince them of the "modus operandi" of these officious little bureaucrats that we, who had worked for them for more than ten years had come to know. "Ridiculous!" I cried. "They're insisting we build a solid wall of cement on that slope just because they'd never heard of doing anything any OTHER way! No way are we going to do it by their stupid little code! We'll do it MY way! We'll not fill up thirty holes now!" etc. etc. But I didn't get anywhere. Dennis and Abbie seemed to think I'd messed things up somehow.

It was a bad night. We didn't fight, but everyone was touchy. I lay awake most of the night and was glad to get out of there and head home in the morning. Dennis was gracious enough, but Abbie was a bit grim. I decided maybe I'd better accept my sister-in-law, Paula's, offer to stay with them my next trip up. Dennis and Abbie said they planned to go to the ocean beach the next week-end and take a break from it all. It sounded like a good idea to me.

BACK TO VANCOUVER

On the way home I stopped at Toutle Creek rest area and walked back into the woods and cried. Poor Dennis. He had been so excited and now discouraged and disappointed and lost interest. As for me---I'd thought--that trip--we'd be on our way. A broken dream. And a hell of a lot of work and hassle ahead.

I gave it all a lot of thought on the long drive home. Just outside Vancouver I went out of my way to look at iron spiral staircases at that place. It was locked and deserted.

When I got home, instead of thrilling at my little A-frame model I'd worked so hard on, I shuddered. As I did carrying in all those file and portfolio of work I'd done. It had ended up a sad trip.

REJECTION BATTLE AND REVIEW

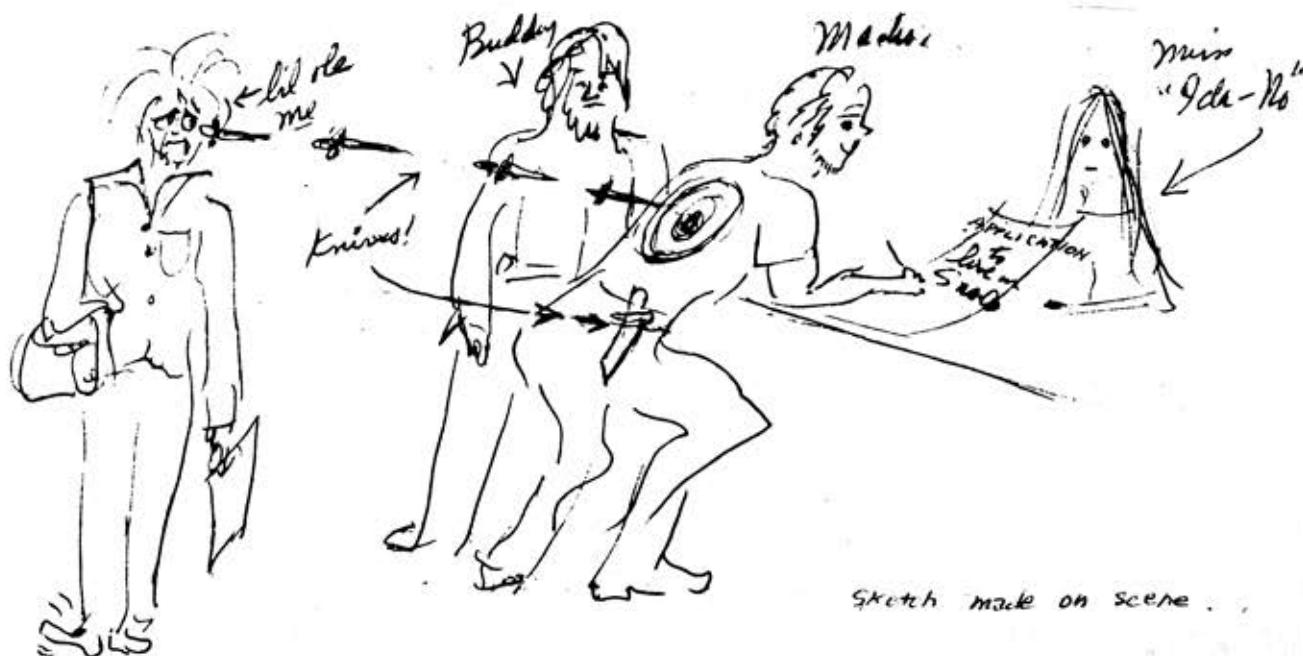
MAY 17-- Back from try with Snohomish County. I thought I'd come back feeling grim, yes, but would sail into those new problems and solve them. Not so. I found myself completely soured, even just APPROACHING that drawing board. That Head Reviewer, Linda, applying SQUARE rules on a TRIANGLE!

I called Dennis, upset, and presented my idea that we could have Mike figure out that stress load on his computer. I thought that Mike might enjoy the challenge and feel that he was participating in our battle. Besides I was sure the prestige of the name "Hewlett-Packard" on our data papers might give us some clout with those small town politicians up there. But Dennis didn't go for that idea. "Oh, we'll figure something out," he said.

They had rejected Dennis' "bargain price" design. I'd been afraid of this, for, as I'd worked on it, I found it hasty and careless engineering--rather amateurish. Dennis had said, sadly, "I thought that plan would PASS!" I'd been afraid it wouldn't. I'd BEEN there! found out all the nit-picking and jealousies and the need for expertise involved. I realized, because of things like this, even my idea to get help from "my guys" at the office wouldn't work. They'd just shrug--with an "I told you so" attitude. Not because the A-frame wouldn't work, but because what their political job buddies say carries more clout with them (the SYSTEM has to work) than my (unimportant) woes. They wouldn't want to "get involved". Nothing in it for them.

THAT ATTEMPT: This time I'd pulled all my "career gal" tricks. I'd been all dressed up in my best pink pantsuit, and armed with my new portfolio with my name on it that that Kohinoor salesman had gifted us all with. I'd had my "entree"--Al's business card in my hand and an appointment set up for me by him.

When I joined that line of real slobby-looking people at that counter in Permits my enemy, "Miss Ida-No" as I'd dubbed her, from my last visit smugly ignored me and made me wait, though I'd presented Al's card. I had to wait behind two bearded young machos with sheathed knives on their hips.



One doesn't chat with strangers these days; one just reads their T-shirts. So I read. One gets used to about everything, but---His T-shirt had a circle reading "something exciting between your legs"--and then there was a picture of a SEVERED PENIS!

The more I surveyed all those tough looking characters lined up to get permits to live in Snohomish County, the more I wondered if I really wanted to live there?

Miss Ida-No was tending the young machos exclusively, till, finally, impatient, I intruded. "Excuse me, is Mr. Scott STILL busy?" She'd told me he was busy. (Guess what she said.) "I dunno," she said. And went on waiting on the machos.

WHEN I DID GET INTO REVIEWERS: "But why do you want to build a LOFT?" Scott and Linda kept bugging me. "A bedroom?" "No!" I sang out and tried to

get it across--"the whole idea--artist--(I hope I said commercial?)--studio--retirement--dream--"

● ("You'll have to re-design and put in for another review.") "And how long will that take?" I asked. "Three weeks!!?" I cried. "Welll---maybe one week."

● The little short, officious inspector, when I said "My six foot son--". "Well, ANGER will only delay things longer!" he shouted.

● And Linda: just before I left, after bewailing what they'd asked of me: "You will build according to code or YOU WILL NOT BUILD AT ALL!" she shouted at me.

● "When do you go to lunch?" I'd asked Scott and Linda after our long session. They just shrugged. It was 1:30 p.m.

● Miss Ida-No: when I went out she was filling out my application form--HER way. I wrote them a check, seething. She briskly crossed off what I had written and filled in her own data---

More aftermath of that failure trip; At Dennis' and Abbie's--we didn't have time to discuss because part of Abbie's family came and stayed quite awhile. Dennis: "How much time do we have? (for changes). "Oh--2--3-- weeks. They said it'd take 'a week' to review again." "Will you be going up again in 2-3 weeks?" "Oh Dennis, I just CAN'T!" A little piqued, I handed him the names and the map. "YOU go talk to 'em!" I said. "Maybe I will," he said. "I have a day off for school sign up--"

We discussed the possibilities of finding a qualified engineer. All we needed was an official stamp on the plans. Though two VIP engineers in family--Zirkle and Abbie's father (retired)--they weren't the right KIND of engineers.

With this new delay we had to face the fact that it would be next June when Dennis' term at the University was over before he'd be free to finish up the cabin.

FUNK

The way things were I faced a long, lonely winter there in Vancouver, holidays and all, without even a job to while away the time. And stymied on cabin work. And that land up there not even any use as an escape, or place to stay IF I got the changes made by deadline. Dennis and Abbie didn't even offer to put the tent up for me so I could camp up there. In fact, they shooed me off. "When the frames are up, you can come," they said.

I beat myself to drawing board and tried to work on that stairway revision. But it was impossible. No way could I get that required 12' run in that space. Why didn't I just buy one of those iron spiral staircases like Scott suggested? Because they cost so much!

COSTS! MONEY!

There was nothing to do but sidetrack and rehassle finances. Cabin money: I'd spent, in toto, \$1700 since last April on this try. That included everything--trips et al. Actual investment so far about \$880. The rest on trips, phone calls, communicating. I'd given Dennis \$430. I still had \$700 left. (plus the nest egg of almost \$5000 in Credit Union) versus I was quoted \$10,000 to put up someone else's A-frame design or a "shell--you finish" for \$8000. Well, maybe we had come a long way--in a year--"cheaply"! We hadn't had to pay to put a driveway in (did it ourselves) or excavating (Dennis dug) or expensive house plans (did our own). Ha. Well, one thing that had passed review--my septic field and stove drawings were OK. I went on figuring if I could afford an engineer.

HELP!

I went to the office to seek help and advice from the guys, braving the stigma of the 'hang-around-retiree'. I needed to find out from Bruce when we could get the stove chimney. About the engineer; they checked and said I could use a CIVIL engineer's stamp. They suggested my buddy from District One, but he had left the building and was unavailable. But I was encouraged about the civil engineer loophole; I knew lots of them!

But then they threw a new blow at me. It seemed that one had to have one's permit and ALL INSPECTIONS DONE before one could move in. That meant it would be the next year before I could even think of moving in. I protested the ridiculousness of this, having heard of and seen so many people move in and finish up the insides of their houses after. They agreed and told me everyone was up in arms about it--protest meetings, etc. against this new code regulation.

STRATEGIES

I told them my new idea to claim that I'd "leave out the loft" and then sneak it in and finish it later. They began to tell me "Oh, that's what everyone does!"--circumvent the fool codes. And away they went telling me lots of other ways to "beat the code" that everyone does!

After I left the office I went to Safeway where they were selling new "How to Build" encyclopedias (sneak perusal!) but the ones I needed weren't in yet. Dave had told me another trick: send for those Time/Life building books, peruse them and then send them back "refused".

I went on home. On the way my car radio broke into the song "Impossible Dream."

NEW TROUBLES

Heartened by all this, though, I rushed home to write up all this new news to send to Dennis. But there I found that my new neighbors that had moved in were so noisy it was impossible to work in my home studio I had set up. And it was no use to complain to the manager; they were well-to-do cronies of his. He'd just ask ME to move.

As I set to in despair to hassle all these set-backs into my arrangements for and early retirement and finally moving out of Vancouver, a wry thought passed through my head: But you are making history! Trying to build a small, cheap little cabin in the days of the '78 BIG LAND GRAB BOOM!

The ensuing days I began a hassle of trying to work out a work schedule and re-do my dream cabin into a code-conforming monstrosity. At the peak of my frustration and anger I stumbled on this article, which cheered me--my whole premise:

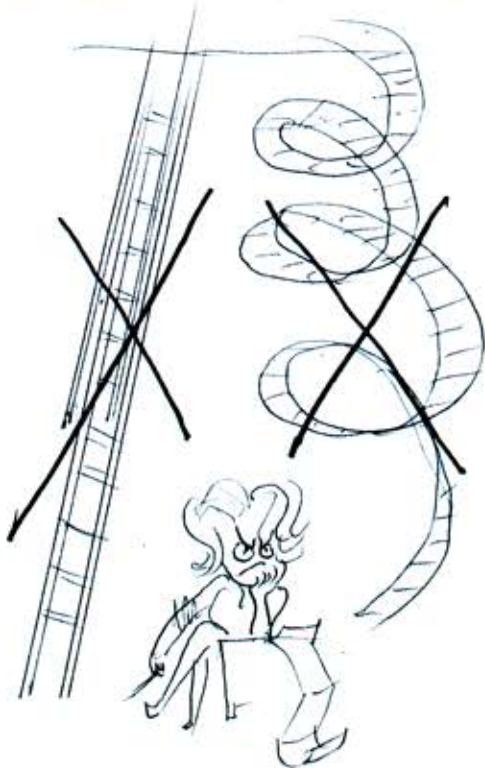
the destruction and putdown of originality and creativity by the "squares".

Also made me gloat--in paper: "Tight money! Clark County building boom fails!"

Working with all those new codes and rules they'd given me to "obey--or else!" I noted they'd all been changed in just the last few months.

And things like: code: "bedroom window must be big enough to crawl out of in case of fire." This despite fact that my plans show an outside exit door right beside window.

Then, hassling that stairway again. They'd suggested I use one of those new iron spiral ones. So, sighing, I called the place in Vancouver where they were making them. Discontinued. Gone out of business; couldn't meet new codes! Stairway! Despairway!



In **TOWARD A HISTORY OF NEEDS** (Pantheon, \$7.95)—five angry and outspoken essays, four of them previously published—Ivan Illich discusses the ways in which a technological society, geared to the mass production of goods and services, has succeeded in devaluing all human activity outside the marketplace. The result is a "modernized poverty" that leaves no room for individual autonomy or creativity. No one can survive without being a consumer. We are paralyzed by commodities, become customers, clients, an audience to absorb media opinions. We can neither grow food nor build a "legal" house using materials of our choice without professional interference. Professionals who support the ruling elite are partly to blame for this dreary state of affairs. A "priesthood of professions"—educators, doctors, social workers, scientists (we even have professional consumer protectors)—provides services it has decided we need, including the caring kinds of things people used to do for each other, and has made it illegal for anyone else to provide them. Whatever is unmeasured by professional standards is valueless. There appear to be no benefits whatever to our "industrial welfare" system. Illich is hopeful that organized minorities have begun to challenge such "imputed needs" as nuclear power plants. He advocates a sort of Greening-of-America/power-to-the-people social inversion that would enable people to decide for themselves what they needed: the right of equal access to raw materials, tools and utilities, "nonhierarchical, community-based competence." He stops short of explaining how he would take power away from those who have it without a bloody revolution.

TUESDAY, MAY 23--EVENING-Dennis calls. He hadn't gotten my letter yet, but he'd gone up to Snohomish County and talked to a young man in the office there. "All's well!" he cried. This young man had advised him to just "throw out the loft"--at least tell them you are going to. "And--I was right!" Dennis cried. "All they want is the STAMP! (re-do on the foundations). Guy said you can buy them for \$5. And he said he sympathized with how we feel about the county--that he'd been "outside" (on the other side of the counter) too. In civil service. (i.e. he knew the names of the games.) Yes, they'd been to the beach and he was all signed up for the University. And HE'D be going up to cabin but Abbie and the kids not going anymore. Lost interest."

I hung up feeling much better! Fools and their rules! It isn't that we are unable--I had it all figured out: it's that they won't LET us!

I went back to the drawing board, encouraged by that small go-ahead. I got the stove worked out. And then I spent three days out of my crash deadline time trying to figure out the windows. Nobody, including Dennis, could understand why I was such a perfectionist about it all.

What difference does it make? That's not necessary, they all told me. "Why do you bother with that?" Dennis railed at me. "It'll work out--later," I had several reasons: 1--I LOVE that kind of work! 2--A lifelong dream. I'd never had a house of my own and here was an opportunity to do it and do it right! I wanted it just right! 3--I'd seen too much slipshod work, and cheating and people getting by with poor work and amateurs messing up important jobs--highways--name it. 4--We had a very cheap, rough plan to build by. My experiences with doing drawings for (any) kind of building had taught me how important scaling and precision are. 5--I didn't want to fail again--get up there and have them tell me again "No. No permit. It won't work. You can't pass code." But, most of all, much as it broke my heart to foul up all my careful work with THEIR way nit-picking I had to be able to prove that MY way WOULD work!

DESPAIR

FRIDAY, MAY 26--I talked to Dennis again. It was an unhappy talk, I trying to explain why I didn't have the stuff ready as he said he was going up to Snohomish county again. "But I'm LATE!" he cried. "This makes me a month late!" (What did he think I was? I thought.) "But you KNEW this was coming!" he went on. "Yeah, but not THIS bad." I protested and it was all I could do not to wail when he said "We'll put the loft through as an attic." (Oh no! not back to the drawing board again!?) He said he hadn't gotten the engineers' stamp yet. (And he was calling me slow!?) He said he was going to write to Yakima--to Abbie's dad (and see if he'd stamp our plans) but he didn't know if Mr. Osbourne would do it. (My heart sank.) Then, "Oh it will be ALL RIGHT! I'm sure he will." He said he was going up and get ready to pour the concrete for foundations that week end. "We'll have code (as he kept calling the permit) in a week!"

I hung up in despair.

Then, looking at the calendar I realized Memorial Day week-end gave me a reprieve? Hoping it would help to rush things through I began wrassling a "very assertive" letter to Snohomish county explaining that we were "forfeiting the loft" etc. etc. and getting all I'd gotten done ready to send them. Not being good on assertion I agonized for days over that letter. I was just finishing it up and my packet all ready to mail---when---

MONDAY, MAY 28--MEMORIAL DAY--1 p.m. Dennis called. He wanted me to send the stuff to him, not to Snohomish county, and HE'D go up with it. And then he began working on me again--I must move up there--find someplace--get out of Vancouver--closer--until the cabin built. (An impossibility I'd long since quit trying to explain to everyone.) He seemed all excited. Send the stuff to him and HE'D go up! "I'M BUILDING!" he cried. I agreed to send the stuff. "The ferns are growing back in again!" he cried. "Ya can hardly get IN there again!" "Great!" I cried. "I gotta get up there. Uh--how's Abbie?" I ventured. "You--guys all 'involved'?" "Oh yeah. Bad year, but NEXT YEAR! (Wow!) Gonna quit work and take a month's vacation!" he cried. (June, he meant: work on cabin.) He sounded very happy, whereas I-----

hung up and spent a couple of days raging and seething. I felt as if all my work--things--had just been taken out of my hands. And I simply could not make the kids understand that I couldn't make--afford--another interim move, especially in that time of exorbitant rents and but nobody! could find housing. If I managed, move-wise and financially, the cabin move (my last of about thirty) I'd be doing well. The moving costs, alone, would break me. Whereas I had that nice, nice triplex there in Vancouver, now.

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Tuesday I mailed Dennis my packet.

JUNE

SUNDAY, JUNE 4-- I called Dennis. Abbie answered. They'd all been sick with the flu. "Oh yeah. Things were 'all right'!" Dennis came on. He hadn't gone up to the land on week-end. Meant to go today, but decided not. Hadn't gotten the stamp yet, but would start pouring next week. Expressed doubts about Abbie's dad and the stamp but hadn't talked to anyone else. No, he hadn't sent the stuff to Snohomish county. "But, Dennis! they have to have a week to review!"

He got kind of cross, insisted he was just going to go ahead, Sno.Co. or not. "But won't that get us in trouble?" He got sharp with me, said I was making problems when there weren't any; that I was being stubborn; that I wouldn't move back up there now. That that would make it all so much easier. I could just rent a little farmhouse and move all my stuff into it.

"I can't explain now! On long distance!" I wailed. "There's more to moving than---one has to give a month's notice and---I don't WANT to move TWICE---" "I've done some moving," he snarled. He didn't like my camping idea. "Oh, I'll talk some other time," I begged off. He said he'd let me know about the middle of the week---maybe about Wednesday.

THURSDAY, JUNE 8-- After 10 p.m. (Our new arrangement--cheaper calls) Phone. Dennis. He sounded quite chipper and confident but warned me he had bad news--sort of--. "Abbie's dad can't do it--the stamp. He's retired, sold the business and under a 6-year "can't practice" order. So there won't be any malpractice," Dennis said blithely, as if that the usual thing. "He was willing to, but we'd just 'missed the boat' on timing. His suggestion was that we get ahold of a DOT engineer that had friends in Sno. Co. (What I'd been TRYING to do!) "What's a DOT engineer?" Dennis asked. "Oh, Dept. of Transportation," I said grimly, for that was the second miss on timing. I'd explained to him that it was too late for me; I'd lost all my connections and didn't mention his former scorn of my "pulling strings."

But Dennis seemed undaunted. "Oh, we'll do it! It's just that I have to change plans--more digging--" "And more money," I put in drearily. "Oh yeah--" "And late--" I added. But Dennis didn't sound beaten. In fact he sounded excited. He said he was taking time off work--two weeks in August--"It'll be spring before---". "Yeah," I said, wearily. "Yeah."

Dennis had more knowledgeable lingo than when I'd talked to him last--as if he'd been talking to profession people? "If I could only talk them into two stringers--" "Hunh!? You mean they wanted FOUR sides to that foundation?" "Oh yeah." He sounded surprised I didn't know. "On an A-frame?" I asked, disbelieving. "Oh yeah. I can do it, but more digging and change of plans." I was stunned. I couldn't believe they wanted us to put in an "acre" of concrete for that tiny cabin.

"How long before you do this--confrontation?" I asked. "Oh next week." "Well, I feel so helpless--" I began. "Why?" "Well, I can't DO anything until I KNOW!" "Why, there's no problem--" "And we're late." "We should have started this--" I bristled and changed the subject to telling about my sharp DOT assessor friend, Jeanne Moore. "SHE understands!" "Well--I should have started checking those plans--" He backed down. So did I.

I began to thank him profusely. "You're learning! We were babes-in-the-woods. Now you'll know when you do your house." "Yeah," he breathed. "Yeah." I reminded him the call was costing him money, checking to see if anything else. "You cheer me up," I lied. "Love--and thanks." We hung up.

Somewhere, sometime in there I'd said, "If nothing else, I'm gonna come up there and CAMP!" THIS time he said, "Ok."

MONDAY, JUNE 12-- I called Bruce from home the first thing in the morning. I told him how mad we were about not getting the stamp yet. I asked him if he'd talked to Bob Elderkin to see if he could. No. He hadn't. But if I'd give him my number he'd call me back. "Ask him if he can stamp or knows anyone in Sno. Co. who can," I asked. "Ok," Bruce said. It was awhile before anyone was available. Then Bruce said Bob said "No" to both questions, but there was an architect in Hazel Dell (local suburb) I might go see.

Grimly, I got ready and set out on that odyssey. I went to the office and had long catch-up talks with about ten friends there. Then sought and found that architect.

THE ARCHITECT--was a personable young man. It was a joy to talk to someone with know-how and sophistication after those Sno. Co. people. And it was a joy to hear him voice that truism about engineers and exactly what my premise about Linda's predjudice against A-frames had been. "They only think in squares," he said. "Anything exotic (sic) they panic." He went on, after looking at our plan, "There's everything here, measurements--the whole bit. Nothing wrong. All they want--they have to--" He went and dug out samples--" they HAVE to file the STRESS FACTOR." No, he couldn't help us--he tied up with the state (why Bob sent me to him). All he could do was give me names of architects to go see. I left, feeling vindicated, and went back to the office to thank Bob and report to everyone.

BOB: Bob's office was in VIP hall. I had no desire to go there. In fact I'd been ordered to stay out of after the hideous turmoil of my resignation battle. I tried to send a message to have Bob come outside and talk to me, but he sent orders for me to come on back to his office. I ran the gauntlet of all those past enemy women. "You!" I grimaced at Bob, "I didn't want to come back here again--EVER!" Enigmatically, he merely gestured for me to follow him and led me back down the hall, down the stairs, past all the people and places of my battles and humiliations. The people all pretended not to see us.

"Where in the hell are we going?" I muttered. "Oh--no place--just--'talking'." On we went, he bowing me ahead of him and opening doors for me, until we came to the conference room, where he ushered me in, closed the door and turned on the lights., gritting through his teeth at me "We're looking for a place to TALK--away from BETTY!" (the top boss's secretary.)

"Well! Here I AM again!" I said. "I think I'll sit HERE!" I said and impishly started to pull out the "Chairman of the Board" chair at the head of the table. It resisted. "Well, I guess I won't". And I sat someplace else.

"Now tell me." Bob sat back seeming completely at ease and in no hurry. I was neither, but I launched into my story. Bob LISTENED.

"That's the story", I said, finally, hands outspread. "Thanks. I wanted you to know Del (the architect) was kindly--and sly, also. Uh---maybe you could help me here?" And I told him about Mr. Osbourne--the injunction on him. Bob explained. "When a guy sells, he sells his name, too. Sad but true."

It was late. If I were to miss the traffic mess in all that construction--- Again Bob started to bow me toward VIP hall. "No," I said, "I wanta see--" And we parted, I scurrying the dungeon way, past my old office and to friends and a phone attempt at Bishop, via Scan, but he was already gone.

I left the office and went to a nearby bar/restaurant Jeanne Moore had introduced me to and had one big victory martini before I went home.

AND CALLED THE KIDS and got Abbie. She'd been talking to consultants up there and had gotten the same reactions I had: No problem with our plans, and ridiculous, all that foundation for that little building. And also ridiculous--all that stress fuss on that little thing. (I believe the stress was on ME?) "Oh yes," she said. "Bishop had called and said he'd talked to a guy at the office, who also said 'no problem'. He said he'd help us out for \$50 if I could get up to see him. Yes, he'd left a name. Abbie and I made arrangements to talk later, after ten p.m.

I was jubilant! Vindicated! We'd BEAT Snohomish County! \$50? Welll---

DENNIS CALLED THAT NIGHT. And they filled me in some more. We were all three encouraged that it looked like we'd found some loopholes in the impasse Sno. Co. had presented us with. I lilted that our plans were all right! "We were right!" Yet, despite this, Dennis sounded a bit cross, said he'd "give it one more day." But I didn't know what he meant. The next day was the day he was supposed to go to talk to Sno. Co. again. Whether he meant one more day off work, or what, I didn't know.

JUNE 12, MONDAY-- The search for an engineer who could--or would--put his stamp on our plans thus far: Dennis and Abbie had, on their own, gone downtown in Seattle and contacted a free lance consultant. He was going to do it by mail to me down in Vancouver, but I figured the time and effort consumed I could find someone up there, closer.

So I had contacted Bishop. He had reported to Abbie that a man in the District #1 office there in Seattle did "moonlighting" and would help me---for a fee.

Dennis and Abbie's man downtown was not too sure he could help and he, also, wanted an (undisclosed) fee. My knowledge of consultants I knew it would not be small! \$50 sounded the better bet. Besides it was someone connected with people I knew. I'd have to make another trip up?

Would it be worth it? At the office Bruce had said about Sno. Co., "If they're giving you a bad time this far, they will continue to do so."

And where would I stay? That would be close to where I needed to be and not further deplete my fast diminishing cabin fund? Somewhere along in here in one of those talks with Bishop he'd offered me one of those apartments he now owned in Everett, one abruptly vacated, so I'd be closer to our cabin business. He said it was only a room. But I had to give up that idea, for there was no place to store all my stuff and the wood stove I'd bought.

CRISIS

MIKE CALLED during all this upheaval. They wanted to send Chris up to stay with me for awhile. Of all times! I had to beg out. I couldn't handle all I was involved in and a grandson who'd never visited me before. Besides I knew absolutely no young people at this stage of my life.

TUESDAY EVENING After Mike's call, I called Dennis. I started out to tell him about all the above. It turned out to be a very nasty call. He was cross and nasty, saying that I WOULDN'T do anything down there in Vancouver, so HE had to do it all. And I refused to move up there.

When he told me they were going to that consultant downtown I was terribly alarmed. I knew it would cost a great deal of money to see a private consultant. He wasn't going to get just the stress and the plans stamped, he was going to have the guy DESIGN it! "Someone who knows what Sno. Co. WANTS!" he cried. I was floored! No, he hadn't gone to Sno. Co. for that consultant he and Abbie were going to see they couldn't see for two days yet. No, he didn't even call the guy Bishop suggested. He just scoffed and threw out that whole contact, though I protested, "Look! that's our best bet!" Nope.

Why didn't I get a camper? he asked me. "A mobile home!?" "No! a CAMPER! so I could live on the land." "No place to put it," I said, and explained how the "driveway" we were using was county property, not ours. Besides, though I didn't bother to go into it, how in hell could I afford a CAMPER?! pay all the moving expenses (the State had moved me in my Highway transfers.), store all my stuff, etc. etc. when I could barely afford to build the cabin as it was?

When I broached my dilemma about Mike and Chris, he---wasn't interested. "Well," Dennis said, "I'll sit on it two days." (Before he'd even consider the Bishop offer.) I said I'd call him back the next night if I found out anything.

I hung up, furious! All that bitchiness was so unlike Dennis. I strongly suspected there were--"other fingers in the pie"? Also furious for--two--days I could have sent all that data off to Bishop and let Dick get started on checking it. I deeply resented the kids going ahead on their own without consulting me first. After all, it was MY money! and MY future life!

I paced furiously around my apartment. Standing in the moonlight streaming through the window, as if to mock me, stood my little 1½' high, delicate, white A-frame framework model I had worked so hard on--to scale. I almost picked it up and smashed it against the wall.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14--I went to the office, since I had xeroxing to do and to use Scan to call Bishop. When I got him he said he understood about Dennis. And told me to send the stuff to Dick and to Sno. Co. "I don't want to get mixed up in it, but--DON'T MOVE! That would be a crisis thing," he said.

And Bruce had said, when I was telling them that all this building venture was getting to be a family friction thing, "Look!" he said, "Dennis--while that guy's sweating this thing--I know when I was trying to build--I was a REAL BEAR! Just stay away from him!"

I finished what I had to do and flew home and got the stuff ready to mail and flew to the post office and mailed it.

THAT EVENING--I phoned Dennis. He was baby-sitting. "I'm sorry," I said--"last night--" and explained the best I could.

"That guy downtown", he said. "I talked to him. I don't think it will work out. He doesn't know what they want." "We'll use Bish then?" "Yeah."

"Dick--" I began. He bristled. "Look! I don't know these people! I can't wait on all these people! YOUR friends. I gotta do it my way!--I gotta go tend the kids--"

"Need a baby-sitter?" I joked. "Oh--how about Chris coming up?" he asked. "Well, I think I'm off the hook there." "He could come up here," Dennis prof-fered. "Noah is excited--thinks that would be fun to have Chris up here. He could help with the building--fetch and carry--that sort of thing--" "Well, we'll see," I said, and began my pitch again telling how Bruce under-stood and so on. He simmered down somewhat. "Well--I don't want to have to pay money to that guy downtown--I don't know about him--" "Well, give it a couple of days," I pleaded. We hung up on that bit of give and take.

I went into a period of recapitulation. My isolation from the scene of action was making things more and more difficult. I couldn't afford to keep wrang-ling with Dennis on long distance phone, and had about exhausted my risky mis-use of State Scan line at the office. Neither Bishop or Dennis would take time to write. Besides, the mails were too slow. It was impossible for me to make an extra move up there as Dennis wanted. I could understand his impatience and anger; he was taking more and more time off work, cutting down on their income. And, with a family to support, he could not afford to do this.

There was a point in how he felt; that he was taking time off work to do things that , free, should be doing. Things had to get moving--even if I couldn't! The only solution I could think of at that time was to make another trip back up there. And so I started figuring it out.

BUD AND PAULA: Maybe I could stay with them? Until I remembered they were in Germany, visiting a daughter. I phoned. No! they weren't going to Germany till fall, Paula said. "Why, of course! I could come and stay there! Anything they could do to help! They had an extra key and I could use it to come and go as I pleased while they were at work. "Fine!" "Well, I'll be there Tuesday---maybe." "Well, don't bother to call again. If you show up--fine; if you don't--fine."

I scurried around getting ready for another trip. This one would be a dress-up business trip.

SUNDAY, JUNE 18--I called Dennis. He said it was ok about my coming up, but he had accomplished nothing. he said that all the engineers Abbie had called would not touch that job. And the one guy they tried had begged out. No, he hadn't been up to the land. Nothing done up there. Abbie's child-care job called off for two weeks and they going to use the time to paint the living room, so my having another place to stay worked out fine, we see. I wouldn't be in the way.

MONDAY I went to the office again to call Bishop and see if I could eke out any more help from my friends there. I was very depressed. At that time things seemed almost insurmountable. Bishop said he'd talk to Dick and call me back. When he did, "Now don't get upset," he said, "but Dick can't do it. He's too busy, but he has an architect friend who might be able to do it if it not too expensive for us. They thought maybe we could cut down on the expense if I would do the drafting; that Dick had said they don't do things like that plan of ours anymore; he'd suggest some changes in the foundations."

I thanked him and said I'd talk to him when I got up there. I hung up broken-hearted. Another blow. The guys were all nice and said they felt sorry for me; it was too bad.

Bruce called Grover's for me to get their price on temporary electrical circuits. They weren't any cheaper than the ones Dennis and I had found up there. Re-lieved of that errand, I left and went and had the car checked and went on home, very, very sad.

I began to pack, my little model looking even more will-o-the-wisp again in the moonlight. How I dreaded telling Dennis this new bad news.

TRIP NORTH

TUESDAY, JUNE 20-- The day was clear and sunny. It would be hot driving. And it was hot in Seattle when I got to the University district, where Bud and Paula live, about 1:15 p.m. Paula had told me to come over to the Children's Orthopedic Hospital nearby, where she worked and get the key. It turned out to be quite a chore as no parking around hospital, I had to walk down and then a long wait for her. She gave me the key and said Bud would be home at 3.

We had a nice evening; talk, drinks, a good dinner and then out to visit Wendy and Norm. I'd called Dennis and let him know I was there. Two things that evening: the fact that Norm's father was a well-known architect in Seattle (and we were looking for one) didn't click. It was a children-busy visit. Bud pointing out in Seattle paper an article about stiffening "rules" (like codes) a way community administrations had to keep outsiders from invading their territory. I thought of Snohomish County.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21-- I got up and went down to District One. Was tired, tired, tired when I got back to Bud and Paula's that night. It was a very full, frantic and busy day. All that driving I did in all that traffic! But I guess it was a successful day.

BUSINESS!

At District One it was kind of like old home week, though so many of my old cronies gone. We went and talked to Dick. There was a lot of waits and phone calls while he tried to get ahold of his architect friend to make us an appointment. When he finally did I was shattered to find his office was right near Bud and Paula's, where I'd just COME from!--all that traffic to go through again!

I thought, since this was the re-design of the foundations that Dennis should go with me. I had a hell of a time contacting him. He'd gone to work and I had to call him there. And they couldn't find him! I was nearly crazed as the time for our appointment drew nearer and nearer and Dennis still hadn't called me back.

When he finally did call, he was as frantic as I and gave me wild directions about where to pick him up at Sear's huge plant in the industrial district. He said he'd had a hard time getting off work. So it was rush! rush! rush! and THEN--- I, unfamiliar with Seattle after so long, made a wrong turn and ended up clear downtown and had to find my way back. My mind was crazed, and Dennis was UPSET! He'd been waiting and waiting! We tore out to the U district, I driving, tho Dennis had wanted to. I was just too mixed up to let go the reins at that point.

We found the architect's office at last. It was one of those refurbished small shops right on the main avenue going to Bud and Paula's--a mere three or four blocks from their house!

He was a nice, handsome, personable young man, quite self-assured and quite condescending (this was, after all, a very small job!) I was dressed in my best "interview" clothes. Dennis was in work grubbies (he worked in the warehouse) The young man and his office--he was there alone, his partner not there--tended toward successful and--arty looking.

I called him condescending. Well, he was--to me. He waved me off with a supercilious smile as if I just a silly little old lady and talked exclusively to Dennis. I sat there and seethed, especially when he announced that, no, he couldn't let me do the drafting; against his license rules.

He and Dennis thrashed out small changes in the plans, he agreeing to, and approving of Dennis's way with some small changes. Yes. For fifty dollars. I gasped. But he assured me, coolly, that that was cheap!

He would have the plans all ready and stamped by Friday. We could come and pick them up. I wrote him a check. (There was something about having Bud pay him--I don't remember why, but I paid Bud back.) and we left.

We went back to Alki, I again making a traffic mistake and going clear out of the way on the way back. It was a wild day! They wanted me to stay for dinner. So I did. Everyone was very happy and elated. "Dennis thinks we're on our way!" I wrote in my diary.

It was late when I drove back to Bud and Paula's that night, and they had been to a play, but stayed up wanting to hear about my day.

"Not Bartel!" Paula cried, referring to his partner. "I wouldn't trust him as far as I could see him!" meaning I know not what. We didn't discuss it. I was very, very tired and just wanted to go to bed. Only later I found out Bartel who worked in that office was their neighbor, it seemed. What a roundabout chase that engineer's stamp had turned out to be!

MORE BROUHAHA

THURSDAY JUNE 22—A mix up began as to where I was to stay the rest of my visit. Paula assumed I was going to stay there and the kids wanted me to come out to Alki. I finally told Abbie I'd come out there that afternoon and baby sit so she could finish painting. Then we'd see.

Meantime I used up most of the day running around buying gifts for everyone at District One--thank you gifts for guys that had helped. And when I went there to distribute them it was like old home week again and it was late and rush hour traffic before I got away from there. And, again, I fouled up trying a dis-remembered back route and it was very late before I got to the kids--too late to be of any help.

It was a bad evening. I finally agreed that I'd come back there and stay and we'd go up to the land again--maybe, but I'd go back to Livesley's again, and explain and stay that night and pick up the plans from the architect's the next day and be back. So I headed back to Livesleys' trying to get there before ten p.m., their bedtime. There I found Paula had gotten a roast and planned a big Livesley family dinner the next night!

FRIDAY, JUNE 23--his was the day we were to get the plans--finally! Bud and Paula went to work. I got all dressed up to go and get plans, but called first, after Paula's warnings about those guys. My fears proved out. "Sorry. They weren't ready yet. His partner, the engineer, didn't get back to ok them. They wouldn't be ready till Monday."

I called Bish--to cry on his shoulder. He was nice but "too busy to talk." I got on the phone. How were we going to get the plans picked up? Paula suggested maybe Bud could get them for us Monday, in case I wouldn't be able to. I also wanted to check on these guys I was dealing with--the plans. Finally, Dick called me back--insisted the guys were ok--was very nice.

I went out shopping for a map Abbie said Dennis wanted and that evening, went back to stay at Alki, where I ran into questions and frictions about our week-end plans.

FAMILIES: Though it was never quite clear to me just what was going on, it seems one of Abbie's sisters had moved back to the northwest--coastal area--and she was going to be tied up visiting them on the week end--or something. Thursday the kids had dealt me a new blow, too. In August, Dennis' only building time, they said they'd made plans to take a vacation and go back for a visit in Couer D'Alene, where they'd lived once and they had very definite plans to move away from the coast and go back to eastern Washington. This was a blow, for I thought they'd be near me if and when I moved up into the cabin. These personal and long-range plans of theirs involving people and Abbie's (huge!) family I hadn't been aware of.

SATURDAY, JUNE 24--We did go up to the land. But it wasn't a very happy trip. We were all cross and at odds with each other. Abbie was restless and edgy about getting back at 3 to catch a call from her sister. We didn't take any tools or food. I had to leave my car and go in theirs. I bought gas for them (though my purse was sure running low this trip!) At first it was kind of fun, but then it seemed that I was just keeping an eye on the kids while Dennis and Abbie worked on --a shelter? or something--off in woods--We were all cross and hungry by the time Abbie insisted we had to get back. I offered to buy hamburgers and we rode back crabby and in silence.

Back at Alki, Abbie started packing for her trip to take the kids and visit her sister. I just stayed out of the way and read.

"SIDE-TRACKS" and "DETOURS" on CABIN-BUILDING TRIPS, con't.

SUNDAY, JUNE 25-- they all left early to catch the ferry. Dennis was going to drive them down and leave them and be back by "late afternoon." But he didn't get back till after seven. Meantime, alone, bored, restless, waiting, and thinking to help, I pitched in and worked my head off cleaning house and yard, which were all in a mess! (Months later Dennis was to tell me that Abbie had cried; I had insulted her housekeeping.)

Dennis was quiet and a bit cool when he got back, and I felt tired and discouraged, but we got to working on cabin plans that evening.

MONDAY, JUNE 26-- This was the day they were supposed to have the plans ready for us. I was running out of time--and money--and---? I'd have to head back for Vancouver Tuesday. And someone would have to take those revisions up to Sno. Co. IF we got them. Dennis went off to work, leaving, I believe, a number where I could reach him.

I kept trying to call the architect. (Coincidence that HIS name was Norm! too.) It was three p.m. before I reached him. The plans were ready! Would be \$75!! (not \$50!) "They should be ok," Norm said. "I don't know what they (Sno. Co.) are trying to pull, but if they're not ok, let us know and we'll take care of it."

I called Dennis and got him and told him the GOOD NEWS!

I called Bud who said he'd go over and get them for me, since I wasn't sure I could make it out there before they closed. He was kind of curious, anyway, to see this place and meet this guy. He said he'd write them a check and then I could pay him. So I said I'd be out there later to pick them up.

I called Bishop at work to tell him the good news. But they said he'd hurt his back and was at home. I tried several times to call him there, but there was no answer. I never did get to talk to him.

So. Then I got on the phone and transferred funds from my bank to Seattle branch and then got dressed and flew up to the nearest shopping district to cash a check and shop for celebration dinner! I bought steaks and wine and french pastries and left a note for Dennis under a bowl of (their) roses on the kitchen table and set off for the U district.



We celebrate!

(if I make it back.)

I look in frig I

I'm "taking you out to dinner" —

DENOUEMENT

Ensued a wild time. I was so excited! At last! We'd solved our problem! I raced in all that rush hour traffic to meet Bud. But I really didn't care whether I met him at the architect's firm or not. Let those two city sophisticates play their own little prestige games. In fact, I stalled, stopping to buy me an ice cream cone and then went on to the house.

He wasn't there! And the house was all locked up!

I went to the neighbor's and asked if I could use the phone and called Paula. "Call the spa," she said. He goes there for work-outs. He had to leave early to go get that thing." She told me to go sit in the back yard and read the paper--that she'd be home in about an hour--about 4:30.

Oh, I was so anxious to see those papers! To see what they'd done!

I called the spa. Bud was there, the rat! He said Norm wouldn't give him the papers until he had his money, so he'd written him a check--no problem. And that the papers were IN THE HOUSE.

I refused Paula's neighbor's offer of refreshment and flew over to the house. There was no newspaper. I sat out in the back yard FUMING! and hot! What we'd tried so hard for behind those locked doors! Besides all this was making me late. I was anxious to get back to my celebration dinner with Dennis.

AT 4:20 I couldn't stand it--the waiting. I was crying. I decided to go down and pick up Paula.

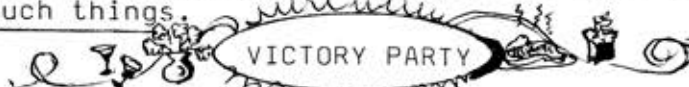
ADVERSARIES

I contacted Norm again, angry about that jump from \$50 to \$75. He was quite short with me. "After all! There were very tricky engineering problems involved and you got off easy! And--to do it Dennis's way--the foundations shown on his plan--was going to be much more expensive! Stronger beams, deeper supports, --etc. etc." I didn't even bother to argue for it was a long story, the rivalry between engineers and different bureaucratic agencies.

Now even Norm was asking: Why is Sno. Co. making such a fuss over this little thing? Why are they giving you such a bad time? The relations between CIVIL engineers and agencies was not. They all into the same public coffer. Counties vied with State and so on. District One vied with District Four and so on. District One vied with Snohomish County. I was a "District Oner". Each trying to prove We! are better engineers than You! Silly--but, I fear--true.

Later, Bishop agreed with me.. He knew what I meant.

This little finale rather put a damper on my celebration plans, but I knew better than to bother Dennis with that angle of it. AT THAT TIME he wasn't interested in such things.



I made it to Alki in time. There was just Dennis and I. He'd come home from an 8 hour day of manual labor and had started working on painting window frames. Then, as we toasted our victory he got obsessed with trying to figure out the mathematics Norm had thrown at him, the stresses and angles, etc. etc.

"Oh, I can't figure it!" he cried, distressed. "Try algebra. Geometry," I said, getting a bit impatient with this. "Oh yeah!" And back he went to his calculator and calculations until I said, "Oh come on, Dennis, it'll come to you in the morning! Let's eat!"

The food was good. We enjoyed. "How are we going to get this up to Sno. Co.?" I asked. "Oh. Abbie called. She's changed her mind. Instead of staying till Saturday, she wants to come home Thursday. I'll take it up to Sno. Co. on my way to go get her." "Oh."

We had our party and fell into bed.

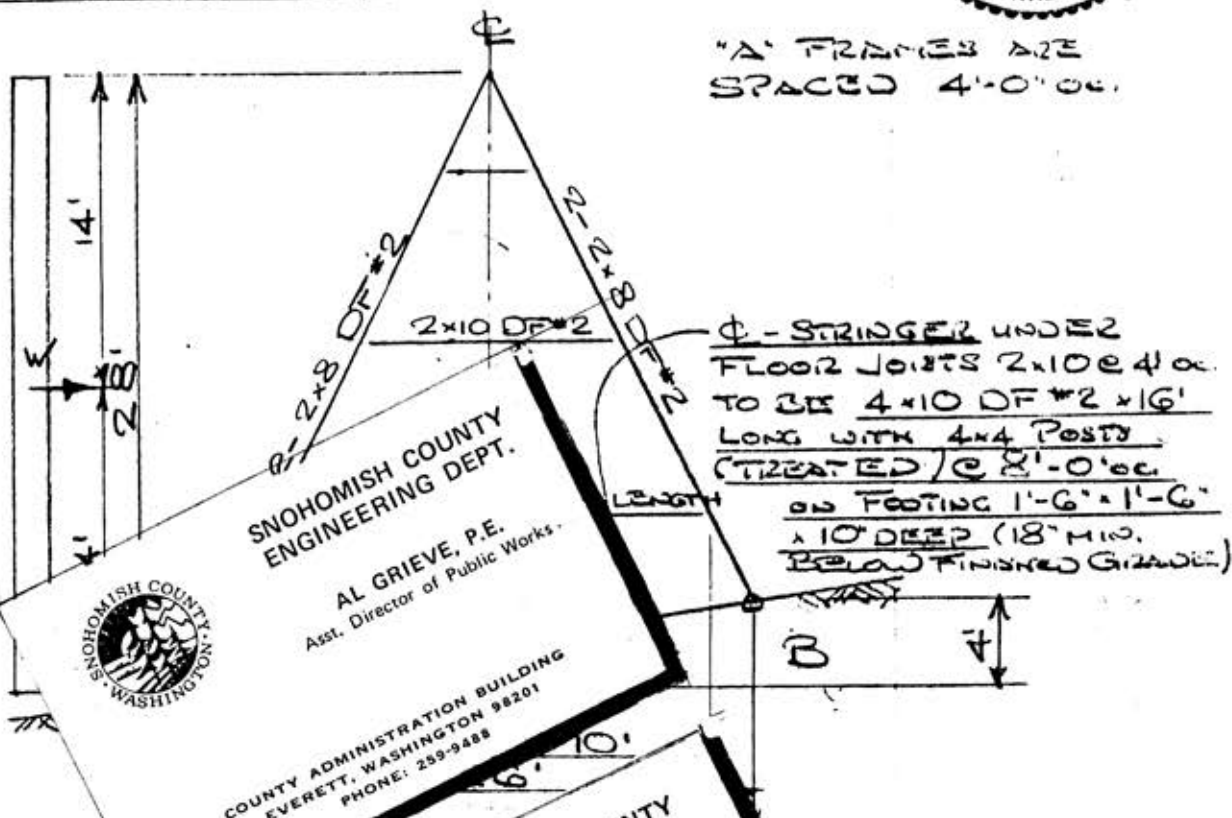
JUN 78

39-48

BY JFE DATE 6/24/78 SUBJECT FOUNDATION DESIGN
 CHKD. BY DATE FOR 'A'-FRAME CABIN

SHEET NO 2 OF
 JOB NO.

ENDERLEIN ASSOCIATES
 CONSULTING ENGINEERS & PLANNERS
 4618 WALLINGFORD AVENUE NORTH
 SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98103, U.S.A.
 TELEPHONE: (206) 633-1199



"A" FRAMES ARE
 SPACED 4'-0" o.c.

Φ - STRINGER UNDER
 FLOOR JOISTS 2x10 @ 4' o.c.
 TO BE 4x10 DF #2 x 16'
 LONG WITH 4x4 POSTS
 (TREATED) @ 8'-0" o.c.
 ON FOOTING 1'-6" x 1'-6"
 x 10' DEEP (18" MIN.
 BELOW FINISHED GRADE)

2 TYPE

WIND PRESS

REACTION
 $R_w = 1$

HORIZONTAL
 $H_A = 1/3$

REACTION
 ROOF

FLOOR

DEAD WEIGHT

(EXCLUDING

$R_{VDL} = V_A$

$H_A \times R = V_{Bw} + V_{Bd} = 1.21 + 1.52 = 2.73 \text{ k}$ PER FRAME @ 4'-0" o.c.
 OR $2.73 \text{ k} \times \frac{1}{4.0} = 0.70 \text{ k/1}$

MIN. FOOTING WIDTH $D_{MIN} = \frac{0.70 \text{ k}}{2.0 \text{ ksf}} = 0.35'$

SNOHOMISH COUNTY
 SCOTT SCHULTZ
 Chief Inspector
 (BUILDING)
 SNOHOMISH COUNTY BUILDING DEPARTMENT
 EVERETT, WASHINGTON
 259-9388 259-0631

LINDA WILCOX -
 Head Plan Reviewer

CABIN $1/8" = 1'-0"$

$\times 28' = 2.24 \text{ k} / \text{FRAME}$

$\times 1.40 \text{ k} / \text{FRAME}$

$\times 2.40 \text{ k}$

$\times 0.64$

3.04 k PER FR.

$1.52 \text{ k} > R_w = 1.21 \text{ k}$

2.73 k PER FRAME @ 4'-0" o.c.

$\approx 0.70 \text{ k/1}$

Engineering Feat

TUESDAY, JUNE 27-- Dennis got up. "Hey! It's clear as clear! All I have to do is---" He began to scribble frantically. "How come I didn't think of that last night? How come I got so mad last night?" I kidded him about "straight and lateral thinking"--from Edward de Bono book of mine--but he'd never gotten around to reading it. "Hey! would you call Norm and ask him some questions for me?" He was still puzzling over some of those figures. "Sure. Sure", I said and while he stormed around I picked up the phone and called Bishop. "I'm leaving," I said. "I'll call you later." "You're leaving!?" Dennis cried. "Yep."

Dennis went off to work. I called Norm and asked him what Dennis wanted me to. "No problem," he said. When Dennis called I told him what Norm had said. "You mean--I can START!?" "Yes!" His voice sounded quiet, awed.

I was left alone in the house. Some great urge gripped me. I flew out still in my robe and nightgown and began to clean out the garage. (Oh what a mess!) I was hurrying so that I cut myself and blood flowed--and so did tears as I found tools and mementoes left from Ed's demise.

It was almost noon before I finished, getting involved with "Jennie Belle" neighbor. "My! you've certainly worked over here!" she intruded. "Yeah. Yeah."

I went in and was busy on phone.--farewell--sum ups. To Bishop: "Highway shenanigans," I said. "King County vs. Snohomish County!" "Yeah!" he said.

I was exhausted. I ate and took a little nap. By 1:45 I was ready to leave. But I was still SO hot! and tired! And my shoulder hurt like hell. Bursitis again? And I had that long drive ahead of me.

It seemed odd to have no family to wave me farewell. Only Jennie Belle and her (mulatto) daughter, Callie. Well. "All's well that ends well." I left the house and yard all clean; tools hung--first clean out since Ed's death--and "mission accompli" on cabin----

I drove down to the beach before I set out, wondering which route I should take out of Seattle. I took the wrong one? for--notes--"traffic problems--West Seattle bridge broken--ship hit it--" I just wanted that trip over with. It was very hot.

TRIP HOME

All the memories on that long drive-- I drew off at the rest area at Toutle Creek and fell fast asleep.

I got home about 6 p.m. Took me four hours.

The peace, privacy and luxury of my nice triplex was very inviting. I fell into bed.

"I DID IT!" said the little red hen!

JUN 78

(41)

THURSDAY, JUNE 29--Phone. Dennis. HE GOT THE PERMIT! "No problem," he said, but took him an hour. He talked to the same guy he's talked to before. No loft I guess, for young man advised him to forget it "for the time being." "But--simple!" he said. (We can add it later.) "All paid. Yes, he got Abbie and the kids." We finally hung up because of phone bill, though I wanted to go on triumphing. I wanted to celebrate, but there was nobody to celebrate with. I had no luck trying to get Mike. So I just spent the day wandering around in a kind of let down daze.

Dennis told me: that our plans were all rolled up at Sno. Co. with date "May 1" on them and a note that said "needs foundation revise." Only that. He also said they didn't give him any money back for eliminating the loft. Odd, for permit cost based on living space square footage and no loft cut down on ours.

And other things I pondered in that whole process struck me as--peculiar. And it was odd Norm saying "This is an unusual case! We are quite interested in it."

GLOAT

FRIDAY, JUNE 30-- I went to the office and gloated! Ran around telling everyone "WE GOT THE PERMIT!" Seems like everyone that had been cool and evasive before now popped out of the woodwork to congratulate as if a victory of their own.

That evening I called Mike, but was unable to get. So I called Dennis, for once, just a social call. He began rattling off mathematics for cabin at me. "Oh I'm getting a bit weary of this," I hinted. "So am I," he said. "I think I'll take a couple of days and just goof off." "Let's," I said.

And I went to a fancy "luau" party friends had invited me to. And Dennis went to goof off on vacation.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------|---|----------|-------------------|--|------------------|---|---|----------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| NOHOMISH COUNTY-COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BLDG. VERETT, WASHINGTON 98201-259-9388-259-0631 | | | | | | | | | | BUILDING PERMIT | | 87440 | |
| OWNER Lorna Chambeau, 3607 N.E., 45th. St., Vancouver | | | | | | | | | | BY cg | | SEWER PERMIT NO. clear | |
| JILDER same as above | | | | | | | | | | CONTRACTOR'S LICENSE NO. 695-7116 | | TYPE OF | |
| SITE LOCATION: 28526 - 105th. St., Monroe | | | | | | | | | | NOTE: NO PLUMBING WILL BE APPROVED PRIOR TO INSTALLATION OF PERMANENT POTABLE WATER TO BUILDINGS AS PER SEC. 318(1) (M.U.P.C. AS AMENDED) | | NO. | |
| RT. | SEC. | TWP. | RANGE | LOT | BLOCK | ZONE | SUB DIVISION/SHORT PLATT | | LOT SIZE | | AIR | | |
| | 24 | 28 | 7 | 30 | | RU | Sultan Estates | | | | REV | | |
| NEW RESIDENCE <input type="checkbox"/> BASEMENT <input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSORY BUILDING <input type="checkbox"/> GARAGE <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | MINIMUM REQUIRED SETBACKS | | | | GA | | |
| CARPORT <input type="checkbox"/> ADDITION <input type="checkbox"/> REMODEL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PLUMBING PERMIT REQ'D | | | | | | | FRONT | | 50' from c/l of ex r/w | | FO | | |
| OTHER <input type="checkbox"/> NO. BEDROOMS _____ <input type="checkbox"/> FURNACE PERMIT REQ'D | | | | | | | SIDE | | 5' total 10' | | FL | | |
| SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: | | | | | | | REAR | | 25' min. | | UR | | |
| | | | | | | | DISTANCE FROM OTHER BUILDINGS: (6FT. MIN.) | | ACCOUNT NO. 3965-000-030-0001 | | BY | | |
| | | | | | | | 16TH SEC. # | | 7th | | PLAN CHECK RECEIPT # | | |
| | | | | | | | | | pd | | IN | | |
| MANDATORY INSPECTIONS | | | | | PLAN NO. | | TYPE OF HEATING: | | | | | | |
| FOUNDATION | | FRAMING | | BLOG. DIMENSIONS | | GAR. CRPT. DIM. | | STORIES | | BASEMENT | | BUILDING PERMIT FEE | |
| | | | | 28 x 30 | | | | 1 | | 12no | | \$ 64.00 | |
| H/WALLBOARD | | FINAL | | SQ. FT. MAIN FLOOR | | SQ. FT. 2ND FLOOR | | SQ. FT. BASEMENT | | | | PLAN CHECKING FEE | |
| | | | | 560 | | 240 | | | | | | \$ | |
| BUILDING TO BE USED FOR | | | | I CERTIFY THAT I AM EXEMPT FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATE CONTRACTOR'S REGISTRATION LAW, UNDER SEC. 3, CHAP. 126, LAWS OF 1967. | | | | VALUATION | | P.T. # | | PENALTY FEE | |
| Cabin | | | | | | | | \$12,240. | | | | \$ | |
| LICANT'S SIGNATURE | | | | DATE | | | | CK 802 | | TOTAL FEE | | | |
| <i>Lorna Chambeau</i> | | | | 6/29/78 | | | | \$ 64.00 | | | | | |
| | | | | <i>* Dennis Chambeau</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| PERMIT IS ISSUED PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 19-27 R.C.W. AND TITLE 17 OF THE SNOHOMISH COUNTY CODE. PERMISSION IS HEREBY GRANTED TO DO THE WORK DESCRIBED HEREON ACCORDING TO THE APPROVED PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS PERTAINING HERETO, SUBJECT TO COMPLIANCE WITH ANY ORDINANCES OR ZONING RESOLUTIONS SNOHOMISH COUNTY. CONSTRUCTION MUST START WITHIN 120 DAYS AND FIRST INSPECTION CALLED FOR. OTHER PERMIT BECOMES NULL AND VOID. BUILDING PERMIT EXPIRES 18 MONTHS FROM DATE OF ISSUANCE. | | | | | | | | | | | | BUILDER'S COPY | |
| JUNE 29 - 1978 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

IT!

JULY

SATURDAY, JULY 1-- The battle for our permit we'd thought we'd get in APRIL was over. Assured now that we were actually going to go ahead and build, I began to seek out and purchase things we might be needing. I became quite a scavenger. Like--happening on some building demolition I stopped and asked the men if I could salvage some of those sliding aluminum windows. "All spoken for, ma'm," they said. I saw a machete in a pawn shop window. I'd never been in a pawn shop, but I went in and bought it for \$10. No scabbard, though. It was getting to be fun.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5-- I visited the office again and called Bishop and told him about getting the permit and all. In the mail that day was a puzzling thing about a driveway permit from Sno. Co.

THAT NIGHT Dennis called. Seems he had to go through the motions of applying for a driveway permit, which was granted, even saying we didn't need a culvert. This pleased us both, although not very clear what it meant.

Then Dennis threw a couple of stunners at me: He wanted me to come up there and camp that week end! And seemed a little put out when I didn't exactly jump at it. But I had figured I'd go sometime in August. Meantime I'd have a few weeks to figure expenses and details of a long stay camping trip.

But he needed someone there to receive supplies he would be having delivered! I tried to explain to him that I had things to finish up before I could leave; the tentative visit of Chris; money settlements; camping supplies to figure. I suggested he ask the caretakers if they could manage to be there to receive supplies. But he wasn't too happy about that.

Another thing he wanted me to do was buy the temporary electrical pole there in Vancouver. "Oh, I bought a machete today!" Silence. Then realized I hadn't answered his question about where I wanted the tent.

I'd gotten the machete; for they had usurped the spot I had thought better for a tent than that cold, damp, slanty, root-infested place in cedar grove they'd put tent up before. The sunnier, flatter spot Dennis had rigged up a hasty, temporary storage shelter for tools and supplies rather cleverly out of small alder trunks and plastic he'd salvaged from work. The machete was to clear the salmonberry, sunny patch beyond as place for tent. But Dennis got to talking about something else and I never got to tell him. (This was to cause trouble later.)

"I expect to have the A's (rafters) up by August," he was saying. "It would really be easier if you could be up there." I---agreed. I said I'd call him Sunday and be "ready to go". "Well, I'll just go ahead without you," he said.

I hung up and started to cuss. That long drive. I didn't want to go up for just a few days and then come back and have to do it again. I no longer felt I could afford to stay in a motel, so it meant lugging a lot of stuff, sleeping on an uncomfortable cot, packing, unpacking, packing up again, unpacking, packing and a lot of things to get, check on, remember, take, do. Too rushed. It would be.

Another thing I wanted to get settled before I left was my Will I'd been to a lawyer about. It involved getting ahold of MIKE before I could finish, but they were off on a trip somewhere.

After the talk with Dennis I began to hassle and struggle with the details. Money. So far everything was staying within my means. Had invested \$1000. Still had maybe \$5000 left. Had given Dennis only \$250 so far. He was doing right well!

THURSDAY, JULY 6-- Decided. I called Dennis. "When do you need me?" "Wednesday." (ouch!) "Alert the caretakers---in case--." "OK! The tent--in the salmonberry patch--". "I've got machete. Don't worry. I'll sleep in the car, or--motel. All's OK! You're doing great work! Want me to drive on straight through--or stop by?" (I wanted to stop and get some of that canned food and picnic tools I'd left with them last trip, all neat and tidy and ready to be picked up--THEN-- but buried in cobwebs in that messy "garage" shed by now?)

"Oh, stop by," Dennis said. "OK." "I'll set up to pour the concrete on the 14th. Will make dates with inspector, etc." he said. "I'll be there!" I cried. "Count on me!" Dennis sounded so glad. We hung up. It was a short, decisive call.

I then began the preparation. Big things: I'd have to go shopping for that electrical circuit. Little things: I altered a wool shirt my sister had made for her ^{Son} to fit me. Work clothes. From now on I'd be more a field hand than a supervisor?

Doubts and disillusionment started creeping in: There would be no loft--the whole goal of my artist's retirement cabin. It seemed like all my money was fast disappearing to build a crass concrete monument to engineers in the woods instead of the charming (I'll show 'em!) place I'd dreamed of. Would there be any money left for the purposes and "pretties" I'd intended? Would the money run out so it's never get finished and just end up another "bummer" place--so unattractive no one would ever come to it? Would I end up there an ornery, bitter old woman instead of a happy retiree?

SHOPPING

FRIDAY, JULY 7-- I drew \$100 out of bank and went shopping. First, to Glover's, an out of the way building supply place where they had Do-It-Yourself help service, to buy the electrical circuit. That errand turned out to be a real hellier crisis leaving me shaking and upset before I even got there.

On the way a traffic scare that nearly gave me a heart attack. And then a big semi blocked my way into Glover's where was all mad rush and confusion when I did get in. But then a very nice young man waited on me and solved all my problems. Until we found we would have to dismantle that clumsy big thing to get it in my car. While he did that I tried to make sketches of how to put it back together again. After all that my hand was shaking by the time I wrote my check.

Haphazard shopping followed, things as I happened on them; a canned-heat camp unit! a big plastic bag to carry tools in; a folding lounge chair I could use as a bed; bug spray; arthritis aspirin--crazy fun shopping.

I went home, rested. Then washed and cleaned the car. Then I sat on my patio and stitched up a "scabbard" for my machete. I was so proud of it! until-- fool! withdrawing the blade-- I cut all my stitches!

Shopping at Glover's, I was surprised at the competitiveness in this new Do-it-Yourself racket this building boom had started. The guys were all grins and gloats that I found it cheaper to buy there than up north. And the discrepancies in codes and fees between different counties I found a bit baffling.

After all that shopping spree---

THAT EVENING: PHONE. DENNIS--"Sorry. I overspent. I need--hold your hat--\$100--fast! That rebar (steel reinforcement engineers forced us to put in) price has gone up----" (ooch.) I leaned on the counter. "Yes? and what else?" "And--uh--maybe--\$40 for gravel--and--uh--\$80 for cement--" etc. etc. Did I hear a weak yelp? "We gotta get it done--the way they say. We can't hassle it! Money we can't worry about--" (sound of whimper?) "Well--I--got--your electrical thing--not all of it, but---" "How much?" "\$60". "Good!" End of that call. And that day.

MONDAY, JULY 10-- I call the bank early and arrange for money to be transferred to kids' account. Finally get Abbie to tell her. She said they were up there on the week end. Dennis got four forms in. A lot of work! "You put how much in our checking account? \$200!? Wow!" No, they didn't put up the tent because it was raining. We hang up.

Afternoon I mail the stuff to Mike.

RUSH TRIP PREP

And then I begin puttering and fretting over packing and trip difficulties as radio plays that song, "Impossible Dream" and warns of a start of deluge weather after three weeks of nice weather.

Where am I going to sleep if the tent's not up? In the car? We have it cleared enough so that I can pull in off the cul-de-sac. No! If Dennis gets all that sand and gravel dumped there--- My mind's a whirl trying to figure it all out. How long will I have to be there? Will inspector come Friday? Be a chore clearing out that berry patch--Nice, though, to have been there--I'll know what I need--

by TUESDAY brain is a-roil and back is beginning to hurt--all I NEED! I concede that motel would probably be the best solution. I get on the phone, and, starting with AAA, make many calls only to find that there is nothing to fit my situation and needs, and it would all be terribly expensive. I give up on that.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON--I start to pack the car. I manage to get all that stuff in with the windows still clear enough to see out of to drive. Only three small bags to have to get in in the morning. No. Four. The other bag, ME!

Oh my aching back! And no good bed for one--two? weeks?

Old fuss-budget me. Everything in the car organized so I can put my finger on anything at a moment's notice. And everything for camping has carrying handles and is waterproof. I get so kidded about my--neatness? But, to me, it makes sense. I may seem neurotic to them, but others and their chaos seems neurotic to me. They're always snapping and snarling at each other because they can't find anything, or forgot something. I may come unglued organizing it all, but what peace when it's all straight and in order. It'll turn into a mess again. Always does. But then I can reorganize it again! So nice just ME and no family or husband or kids to worry about! Retired has its charms!

I get my hair washed and fall into bed, ready to go in the morning. I'll be so GLAD to get out of this housing development--a nursing home for the rich!

The last thing I see before I fall asleep is clear skies and the moon! And the last bit of news I hear: In Seattle they are turning apartments into condominiums. Little did I know what that was going to mean to me!

TRIP NORTH #???

WEDNESDAY, JULY 12--I leave for a camping trip out on our land.

The weather, of course, would be a very important factor, so, though it made for uncomfortable driving, I was glad to see the day hot and clear. So hot, in fact, that I decided the leftover eggs I had might not keep till I got to Seattle, so I stood in the kitchen and had fun throwing them all in the sink.

I turned on the ignition about 10:30 a.m. The radio was playing "Impossible Dream." I set out to start building the cabin.

I stopped in Olympia to see aunt Angela and delayed there waiting for my sister and cousin, Madeline and Phyllis, who never showed, though they were in town and said on phone they would. I went on.

I went in to Seattle the back way. Stopped in Des Moines for a sandwich and puzzled to see water flowing out of car radiator, but I went on. To the kids' And stayed there all night.

While there, I decided I'd go out in garage and look for the picnic stuff I'd left there. I'd asked Abbie where it was. She was vague--"Oh out in the garage, I guess." She came out later while I was bumbling around in that tumbledown shed full of black widow spiders and piled high with all Ed's and Dennis' and Abbie's discarded junk. "What are you doing?" she said. "Oh--just looking for---"

She started poking around in the mess. "Oh my! Here's Dennis' birth certificate! We've been looking all over! And--my old high school scrap book! Gee!"

I found the picnic stuff.

CAMPING TRIP

(from notes made at time.)

THURSDAY, JULY 13-- At land. I'm here! Hot--tired--car loaded "to gunwales". It's so quiet and silent and deserted and overgrown. The berries are ripening. The mountains view--breathtaking. I stopped en route and got ice and hastily selected possible material to concoct a toilet---

Evening. I am in absolute heaven! So happy! though sore and aching from driving, machete-ing, lifting and carrying. Decided not to pay \$14 for their stupid motel. Have made me a "little home" out of Dennis' shelter for tools. It's quite adequate! Got everything I need here--why pay for motel? Arm's too lame here and lantern and candle too dim to write much.

9:30 p.m.--And night has fallen. Am so happy! Just love this! Sort of a gloaming light; not dark. Got my camp all made and work done and then has myself a glass of sherry to celebrate. The weather turned out just perfect! What a mess this would all have been in bad weather. I'd told the kids when I left Seattle, :Oh, I'll figure out something. Don't worry."

The birds! As I folded up for the night, they were all like a chorale whose words were "Per diem! Per diem! Whadja get? Three--three--three--per diem!" (This a private association of my years with the Highway Dept. When traveling one got expenses compensation called "per diem"; equals a nice trip. Get it?)

THE "ENGINEER"

During the gloaming, I, giggling, set to on my little engineering chore of solving the problem of how am I going to go to the toilet in the woods? Thinking to build a little stool I'd asked Abbie and Noah for some of the scrap lumber left from Dennis' forms making. But seems Noah had plans for it. Well, maybe there'd be a lumber company in Monroe where I could beg or buy some scrap lumber. But no. Maybe a good strong cardboard carton? Ask at Safeway store. Nope. If good, return them. What to do?

Aha! Always the ultimate solution in a bind; the liquor store! Got a box in the alley, selecting one that happened to say "Tia Marie" on it. Giggled. (Oh "Aunt Mary"! If you knew what I am going to use you for!)

So. Here I am in the woods, whacking and cutting; sitting on the box and tracing my ass to get the hole the right size and shape--giggling like hell, wondering who designed the first toilet seat? who modeled for it?

Through, I wondered if it would hold my weight? It did. It was so comfortable I almost went to sleep on it. Then I noted a shipping warning label on it. "Glass be careful." Giggling, I got up and cut off the "G" and the "L"-- (ass, be careful)! Could hardly wait till kids come up so I can show them my joke! For---

The whole family's coming up for the week end! Not only Dennis family, but Bud and Paula--with a picnic! A breaking-ground party?

Groaning, I made one more trip out on path to lug things in, laughing. each time I carry a load in I notice I straighten the trail a bit more! Then, work done, I sit and gloat happily in my woods. I can see Dennis' belabored forms looming there. I get polaroid camera and try to take a picture with flash. Not work. Forms don't show.

I sit with lantern and candle going, wondering how long either will last? I am not used to this primitive lighting. I look about and realize that the new position of cabin they forced us into may result in east/west views I wouldn't have had in my guesstimate of position.

The moon rises. I go into "shelter" to bed. The "banana" chair folds up and catapults me onto the ground. I don't care. I'm happy.

FRIDAY, JULY 13-- 6:30 a.m. Strangeness hits my opening eye. Oh! Oh. I'm in my woods! Daylight and the birds have waked me, and it's another fine day! All's well! Everything is wet, wet, wet with dew, but I'm comfy and protected.

First thing my eye lights on is a moss covered tree trunk. Rain country! You're going to need that wood stove!--a ticking clock. How good it sounds! Been a long time. Get up? Have a lot to do today: clean out an area for gravel delivery at 1 p.m.; the inspector may come "anytime". Then I'll have to find a phone and call Dennis and Abbie and let them know what he says---but first--

I just snuggle back in sleeping bag until the sun hits in here and warms it up a little--and gloat and be happy about--Dennis' foundation forms. They are impressive. Look like little miniature cities. Wish it were possible to take some pictures---

Was I afraid in the night? My first night sleeping in the woods? Only once. There was a car revving up into cul-de-sac. I reached and unsheathed machete and put it to hand. And went back to sleep. Brrrr. As cold this morning as it was hot yesterday. The birds! Phewt! phewt! They are so friendly sounding. Who needs people?

9 a.m. That was fun! Getting up and dressing in the woods--clouding up? No?

11 a.m. Was working out by car. Inspector comes. A real nice guy. "Fine!" he says. "no problems! Go ahead!" (As I said a real nice guy!) Am so excited! I want to phone Abbie--try and catch her by noon and tell the news. But caretakers, the McNabbs, not home. I had to drive clear to Sultan store to phone. Got her. I tell her to call Bud and Paula. Cost me \$1.15. I go back. It's gotten hot again.

I wait for the guy to come with the gravel. He's 45 minutes late. Just a kid. Said he got lost, Seems like everybody does, trying to find this place. He dumps the gravel--carelessly--and leaves a mess--trees all ripped to hell and our path in blocked. I have to cut a detour, after all that work I did this morning to clear---

2:40 p.m.--Whew! I pause for a rest. The flies! Nearly eat me up! Bought \$5 worth of bug spray. No good. But I am so thrilled about our first building material delivery (the gravel) that I whimsically make a "birthday cake" out of the mound for Dennis has a birthday Monday. I put sticks on for candles and a Happy Birthday note.



Then, hot, tired, arm lame, dirty, fly bitten and bloody from briars, and car moved back off street and business done for day I decide maybe it's time to quit when I find myself taking an angry swing at a fly on my face--with the hatchet I have in my hand!

I give up and go back into camp. I fix some lunch, wash, get in my robe, spray (uselessly) with bug spray and take a nap.

My camp looked so peaceful and neat and beautiful when I came back in. I was so sorry my camera wouldn't take in that gloom under trees--that I would not have a record of before all those people come and it'll be a mess again.

After my nap, I sat and rested and tried to make notes. The kid with the gravel and the inspector being so nice took some of the cuss off our hassles with Sno. Co.----After all my slash! slash! slash! at those vicious blackberry vines, I found my city salivation for wild blackberry pie diminishing---

My bath. How does a city gal take a bath in the woods? Could anybody see me? Water was now no problem. The gal at the store had let me fill my water jugs in their rest room there. I began to bathe by inches--a "spit bath". Got braver and braver, until assured that no one was really around, I found myself running around half naked and barefoot in wppds. Fun! Just then there was a thrum of a motor and a helicopter hovered just at tree top level. "Voyeurs!" I cried.

I just took it easy the rest of the day, enjoying the sunset, the birds,

letting my arm heal and rest. The sky was beginning to lighten up a bit. The bugs didn't bother me after I washed the sweat and blood off. I fell asleep again.

11 p.m.-- I woke. The moon was just starting to show between the trees. One could feel the dew forming. Perhaps I'd better cover my food? I went to do so.

Then--I sensed something. Something was--there! My flashlight shown on an--animal! A little pup. Then I remembered. Abbie had said, "The neighbors have a pesky little pup." I decided this was a good time to test my argument to Dennis about only needing bright flashlights for protection. I shown it in his eyes. Drove him nuts! He kept trying to get behind it. Then he went.

I went back to my cot in what was to become known as "the shelter" and fell asleep again.

SATURDAY, JULY 15-- Dawn."Something" again. The pup again, lying beside me. I booted it off--me, once a dog lover.

Sleep--daylight. Clouds scudding in from west? Lay there--thinking--all that tree surround--saw a sign someplace--"111 acres for sale." Betcha! Subdivision or mall in a couple of years----

6:30 a.m.-- I get up. Wander around. Explore. Restless. About toilet time. Oh shit! That god damned dog again prowling around. So that's why things were scattered, fallen in camp? Chase. Squat. Toilet paper? Oh no! dog has made off with! It strewn all over woods! But I am unable to----move. Meantime, yelps and crashes--the pup is trashing my camp! I forfeit all and chase--furious! So much for toilet hour in the woods!

I don't have much time for cabin pondering; Abbie said they'd be here by ten. But--one thing--the enforced shift in cabin position, I'm not very happy about. Where will the front door be now? What I'd planned as service area (street side; to east) has now become the "front" door. And where I planned the real front door there is a big cedar tree--Well, no time to think about it.

10 a.m.-- I get into DAMP--yuk! clothes. And rush around. They said they are going to bring the cement---

About 11 a.m.-- They come. They haven't brought any food. Dennis has forgotten stuff he needs to work with. Abbie and I go store. Get gloves. (for Dennis.)--fried chicken--stock up on water. I spend money. [[Notes incoherent]] --cedar log--chips--D. wheelbarrow--all cross--no jokes---

Then--better. Noah and Abbie dig. Abbie and Noah go home. Dennis and Sarah stay. Dinner. We use my food. Make fire. Nice evening. I sleep in shelter. They have put tent up--for-- during night it starts to rain.

SUNDAY, JULY 16-- This was to be foundation day--the day we were going to pour the cement--Bud and Paula coming for picnic, but tragedy--rain! A downpour all night long. We ok, I sleeping in shelter and Dennis and Sarah in tent, but everything just soaked!

SUNDAY (later) was a very melodramatic day! Everything that could happen, happened--to the point where I told Dennis--"as if the "woods gods" were unleashing all their fury to keep him out? Seemed as if--the weather nice--until he comes and then ceaseless downpour.

We had one hell of a day. One damned thing after another, without let-up. Dennis had forgotten the essential parts of his foundation forms, so he couldn't pour Saturday. This threw off his whole tight schedule. The plan now was that Abbie was to return 9 a.m. Sunday and they would start immediately and they'd have the first four foundations in that day.

The whole day became an underwater, muddy, soggy trial!

I'd waked about 7:30. Was ok, except the foot of my sleeping bag soaked. I struggled into some clothes and went down to the car to get some plastic pants I'd bought for this kind of weather and to try to catch the radio weather report on my little battery radio. I slogged out in the downpour. Then--the zipper on my rain coat jammed. After five minutes of fussing with, I just ripped it open. (Later, Abbie's did the same thing, and she, too, ripped hers

off--desperate.) Then my plastic pants ripped. One leg. Then the waistband drawstring--wet. I couldn't untie it. I was unable to go to the toilet all day. Never did. Went around all day encased in torn, muddy, oversize plastic, a shower cap on my head.

Abbie's rain coat ruined. Dennis was drenched! The kids were ok; had those yellow storm clothes for school on. It just simply poured all day! In fact--the radio told us--campers on the Olympic Peninsula washed out in the unusual rains there.

FOOD

Bud and Paula were to come with that fine ham picnic Paula had promised. They never did. Without any means of communication with them, we could only assume that the weather had changed their minds. (Found out later, was so.)

I was starved all day. All I'd had was a cup of coffee and one of the doughnuts Abbie had brought. The only other thing she'd brought was candy. My supplies for the week were low, but I used most of them and my little cans of Sterno up to feed them. I stood in the rain and fixed snacks for the kids. Pretty paltry fare, but I was just glad they ate at all, they usually so picky. Their parents were too busy to fuss about food with them. At the last minute I heated some canned hash for Dennis and Abbie. It was pretty frugal eating that day.

WATER

Dennis was so anxious to get to his cement pouring that he raced to connect up the hose I'd bought the day before to the stand pipe out by the cul-de-sac. We (ironically) having no source of water for the cement. He let out a roar! The developer's cheapy plastic plug had broken. Blown off when he tried to undo it. A jet geyser of water was loose, shooting off into the woods! That water jet went on and on.. Yes, plus the downpour from the heavens. (Meantime the rain had destroyed my cardboard toilet; we had no toilet.)

A frantic Dennis sent Abbie and me to town to try to find a fitting while he struggled with that jet stream. It was Sunday. Everything was closed. All we could find was one cheapy little fitting. We stopped at the caretakers on our way back with our tale of woe. They just shrugged. We went on back. The fitting was too small. Dennis was but frantic! not only could he not do his work, but we were afraid that maybe we'd blown the main water supply system?

Somewhat later old Marv McNabb strolled up. "OH. Why didn't you say? Main valve--here--down the end of the road. All ya hafta do is shut it off down here. Besides, I always whittle a (wooden) plug." And he began to do so. The jet of water was off, finally.

THE CEMENT

THE CEMENT. In all that rain. Dennis would bring in two bags of cement, 95 # each on the wheelbarrow, letting the two kids ride on top of the load. And he had to go all the way around downhill and back up in all that mud and slippery slime to get it where he wanted it. This was because there was a big nursing log across the path with an opening too small for the wheelbarrow to get through. I'd tried to hack at, widen that opening but it was too tough for me.

DEDICATION

It was sheer hell! But Dennis and Abbie worked like hell. In all the mud and slime. And--about 3:30 p.m. they had the four foundations cemented--the anchor ones--four corners. "Let me try to take a picture!" I cried. One last film left in camera. And I slithered up the mud hill and took a stick and wrote "7/17/78" in the wet cement of the 'cornerstone', fudging a little on the date, intrigued with all those '7's. (The next day, the 17th, Dennis' birthday)

"Now, pose!" I cried. You never saw a more bedraggled looking crew. Like "ye old pioneer pictures". They posed so proudly. (The pix never came out.)

We were all exhausted! Muddy, soaked. Everything a sodden mess! And then they went out to leave---A FLAT TIRE! Dennis changed it in the rain and mud and all.

They left me about 4 p.m., all hugs and kisses. (For Dennis' birthday my gift to him ~~to be~~ those gloves.) I insisted on staying. Dennis got me some water. No, I'm not trying to be facetious (we needed water after all that?) He did. He unplugged that junction and filled my water jugs.

I was almost dead with fatigue when they left, but I drove to the store--got some wine and some plastic and worked on that shelter until about 9 p.m. And then, exhausted, but happy, in spite of that damned abandoned dog pestering me all the time, I moved into the tent. Dennis had very kindly left me his sleeping bag to replace my wet one.

I do not want to throw away these notes. It was one HELL of a day. (And it's been one hell of a day trying to tell it here--post hoc!)

MONDAY, JULY 17--I wake with so much to do I don't know where to start. It is cloudy and I fear more rain. There is no place to dry anything. I will have to go out--to a bank--and find a laundromat and dry my sleeping bag. I am very tired. The fun of my camping trip is kind of gone--but--it's--ok.

LATER: No rain, but it's damp and gloomy. I don't know what time it is. Have been going through this soggy mess, trying to spread things out to dry. Ugh. A break for tea and then I'm getting out of here. Oh! for a toilet! I go, leaving stuff out to dry and hoping dog won't molest it.

I went to Sultan. Found a bank with a drive-in window open and asked about and found a laundromat. Then I went to that park by the riverside and used their public toilet. (Whew!) It was all very dirty and unkempt, but---I swiped some wood pieces from the park firewood pile to build me something to sit on--bought myself a hamburger and ice cream cone while waiting for the dryer and went back to camp.

Where I didn't even attempt to go in. I was so tired I just fell over and went to sleep in the car. I had detoured into the opposite cul-de-sac on way back to see if any people where that dog came from. It looked all deserted. And abandoned dog?

I went back into camp. At least I had A CLEAN BED. I cleaned Dennis' tools (all rusty) and built a little toilet seat out of the stolen wood. No sign of the dog. I sat by lamplight late, wishing Dennis a happy birthday and--though very tired--was happy. I slept in the tent.

TUESDAY, JULY 18--Woke about 8 a.m. Had a good sleep, though pains in back. Wake to overcast, but no rain. And birds singing. I carry my new portable toilet down to a place amongst the bleeding heart plants. And at last relieve myself. I feel much better.

Still in night clothes returning to camp area I notice the two shovels I crossed as barrier in the front opening are down.. There's the dog in shelter! "Oh you!" I rage. It scuttles out a hole in the shelter and goes off.

I get dressed. I have a lot to do. Dennis and all of them are coming back this afternoon. I want to get my cabin plans out and figure the electricity and water lines before Dennis gets here. I clean camp, apprehensive about the fog gathered. About noon the sun breaks out. I lug all the stuff down to the car and spread it out on car to dry. The sun goes.

Tired, I crawl into the car for a nap. A battered car with two rough looking young men in it sneaks around the cul. Pauses. I'm afraid. But it goes on.

Even so my ability to concentrate on cabin plans study in car is upset. I'm uneasy and especially so when, about 2:30 another sedan comes into cul. But this time it's Dennis and Sarah! Unexpected. For they'd said they'd be up about 6--the whole family--with food.

"I took the day off work!" Dennis said and rushed off to his unfinished work like one obsessed, ignoring my birthday jokes and funnies and attempt to present his gift of gloves. Nor could I seem to get Sarah's interest.

They said they'd brought food and Dennis presented me with their battery radio. "Abbie can't understand why you--how you--can stay all alone up here--why she sent the radio up." (To keep me company?) Much later, Sarah produced a big basket with a big red ribbon bow on it all packed with goodies. Nothing being said about it, I set it aside, a little puzzled about the bow, but assuming it was our dinner.

About 6 Dennis asked me why I didn't eat my dinner? I was piqued by then, and puzzled at this rather strange turn of events. But I realized how hungry they must be, so I opened the basket and started to fix it to share with them. "No, No! They had to go."

Piqued? Well, meantime, I had stood around, feeling useless and helpless, watching Dennis work and marveling at his skills. "I'll need some help," Dennis had said. And then, "Put your finger there. Hold it." I held my finger on the tape. "Sarah, you do it!" Dennis snapped. "I should have Abbie here! SHE knows how to do it!" He did the rest alone while I huffed off and went and started to clear brush all by myself.

"We have to go." And there I was left with a huge basket of---barbecued spareribs! chicken! Cake! Scalloped potatoes!--more than I could ever eat--complete with ice to keep it fresh! Too late, I realized--the gift. I felt like crying. It had been meant to be "Little Red Riding Hood takes basket of goodies to grandma in the woods"? But Sarah, too shy to-explain it? The point was lost?

Aside from the work Dennis wanted to get done that day, I was puzzled why they had changed their plans. Sarah had been quiet and bored. Late in the afternoon, she came up to me. "Mommy said you'd take me swimming. See? I brought my suit." "It was HOT in Seattle!" Dennis said. I felt real mean. as I begged out, for it was not hot up here in the woods, and my legs were so sore I could hardly walk, much less swim.

"Abbie?" I'd asked. "Oh she isn't coming this week end." "Uh--because I'm here?" I ventured. "No, no. They're having a garage sale. Selling Ed's stuff." "Oh. Did anyone call Bud and Paula? (why they hadn't come.)" "No." "Well, I'd like to know!" I said. (or if they were coming the next week end.) But it was left at that.

That path-blocking log. "You going to chop the log?" I asked Dennis. He got the big splitting maul I'd gotten him and began to chop the opening bigger. I stood and watched. His red hair was exactly the color of the cedar wood. I wished could have taken a picture. Finished. "Well, THAT was something I didn't mean to do!" he says. "But think of all the work it will save you later!" I said.

"Are you going to connect the water today?" I asked. "Uh--no. Will use buckets this time." Getting water, at this point, meant going down about a 90' trail to where the water connection was and using a wrench. There was no faucet on the pipe at that time. Then fill buckets and lug them back. The hose we had bought was only 50' but it would have helped. "These things I got," I said, producing some hose hardware I'd gotten. "Oh yes--I can hook up the hose--NEXT time," he said.

I had planned to leave after maybe a week, but watching Dennis working so frantically, trying to hurry so, I put out a suggestion. "Why don't we put off the electrical bit (putting up the temporary electricity pole) until NEXT week?" I asked. I'll STAY." For he'd need electricity to continue work--for power saw and to see--and we'd have to contact PUD to hook it up after the temporary in. And I could see that all this wasn't going to get done in my planned time.

All the time they were there that fool dog bothered us. Their leaving---Dennis offered to hitch up the hose for me. "No, no---they in such a hurry. But he filled the water jugs for me. I gave him the radio to take back. "I'd rather listen to the birds," I said. He took it. "Tell them I'm ok. And thanks." "How are your legs?" Dennis asked. "Why---OK!?" "By the way," I found myself saying, "Lu said we can always take a shower--down there at the park. There are some--for the swimming pool---" But they were leaving.

After they left, I sat and ate as much as I could of that food. It got dark. The moon came out--briefly. I staggered into the tent and fell asleep.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19-- Birds and bladder wake me. Still dark. No rain--thank God. But the damp! Everything I worked so hard to dry out all damp again. A crash! in middle of night. I let out a roar. Th at dog again? About reached the breaking point with it. I'd barricaded shelter with wheelbarrow, but--what mess would I find later?

I've been up here one week today. I lie and think: Dennis saying Abbie can't understand why I'm not just going buggy up here---I appreciate Dennis using his "string method" lining up those foundations. Saved me \$8 for a transit--I wish they'd told me they were getting a hose. They paid \$10. I could have gotten one for \$6--Dennis" "Hey! did you sharpen this axe?" "Why?" "Well, it seems sharper!"---Wonder why Abbie didn't call Bud and Paula?---

6:30 A.M.--Hey! Blue sky! But guess I'll go back to sleep. Water is gone--I will have to get water today--and ice--and get rid of garbage?---

7:30 A.M. --Couldn't sleep. Today--I've GOT to get rid of that dog, too--- Better go see Mc Nabbs (caretakers).--Just for fun, I think I will post our (temporary?) building permit. Will look--"official".

LATER--Sun!--and yep. Dog tipped over all my stuff. Oh! there he is! Up on nursing log. I scream at him, "Get outta here!" He skulks off-- Better get busy--am learning: daylight is very precious; nighttime is costly--batteries and candles--

12:45 P.M.--Just finished cleaning up camp and me, when Mrs. McNabb appears as silently as dog does. Scared me. We chat. I feel her out about the dog. No use complaining--she likes it--dog lover. "Garbage?" "We have to haul our own to dump and pay fee there." "Water?" "No, it's not on a well. Is city water and cheap. My, don't you need a shower?" she asks (her nose NOT wrinkling?) "You can use the one down at the park, you know. Don't have to ask." When she leaves, I feel brighter: there are some benefits to belonging to club, then? But guess I'll wait till tomorrow afternoon and shower then. The kids will have come and gone by then.

I GO MONROE--Stopped and gabbed with Mrs. McNabb while I got water there. Then to Monroe, where it's HOT! Find myself unexpectedly crying(it's so cold and chill up in woods--)

3:45 P.M. --Back at camp. Has sure warmed up even in here--and also so pretty when I came back in--all dappled sunlight uner the trees--LATER: proud of myself! Tried using wheelbarrow, for the first time to bring in ice and water. It was easy!--Try again to take some pictures---

8:15 P.M.--Been no sign of dog. I spent the afternoon cleaning out the construction area and cutting a path to where I want those steps to be. Everyone has been making their own random paths. Might as well have one that is right! It looks nice and neat now. Has dried up a bit, but when rain comes--a sea of mud again!? The sun is nice, but brings out all the bugs. Nothing seems to repel the mosquitoes and flies except nightfall--which it almost is now.

Been no sign of dog. Maybe my complaint worked? Am sitting enjoying evening. So nice now--no wind--only birds--and no dog. There's a big magnificent golden cloud to east. Later I walked down to see it, after just resting and enjoying. Ate cold leftovers as about out of Sterno and find that stuff expensive!

I really enjoying clearing. All my life I've wanted to garden, unmolested, but never had a chance to.. Now I do. Such fun. One isn't DESTROYING the woods, just "suggesting" (you go; you stay, etc.) Whacked at salmonberry patch, hoping I can talk kids into putting tent there where more sun. Fooled around creek but not long--this a business trip--not a playtime.

NEWS ITEM: RADIO--caught on car radio. I really don't need Abbie's radio. Can catch all the news I'm interested in on car radio. I gloat over troubles pertaining to my Highway Dept. 'enemies.' Ferry strike. (Highway Dept. handles the ferry system.) and 2 fires on I-90 Summit (Snoqualmie Pass) wiped out the commercial enterprises there--"they suspect arson." From what I know, I suspect ---something crooked going on there--(speaking of "BUSINESS.")

Speaking of "highways"--I sat for awhile in the gloaming. Walked down to see that big pink cloud, noting that we have made two paths in--unplanned--"a high road" and "a low road." About 10 I crawled into tent, noting again how cold and damp, especially under those cedars. Not a good place for tent. I went to sleep hearing, for first time, sounds of kids below? somebody going swimming?

1:30 A.M. ---wake and glimpse the moon through little window in tent I didn't know it had; one reason I didn't like being in tent--you can't see out. It's unearthly still and quiet---

THURSDAY, JULY 20--The kids to come up later in day, the idea being, at the time, that Dennis would put in as much time as he could after work to get those foundations in. There were 20 to do. During morning chores, wondering where dog was, was surprised to hear a woman's voice calling him by name and he responding to. Was his family back?

BEARS! of different kinds

Bears! There's a lot of BEARS here? Mrs. McNabb had told me that all those guys prowling around were looking for bears. "Oh, you're kidding!" I said. "No," she said. "All this development up here has spoiled their bear-hunting grounds." "But our (Highway) report we worked on said all the bears were gone up here," I ventured. She insisted. Hmm, I thought, I'd better not tell the kids.

Well, it seems that that (pest) dog's name was "Bear", for, later, I could hear kids calling it, "Here, Bear! Here, Bear!" It sounded funny--as if there were a bear there-- And then there's Sarah's favorite teddy bear, "Mrs. Mommybear", she always brings with her.--And then there's the bare--ME! taking my spit bath in the woods. I decided to go down to the gazebo, as they call it, and take a shower down there!

THE SHOWER

Eight days since I've bathed! (Though I didn't think of that as I chatted with Mrs. McNabb.) "Yes, the dog's family had come back. No, I needn't worry about their dog bothering me. They always keep it locked up when they are gone."

I went to take my shower. AHHH! Clean! I reached for my towel--mildewed. I reach for my clean underwear. It falls onto the wet, muddy floor. So much for cleanliness!

I go back and sit in the car and cut my nails, after spreading damp things on top of car in sun to dry and listen to the news: "The Highway Dept. is still in trouble. Ferry strike. Court action threatened." I gloat.

Back at camp I am tempted to get to work and clear the water/electric line path before Dennis comes, but I felt so good--all clean and clear-headed and I rested for the first time--that I gathered all my papers and worked on them for hours in the car, my "office". And then I did, at last, one of trip's purpose chores: I roughly staked out the septic tank field in order to find where water line could come in. Then I tackled the salmon berry patch again, measuring to see if tent would fit in there. It would. It was hot out there.

6:30 P.M.-- About time for kids. They's said about 6:30, but I never knew for sure. They had switched times on me so many times. Nor did I know how many of them to expect. I was tired. I stretched out on back seat of car. Then, as dusk began to fall, I got worried. The evenings were getting shorter. By six it was already getting dark in the woods. Would be too dark to work--

I had just dozed off when here they came--the whole family! And Sarah in a bathing suit!!! "Uh--have you eaten?" I asked. "No, but I brought the makings for 'Poor Boy' sandwiches," Abbie said. She began to fix them as Dennis frantically began to get ready to work.

The hose they'd brought leaked. I, trying to fix it, only made matters worse. Dennis finally got it fixed and he and Abbie went to work like fiends. I sat helpless and useless, though I tried to mind the kids and/or interest them and keep them out of the way. But they were, at this time, still a bit shy of me. I got them to help me gather what I hoped was dry wood from cul to build a fire to light things up more for working light. But it only flared and went out.

Dennis and Abbie were working frantically against the fast failing light, gasping, groaning, sighing, rushing. By the time they had two forms in, the light was failing. And it seems they had a new problem: the cement, a different color than they'd gotten before, wouldn't mix. "A different cement?" I ventured. I nearly got my head snapped off. Seems they had gotten a cheaper kind.

They toiled on. I had only one flashlight left that worked. I was trying to light their work for them, but not able to follow their swift change of movements. "Here!" "There!" "No, here!" Nobody could see. The kids were tired, bored, restless, underfoot. When Sarah began dancing in the beam of the torch "Cut it out!" I snarled at her. Everybody was snapping and snarling.

The leaky hose and cement mixing had made a slough of mud on that sloping ground. Dennis and Abbie began to slip and fall in the mud. I'd never seen them fight before. "Oh you and your bossy ways!" Abbie cried at Dennis. But they struggled on. They got the last batch of cement mixed for the last and fourth frame and things calmed down somewhat. I got out my supply bills to tot up. "How many bags of cement to go?" I asked. Only Abbie answered me. Dennis was too busy. "Twelve!" Abbie said. The last load of cement was mixed---

and then the wheelbarrow tipped over with the last load.

But they scooped it up and got the last form filled. It was ten p.m.

Then everything changed. Dennis came and flopped down on a log. "Well, Abbie! We got it done!" The kids were so sleepy and tired--and scared of the woods. It didn't help when there was a wierd, loud horn sound. "What's that!?" they jumped. I tried to explain it was just some macho "hot rod" guy blasting his horn as he raced by. "What's that!?" I cried as a tinkly, fairy bell music started in this dismal construction scene of mess and mud. Abbie had turned on Sarah's music box. "I can't think of two things more opposite!" I laughed.

Dennis made the kids put their pajamas on before they all piled into the car. "I'm just going to carry them in and put them into bed when we get home," he said. "Would have been nice," I said, as I helped them down the trail with the one flashlight, "if only the moon had come out to help light things up."

After they left, the moon came out.

It was sheer hell, but they got it done! Everybody was exhausted--but happy!

FRIDAY, JULY 21--It was 9 a.m. before the sun woke me, shining full on tent and me. I had left that last lamp on! Both lamps were dead!

It was time to take a reckoning. Things like--the kids were having trouble with that old car. Would I have to help them get it fixed for more reliable transportation so they could get up here to work? How much was left in our fund? Tuesday they's had \$95 of what I'd given them. Thursday, \$25. They needed at least a hundred more to finish those foundations. Water. Dennis wanted me to keep those forms wet, but Abbie wanted her hose back. I'd better buy more hose. There was no water left in that hose as Dennis had claimed and the dog was prowling around those delicately balanced forms. Dammit.

They planned to come up again on the week end, I assumed. But I was confused as to their plans. First, Abbie had to stay in town for the sale of Ed's stuff. And Sarah would stay with her. And then Sarah decided she'd like to come up with Dennis and Noah. And then Abbie, not wanting to be left alone, decided she could finish up the sale Saturday and come up Sunday. But no. She's have no car. Suddenly she decided maybe she's better call Bud and Paula and see if they planned to come up Sunday. So. I have no idea whether they plan to come, when, or who. Or stay all night--or what.

As I sit and figure my finances--a mouse! First one I've seen.

I get ready and set out for Monroe, bank, etc. It's very hot. But how pretty!

I have a rather fun encounter at foot of hill by the store. Some guys are doing some striping there, one gal with them. They are blocking my way. While I wait I ask "How'd you learn to do that?" "Well, guy says, I got drunk one night and old guy showed me how and sold me his equipment." "You're not Highway, then?" "No, but I want to get a contract with them." "They farm it out?" "Oh yeah." They let me by. Not that it did me much good, for no traffic signal there, I had a hell of a time getting on to SR-2.

In Sultan. After bank transfer of funds, I set out to get more familiar with what area had to offer. First I went to the liquor store and asked the woman if there were any stores in Sultan? "No. We have a hard time getting businesses to stay." "Not even a grocery store?" "No. Up the road aways." Where I'd just come from. So I set out for Monroe, eight miles away. It was very hot.

MONROE

I started to explore it and see what they had to offer there. It was a strange, dingy little place. Mostly main street lined with delapidated, outdated, one story frame buildings. There weren't even any parking meters! And the din of huge logging trucks rolling one after another through their main intersection! I began to search out stores where I might find what I needed.

A hardware store. Two tough looking guys were blocking the entrance. "Mind?" I asked. And pushed through. Inside were six guys with a big black lab dog all buying guns! I felt I was in a real rough and tough frontier town!

Then, hot, I stopped and bought an ice cream cone in a rather new and sophisticated looking sandwich place. (It soon went out of business. The next time I tried to take Abbie there--gone.) Grandma yelped at having to pay 39¢ for an ice cream cone!

Then I went searching for more stores. But I must have taken a wrong turn? For I was suddenly in a dirt road riddled with pot holes and an old lady and a gal with a baby in a stroller blocking my way. "Mind?" They moved and let me through. I finally found a "ten cent" store and picked up a few things--stuff to entertain the kids with --some sweat bands for our workers whose sweating hair blinded them as they worked. And then--I hit for the hills!

Back at camp, supplies replenished, I tackled the electrical line path in driveway area. Slashing with machete in all that heat till I was bleeding and raw--all those vicious blackberry vines!--which pleased those vicious biting flies. Yet it seemed easier than before. I wondered if I were getting tougher? Or my tools were sharper?

I finished, washed up, fixed lamps and fell---literally!--into tent--and bed.

SATURDAY, JULY 22- 7:30 a.m. Glad I was awake early as Dennis said he'd be up early. Also glad I didn't have as sore muscles as I'd expected. The sun was shining and I had promised the kids swimming. And Dennis and Noah were to stay overnight: would have a bonfire and hot dogs. Abbie was to stay home because of that sale. Dennis wanted to get in four--or more foundations.

I began to work, moving stuff out of tent and setting up chairs and lounge chair outside and rearranging the picnic table/"kitchen" more conveniently, noting my food stock was very low. I worked very hard.

11 a.m. Nobody came. I worried. Car trouble? 11:30 a.m. Dennis came with BOTH kids --and infinite gear. They had brought weinies. "No ice?" I asked. "Well, I'll go get some." I took the kids and we went to the store and got goodies. It was very hot! I bought us ice cream cones at the drive-in. Without their parents around, the kids were very good. We had fun. We drove back a different route, exploring. Everything fine.

Back at camp, Dennis was very uptight and cross. He had scheduled himself to put in EIGHT foundations--all alone. "Take the kids swimming!" he roared. "I have work to do!" I took the kids swimming.

Again, away from their parents, the kids were very good. My main problem was that I couldn't get them to come out of the pool when it was time to leave. The kids were the darlings of about five grandma ladies there, some in pool; some out. I went in, too. I was rusty, but I was the only one of the old ladies who could swim.

Before we'd left, Dennis had said, "Oh--Abbie called Bud and Paula. They're coming up today." (Goody! with food I hope!) The kids and I were now alone in the pool. I was kind of on the lookout for the small yellow car Bud was driving at that time. And one went up towards our place. "Hey! kids! Come on! Gotta go!" But--odd. The yellow car comes back. Not them? Then Lu Mc Nabb comes out. There is a hue and cry, "Lorna! somebody looking for you!" It was Bud and Paula.

I ran out in swim suit and towel and flagged them down. And then showed them the park and introduced them to the Mc Nabbs. and then led them on up to camp. "Food?" I hinted. "Oh yes!" Paula says. "We'll eat--later." We all let out moans of hunger pangs. "Ok. We'll eat now!"

And Paula proceeded to set out--in all that muddy construction mess--the most dainty, gourmet picnic! Wine! Tablecloth! And all kinds of the healthy things for the kids they usually scoffed at. But they ate--for her! And then she led the kids off in a kind of school-teachery tour of the woods where, it seemed, all kinds of Beatrix Potter animals had dwellings.

After which, she came back, so tiny and well-groomed in a fancy, fashionable pant suit. and went up to Dennis, who was sweaty, muddy, dirty, hassling heavy wheelbarrow loads of gravel, "Oh let me help you!" she cried. "I--I think--I can do it, Paula," Dennis had a hard time convincing her. They made a rather hasty departure---"had to get back." After which Dennis bitched, "Well, it was--nice! But--I lost time!"

That evening, I had thought after the kids were in bed that Dennis and I could sit and have a business talk, but, by the time we went through the weinie roast, which the kids could have cared less about and Dennis spent till midnight tending Noah, who wouldn't settle down alone in the tent, the evening was gone. Dennis and the kids slept in the tent. I slept in the tool shelter--from choice.

SUNDAY, JULY 23-- was difficult. We had very little food left. The kids kept begging to go swimming again and I took them at Dennis' insistence, but it wasn't fun this time, though the kids were good. I was tired and sleepy. We dragged back to camp where I tried to keep them out of Dennis' way by telling them stories, which was kind of fun, as, for the first time, they listened.

"Yellowstone! There really is a place where the hot water comes out of the ground!" Got Noah's attention for the first time. "Where is it?" "Oh--over there--a long ways off--" I pointed, vaguely, east.

Food. All I had left was sunflower seeds. "Here," I said to the kids. Sarah took them and just dumped them on the ground. "When I was a little girl--" I went on with my story-telling--"We had to mind our grown ups." "Why?" asked Noah.

Dennis and I were pondering on where to put the temporary electrical connection. "This tree?" "Oh..ok ok." Dennis started to clamber up the tree. "Tarzan!" I yelled to the kids. "Hunh!!?" They came running.

At one point Dennis paused in his frantic work, "Abbie wants to get away from the kids. We'll go to Spokane and then I'll drop her off in Yakima and I and the kids will be up here about the 14th." "Well--do you want me up here or not?" I ventured. "Be frank! And--what about Chris? (Id made vague promises to Mike

that Chris could come up.) Dennis shrugged. "Oh--whatever--. I intend to raise the first "A" rafter then," he went on. (How exciting! I wanted to be there!) Then--"Chris come up?" Dennis asked. "Hey! the whole tribe up here!" he sort of glowed. Later, he told me, "Oh Abbie's changed her mind. She isn't going to Yakima after all. She's coming up here."
I was puzzled. How was I going to work my own plans/wishes into all this?

Dennis, finally through, I urged him to go down to the pool and take a shower and maybe go swimming. He agreed. So we all went down. On the way, Dennis remarked, "I didn't seem to get so tired this time!"

I couldn't help wondering. Things were different this day compared to Saturday. I had made some improvements--new paths; got his tools in order. Also, he was able to work alone and he'd started in the morning, not after a full day's work. Also, he only poured two, not four forms. He kept fussing that he didn't get his goal of eight done, but there were other things that had to be done. I thought he got a lot done!

He and the kids had a fine swim and so did I after I gave up trying to engage Dennis in seeing if we could find out something about the electricity from that nice lil ole Mrs. Doochie. Dennis was polite but so aloof I finally claimed I had "to swim for my arthritis" and jumped back in the pool to break up a rather sticky situation.

Then Dennis and the kids and I went back up to camp where Dennis fixed the shelter roof for me, got me water, and then they left.

MONDAY, JULY 24-- 11 a.m. before I woke up. There was nothing to eat. It was chilly and overcast.. For the first time I felt depressed and uninterested. I had a "party's over" feeling. And my tasks for that day were unpleasant ones: cut down that pretty little vine maple I'd hoped to keep. But it blocked the most logical ingress pathway; re-dig the toilet hole. (Sarah had so fastidiously filled up!); go do a wash; go out of my way return trip to return things Bud and Paula had left. My trip back and the end of the month began to loom.

It was after noon, when I was cutting down the vine maple when here came old McNabb. "Here's the water valve he should have on that outlet," he said. (\$1.50 please.) I paid the old scotchman. We chatted. He left.

I did the path. It was 2:30 p.m. before I set out to store and to do the washing. Five before I got back. In a bad mood. Mad, and broke. Had paid too much money for some lousy lunch and it was depressing in that hot, steamy laundromat. I grumped around camp, feeling unloved, though the Mc Nabbs seemed to like me and they and the Doochies waved gaily as I drove back in. I couldn't even wash dishes or cook. Stores had no canned heat. Then--

Shots rang out! BANG! Bang! Bang! a bit too close for comfort----6:10 p.m. the shooting still going on. Annoyed, I scream "Stop it!"---
9:30 P.M. It's dark. My clock's quit. I spent the evening doing more chores--bumbling job on waterproofing shelter some more--irritable feeling---

It was nice to be back in the tent--in clean robe and nightgear--and a soft bed. Dennis had left me their sleeping bag--

3 a.m. I woke up. I had been trying to drink more water all day--my body giving me warning signs-- I had wet the bed! My clean robe, Dennis's sleeping bag all soaked!

TUESDAY, JULY 25-- I was furious! All that washing--everything clean--and I peed on their sleeping bag--and today I had to redig the shit hole. Dammit! This is a delay. I shall have to go wash the sleeping bag. Oh well, the sun shining.

Almost noon. I had new shit hole dug and camp clean. But suddenly I felt very faint. Vertigo. Pain in chest. All I needed was a heart attack!) I staggered into the tent and lay down.

An hour and a half later I convinced myself it was "just nerves" and got up. I still felt nauseated (and scared!) but I had things to do! I have to contac. P.U.D. I told Dennis I would---

By 3 p.m. I assumed I was over my "heart attack"? Though I had to go and lie down every once in awhile, I managed to cut out those "trip roots" in path I was clearing and raked all the scattered gravel back into the pile. (Dammit! I'd paid for that rock!)

I rested in the car. The sleeping bag had dried in sun. The driveway and car were clean. I'd cleaned car the day before at laundromat while waiting for wash to finish. I worked on cleaning up the construction area, making it easier to be able to work there. I used up the water, for Dennis would need the buckets. I got stuff ready for kids; the toilet fixed, snacks made and sticks for stakes to plot position of cabin with picked up. Everthing all cleaned up. I read awhile and fell asleep.

I woke about 4:45, not rested at all. I could have slept for three days! And I didn't feel good at all. They weren't due until about 6:30. I'd have time to rest up some more before. I went down to the car for a peptic pill for my roiling tummy, started back. Sound of a car coming. A cheery female voice, "Hi!" They were here.

They piled out. Dennis looked tired and beat. "How's it going?" For the first time I said, "Oh, not so good. Don't feel good." They got solicitous. "Don't you think you'd better give up and come back to us?" "No No--where's Sarah?" "Oh she's staying with an auntie."

They didn't unload any food. "Have you eaten?" I query. "Oh, we brought some snacks along but they are all gone." "How come you came so early?" I asked. "Oh, I took the afternoon off," Dennis said. He sighed. "Ok. I've got two things to do; those other two foundations to pour and the electrical." "Why don't you do the electrical first?" I asked. "I'll do the concrete first," he said.

I tried to lure Noah out of the work area. "Look what I got you, Noah! Popcorn! And some of that drink Paula had you liked!" No interest. I began to lay out my sticks for room patterns, dodging the busy, flying shovels. No interest. "Hey, Noah! help me build a fire?" "No." Dennis ordered Abbie to get to work. She complained about sore muscles but then began to help him. In less than an hour they had the two foundations done. "Hurrah!" I cried.

Then Dennis tackled the electrical circuit contraption. He was almost weeping in anger and frstration as I flew around trying to find the directions. I watched from down at the car where I was looking for papers. He was trying to pound the ground pipe in with that loose handled axe. Whang! Whang! Whang! Sparks flew. "It's bending!" I called out in warning. He cursed and pulled the thing out and started all over again. When he finally got it in his face was white and he looked as if he were going to faint. And it was dark. But our first "mechanical" was up.

Everyone sat down to rest. The work was done and they would have to go. I called a "business meeting". "Now, tell me what you have in mind," I said. Dennis told his schedule. I sighed. It sounded impossible. "Well, I'll goto P.U.D. tomorrow and the lumber companies and get bids--" I said.

Before this. I'd dared to ask Dennis how come the floor seemed destined to be so high in the air on one side? We began to check it. I put in a stake, while Dennis and Abbie worked on a plumb line. While we were all working on it, Noah flew in and impishly pulled the stake out. We all blew up. And--then--- "Oh God, no!" Dennis groaned. "My calculations are off!"

It was 9:10 and dark before they got going. And nigh 10 before I, nothing to get for dinner, just sat and reviewed and then got myself ready for bed. Abbie's sister wanted the tent. They'd be up for it Thursday and then back up again for the week end. This left me only Friday to get things done.

WEDNESDAY--JULY 26-- Birds woke me. It's not raining. I wet the bed again! I lie thinking about what the kids said: Dennis told me that I'm going to move the stove up; that he's going to build everything "in a few weeks" and that I'll winter here. The only male help he has in prospect is his friend, Godfrey but I gather there is some friction between the wives.---- Dennis is doing a really fantastic job, and, amazing! nobody's gotten seriously hurt--yet. I sure had gulped when Dennis had swung that axe the head falls off of----I toy again with my idea to call the place "Chamterre"-- (Chambreau-land.) Realize I've been up here two weeks and still haven't done the business things I meant to do.

MID-MORNING-- It's dreary. There are clouds--then rumbling, constant rumblings. Lightning! Thunder. And here it is! the rain! I scurry to make everything water proof. And this the day I had to go to town and see P.U.D. and all.

I went anyway. In all the storm. Went to P.U.D. and the two lumber companies. Laughed at irony of it when one street was all blocked off because a gravel truck had overturned and there was gravel all over the street, crews working to clean it up. And all the time the lightning crashing. Here we're working so hard to buy some gravel and get electricity and here it all is for free!--being thrown away!

Dramatic day! On radio news " Two men hit by lightning on the Pass--and side of a house ripped off--"

I put the sleeping bags in to wash at the laundromat and then went in search of something to eat--starved. But found nothing. Walked out of three dingy places whose packaged snacks I didn't feel warranted the price they wanted for them.

At P.U.D. the old gal gave me back the \$10 Dennis had given me to pay them, saying to pay later when connected. That was welcome news, my finances so low, but it was not when she said it would be 6 to 8 weeks before they could connect.

The lumber companies left me gasping. One place estimated roughly \$1772, but they wouldn't tot it up for me. The other place, old guy took forever and then came up with \$2440. By that time I was beyond shock or caring. Dennis had guessed lumber at about \$1500.

At Dunbar's I was annoyed because the boss talked to me via his employee, instead of directly to me and kept asking me why my son didn't come in and talk to them. Where they did deign to talk to me, guy said there are bears up here!

During all this the lightning crashed and a veritable deluge began, but I drove the 8 miles to Sultan in the storm anyway to that nearer lumber company. And to get food at the store, where there were long, long lines. I thought I'd die of hunger and fatigue before I got out of there. And I was drenched--my best clothes. For there was a rip in my rain jacket. It was quite a trip!

I stopped at McNabbs' and made phone calls. It was so warm in their place and I was so cold and tired I thought I was going to faint for a moment. The electricity call: the inspector was not there. I left a message. An order. Consulting with McNabbs about sharing a P.U.D pole, as told at PUD, got a No. No, no neighbors to share with. I called Abbie. They going to come up Friday night instead of Saturday, which meant I'd lost that spare day I'd counted on.

Thought I'd never get away from old McNabb. He went on and on with tales of dire construction difficulties: delays, snows, fallen trees, rip-offs. I thought he'd never stop. I was in no mood to listen to hardship tales.

5 P.M. before I got back to camp. Had to struggle to get those sleeping bags in without getting them wet after all that wait and money to get them dry. Luckily I had a plastic bag in the car trunk. After lugging the stuff in I sheltered in the "shelter" to get out of the big wet. It was quite snug in there--too snug. Crowded more the word?

But it began to be kind of fun. The rain was heavy, but warm and coming straight down--no wind. And it began to ease off and the sky lightened as the thunder peeled off into the mountains. By 8 p.m. the storm was abating and there was a very pretty glow in the woods. I was tired, but I ate. And then I worked on waterproofing the shelter some more.

I finally moved into the tent, but the plop of rain falling off the trees onto tent nearly drove me crazy. Sounded like popcorn popping. But it, too, finally eased off-- and the first bird call after the storm---it was one hell of a day---I crawled into the nice, clean sleeping bag and-----

4 A.M. I wake. The rain has stopped, but it's dark, cold, dank. I lie and begin to fret about all the discouraging things I'd found out about that day. Besides told--Mc Nabb said to keep on fighting P.U.D; not supposed to charge us; Sultan Estates has franchise. Guys at lumber company said 4' joists wouldn't support floor weight--all hassles, hassles with Dennis--

Four more nights here. I'm getting a little weary of trying to build in a building boom. Wish that inspector would come and I could get out of here-- First time I've felt really discouraged----

THURSDAY--July 27-- 7:30 a.m. Awake. Nose and throat a bit raspy. Birds. No sun. But no rain, either. 11:30 a.m. Ate and strolled down to cul to check on weather. Over cast. Camp is cleaned. Sun's out a bit. Dog showed. Once. I fool around clearing around the electrical circuit in case inspector comes. Lay out my 10' stakes. And hope to get some paper work done. 3:00 p.m. Day has turned out real nice. But I got so engrossed and having so much fun marking out my house with stakes I forgot to go to the bank. Checked on the floor level again and decide Dennis wasn't either wrong. After a nap in the car I go to the store and get ice and so on.

ABOUT 7:00 p.m. the kids come--all of them. First time I wasn't down in the cul. Didn't even hear them come I was so happily laying out my house. Here they came through the trees. "Hi!" they called. They all seemed in a good humor. "May I show you through my house?" I joked and gave them a tour of the stakes and lines in the dirt. "Here is the front door--the steps are there--the stove there. The toilet? Abbie's got her shovel in it!"

It was a very nice evening. We all worked together, even the kids joined in. There was a kind of feeling of celebration. Dennis wasn't a bit upset with all my bad news. In fact he and Abbie were jubilant. "Dennis thinks those are great bids!" Abbie cried. "Oh I can saw by hand!" he cried. "We're in! We're in! So what's \$2000? You've got \$4000!" "But--but--Dennis--- "

This time I worked along with them on the foundations, helping with rain-rusted bolts and so on. When through, we all jubilant shouts! "Look what we have wrought!" "Ain't it beautiful!" we rejoiced. I couldn't fool 'em this time as I put out a wail of "But I'm broke!" joke as shouts of "Steaks! Celebration! Sunday--!" "No. Saturday night!" Abbie said. They were all so glad and happy.

I told Dennis about my idea for the "Chamterre" name. "Guy Williams used to call Ed's house 'Chambreau-la'. he said.

Again it was 10 P.M. before they left. I saw them out. We got the foundations poured! The mood was so euphoric that even shy Sarah hugged and kissed me. They said they'd be up Saturday with food and Abbie would help drive me back to Seattle. They couldn't come Friday as Dennis had to baby sit so Abbie could be with her mother who had come over for an eye operation. I went to bed happy.

FRIDAY--JULY 28-- I woke later than I wanted to--with a quandary. This was my last day here alone when I'd be able to do business still unattended to. Bank; P.U.D.; McNabbs: lumber companies; check building codes; clean camp; get water; phone inspector. A day's work. The kids had switched on me again, cutting down my time--"early Saturday" they said. "about nine." Well, the weather OK. I got up and got busy.

By 11:30 a.m. I was on my way to Monroe. I wanted to hassle with Dunbar's to see if they wouldn't give us a better price for a cash sale. And hassle P.U.D. Pay them their ten dollar fee and see if I couldn't "charm" them into an earlier hook-up.

4:15 P.M. when I got back to camp, where it was cool. Was hot in town. Tired and hot. Swimming pool deserted, but too much effort to go swimming. It was the first time I wasn't glad to leave town and come back, though, for I had fun! Would like to be able to do some more hassling.

It was a very successful trip. I was glad I went. I found out a lot. And we would have made some very bad and expensive mistakes if I hadn't gone and checked.

I'd hurried back because the old gal at P.U.D. had said the inspector was in town and would probably be up at land now. And McNabb said there was a PUD truck up here and there might be an "OK" or "Fix it" tag on the circuit. It would have been a fitting end to such a successful business day if there had been--but there wasn't. I'd told them to contact caretakers, but they hadn't. And I hoped there wouldn't be a \$10 fine because I wasn't here.

I'd gone to Sultan first--to bank. And juggled cabin funds to get the money needed. And then I'd stopped at that public park by the river to fill water jugs. I pulled over and took a nap there. How dingy that park looked after my pretty woods! I chatted with an old lady who thought it was terribly glamorous to be building an A-frame. And I perused the Sears catalog Dennis had brought me and was appalled at how the prices had gone up since last year. Then I used their filthy public toilet and left, people wanting my parking place.

Next, I stopped at the "Candy Cane Restaurant". Sat in a fly-bitten booth next to a crazy old man who went and peed in toilet right opposite my booth with the door open. The old man chanted away to himself as he peed. The youth with him only laughed. Later, when I needed to use the toilet, it wouldn't flush. Nice place!

I sat and had coffee and worked over my lumber bids lists till I finally got them straight. Out in the hot car I checked the code again and then went and tackled Sultan Hardware, where I'd gotten the highest bid of all. Though this time the wizened little owner was charming and laughing and swapping stories when he found out I was really serious about buying, he still wouldn't agree to a discount for cash. So, I didn't buy.

I went on to Monroe and PUD, where I tackled that grim old gal with all the charm, firmness, sympathy and pleadings I could muster. There were a lot of men in there, interrupting. She finally softened somewhat, saying that maybe it might be only two or three weeks and that the men might be up there now. Whatever, she was sure the inspector would call her Monday and she'd tell him. I paid the \$10 and left, feeling things were getting better.

Then, though hot, thirsty and confused, I tackled Dunbar's, where I parked in the rear and went in the back way through the shop. This way I could see more what they had in stock. I felt I was beginning to know a little more about lumber now. Here again, once they found I was a real, potential customer, their former surliness changed into glad welcome. They all gathered round and were real nice and helpful, now. They all tell me that we wouldn't need that pre-treated lumber Dennis told me we should get. They said the smell was awful and it exuded poison. I asked them if we could treat it ourselves and still pass code? They didn't know.

On way back to car through alleys I detoured to ice cream shop next door to get me an ice cream cone, a little scared at old bum in alley kidding me as I went by. Out again that guy in the fancy pick-up that said "Building Contractor" on side of it was still there. And he started to kid me (about my cone?) We started to chat. So I asked him if we needed treated lumber. His answer was a definite No! He said he'd been in the contracting business for 21 years and self-treated lumber would pass code. And Dunbar's had said "Yes. They'd give us a discount for cash; would sell at "contractor's price." I left there feeling quite gleeful. Dennis had scoffed at my wanting to bargain for a discount for cash. Things were looking brighter.

From there I went to the liquor store, where I discovered another bit of small town local color. A very fancy woman was having cases and cases of liquor piled into her fancy station wagon. "Large party!" I quipped to clerk. "Oh, she's buying for a local bar here," she said.

I headed for home then, stopping briefly at the last lumber company, Smith and Carlson's. There I asked the woman about discount for cash? She eyes her boss. "Mmmmm--yes," he nods.

I continued on to camp, going on the back road (Old Pipeline Road I was to find out later) to check on that big real estate sign. "111 acres for sale" it said. A jolt of apprehension raced through me; a big development going in? It was awfully close of our place!

I stopped at McNabb's, embarrassed to find them eating when it was so early. I'd found that people in this area eat at the oddest hours! But they let me in. I wanted to ask whether the inspector had been there and establish phone numbers with them. I was hurt when I showed Lu my cabin sketches and she just whipped through them and handed them back. No interest.

It was getting dark and chill by time I got back to camp, though it only 5:20 P.M. It will be my last night here alone. But all's well. I can leave Dennis to get started and go home and begin to shell out \$2000 for Dennis to get started on the "shell" of the house. I go into camp, eat a spot of canned food, tot up my cabin fund estimate, lean against a mossy tree and cry a little: Time to fold up the tent and go! But a good show! Good show! Good work, Dennis!

SATURDAY--JULY 29-- I wake to sun---and worries. I'd figured money based on smaller cabin. Dennis has added 8 feet to the length. Ah well---- I've been here 18 days! I feel just great! It was a good time!

I start packing up.

SUNDAY--JULY 30-- (I have no notes on Saturday/Sunday with kids.)

2:45 P.M.-- The kids have left, gone on. I do last minute things: gather garbage; stop and talk to Lu McNabb; go to Sultan garbage dump; stop and buy some fried chicken to nibble on----

3:35 P.M.-- The sun is shining. I leave "Chamterre" and drive back to the world.

SEATTLE: I stop at Bud and Paula's and leave their things. They not there. I go on over to Alki.

These things ended somewhat dramatically.

I found Abbie furiously going through some more of Ed's stuff. At one point the kids were prancing around in mouldy old berets of Ed's his mother had brought him from Paris. Abbie was very busy and things were hectic. I don't remember why, but friction started. Daughter-in-law and mother-in-law ended up being cool to each other.

THE WINDOWS

Then Dennis and I got into a fight over different views of how to go on with cabin. He wanted me to get some windows, right away! He said he couldn't start to "frame in" without them. I was tired and had no trip time left to look. I also wanted to straighten out my finances before any more major purchases.

He made me look in want ads for second hand windows--bitched until I finally did. And then got mad when I wouldn't call and make inquiries about the ones found. I spent a sleepless night. And Dennis left for work the next morning we not speaking to each other. The first time ever.

That morning, rushed and tired, but I got on phone and called those ads. I got some interesting answers: one a nasty old man that nearly chewed my head off. I called and called and called till there was only one possibility left: one that Dennis and I thought sounded just perfect. But I had one hell of a time tracking that ad down!

I did much, much phoning, seeming to get nothing but foreigners I could hardly understand who passed me from one person to another. Finally I made connections with a woman with a charming accent. "Yes, they had four casement windows and a couple of little ones left." We went through prices, sizes and so on.

"Your name's Ida? Why, that was my grandmother's name!" I cried. "And your name's Chambreau. French! How beautiful!" It seems they were architects and had salvaged these windows from an old house, meaning to use them on a new house they were building themselves, but had changed to something else. The windows were exactly the right size, price and quantity. And this charming foreign woman and I hit it off as if old friends. "Oh! I'm so anxious to meet you!" she cried. But they lived in Bellevue and I, of course, leaving town had no time to go and search them out. Gingerly I asked her if they could keep them, store them for me awhile, explaining my dilemma. "Why, of course!" I'll take them!" I cried and hung up torn between the rashness of buying "a pig in a poke" and the feeling as if some kind of miracle!

Tell Dennis I got the windows!" I told Abbie and simply grabbed all my stuff and fled down to the beach to finish my last minute packing, feeling Abbie was anxious to get rid of me. There I parked and finished putting on my make-up, packing the car and strolled around on the beach for an hour wallowing in memories Alki point had for me. Eating places were all closed, so I bought a beer, sat in car out on the point and drank it and then tried to make up my mind which route I'd take out of town. I opted for Harbor Way and I happened on--

A thrilling sight! It seems Seafair was on and here were all the international "tall ships" just coming into harbor. It was a gorgeous day and I had an unobstructed view from the esplanade.

After that magnificent and exhilarating spectacle (I love sailing ships!) I headed out for the long, hot, tiring drive back to Vancouver.

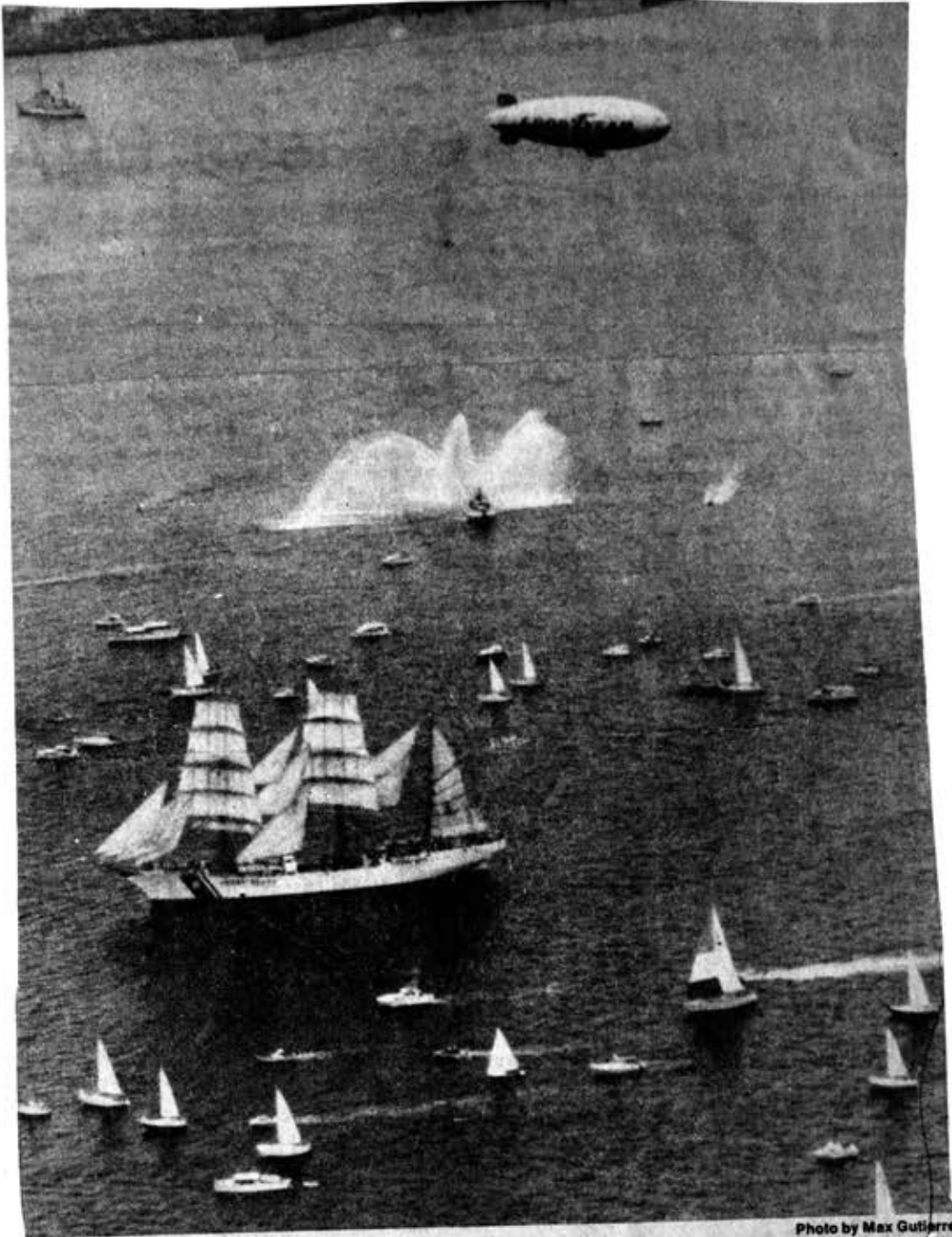


Photo by Max Gutierrez

Days of tall ships recalled

The U.S. Coast Guard's three-masted barque Eagle sails through Elliott Bay in Seattle where the training vessel will be part of a tall ships gathering for the Seattle Seafair. Pleasure

craft, a fireboat spewing water and the Goodyear blimp all turned out to greet the Puget Sound visitor.

END OF CAMPING—BACK TO VANCOUVER

MONDAY, JULY 31. 7:30 P.M. when I unlocked my apartment door. Was I glad to get back? No. Vancouver looked dull and provincial. My apartment looked, not luxurious, as I'd been prone to thin of it, but kind of junky. It smelled dusty and musty. And, outside, a good many of my plants were dead. All the yards outside looked sere, weedy, neglected. There wasn't a soul around, as usual. I sighed. My move to Vancouver had been a mistake. But my trip had been a good accomplishing one. And I was certainly in better shape than when I'd left.

Dennis had told me to call I was too tired to wait till ten. I called. All was fine! Fine! He was thrilled about the windows. We talked for about twenty five minutes.

Just after that Mike called. I made my report, making sure to get in, in case of future financial mix-ups that "Well, Dennis is making it bigger—nicer. Uh...will take more money—uh—" "Sure!" says Mike. "Just be sure you do it right!" Then he launched into his report: Steve was back from camp and—"Uh—Chris?" I interrupted. "We'll send him up later—about the end of August or September. He's not too interested in the woods—" "Oh fine! I'll take him to the Science Center and all. That's fine. Sure. Send Chris up." (I'd get everyone in Seattle to help me; figure it out later.)

"Say, how are you about electricity?" (Dennis had said he didn't think he could do that. "Maybe Mike could," he'd said.) "We-e-ll-I'm good—but not this year—we-er—it couldn't be till next summer." I let that one go. "You'll send Chris up then?" "You'll meet him at Sea-Tac?" "Why, of course!" "He has to be back for school." "Yeah. Well, fine. Fine." We ended our phone talk.

I stripped off my clothes and just fell into bed. The unpacking could wait.

"Afterburns": The friction we got into up there at the last did not pertain so much to the building of the cabin as that we were a tired, exhausted crew. and none of us had lived in such close quarters with each other for years. We had visited each other—yes, I dropping in on their ever increasing domesticity; they never exposed intimately to my independence and "business woman" activities during those years: I the perfectionist; they slam bang in our ways of doing things. And, of course, the camping difficulties. Mud. Rain. Slime. Slugs and all. We were all city oriented. The kids hated the woods. Abbie needed her telephone, radio, stores, shopping. Dennis, of course, was "torn six ways."

We were—damned fools? Wonder we didn't kill each other off! We were a motley crew, for sure, and none of us had, actually, ever done this before. Pioneers, fools, escapists—whatever. It was a struggle and "someday" I'm going to tell it—write it up, I vowed.

AUGUST 1978

Next day: I enjoyed my phone talks with Mike and Dennis the night before. We were crowing and happy! **We did it! We made it!**

I now could make my report on that trip?

→

TUESDAY, AUGUST 31, 1978

As I cleaned out my notes on July, this found: Dennis had said he'd give himself about "two weeks" to get the foundations in. July 16 thru 30th. ~~It~~ took him and Abbie 3 week ends and 4 evenings to put in 20 cement foundations. They did it all by themselves!

FLASHBACK; END OF CAMPING TRIP

Our celebration picnic at camp: The kids brought steak and fresh corn and, to cook steaks on, their hibachi, a big old heavy thing they lugged in. The corn they tried to roast in the coals of bonfire. But those coals went to waste as they struggled to get charcoal coals just right for steaks in the hibachi. None of it turned out too well. But we didn't care.

At the last bonfire in camp we got into a little hassle. I was very nervous about kids and open fire in the now tinder dry woods. I had gotten information somewhere that there was a helicopter? fire patrol.

Abbie and the kids sat by bonfire and played with it. At one point they began beating at it with long, burning sticks. I could contain myself no longer. "I never saw people beat at a fire like you do!" I cried, wishing they'd all just sit back and tend it. "Oh, they're just playing." I was assured.

Then—I smelled burning hair. "Lorna!" Abbie screamed. A live coal had landed in my hair. "Noah!" I yelled, "Put that stick down! I mean it!" I got glared at and they went on fire beating.

A little later I saw a spark rise and fall on Sarah's synthetic fiber pants. It did not go out! I screamed. The parents screamed, while Noah, whose stick had raised the spark, sulked and Sarah look puzzled at all the commotion. We got it out, of course. Or I wouldn't be here telling the tale.

So. Next day we were all leaving and no one would be back up for a week. I insisted we pour at least water on that crude little fire pit Abbie and the kids had created out of rocks there under the cedars. They were very proud of it and dirt would have buried it. I insisted over their arguments that it wasn't necessary. "Rules!" I cried. "Fire patrol!" They looked at each other, shrugged and poured water on it.

Later, we were all busy packing and loading. A cry from Abbie! We all ran. The fire pit was sizzling and bubbling. "Migawd!" cried Abbie, "I thought that thing was out!"

Later, I read in a fire patrol brochure that fire smoulders in and carries along in tree roots, something I'd never known before.



THE WINDOWS: What a lucky break it was to find wooden casement windows! For all three of us, Dennis, I and the architect's wife who selling them not like the ubiquitous modern aluminum sliding windows.

OUTLINE OF CAMPING TRIP

I did this after I got home. Since it was my first experience of this kind I wanted a way to check for better ideas for the next time.

I spent 18 days up there. I made 12 trips out of camp. The reasons I went out were to phone; for food and supplies; to get money; to do washing; and to tend to business pertaining to cabin building.

Why didn't I get more done that I'd intended to do? Well, of the 18 days only 8 of them and the mornings were alone. The kids came up 10 times. all of them came 6 times. The other times Dennis came with one or both kids and Abbie didn't come. They came up every week end—3 of them—and stayed overnight. And they came every Tuesday and Thursday evening. The idea, of course, was for Dennis to get as much done as possible in the "spare" time he had. Having to rush so with such a tight schedule made him, understandably, cross. 4 nights they stayed and worked till after dark. The unpredictability of when they could get away made it hard on them and me both. We never knew. And Abbie was tied up with the problems of having her mother in the hospital in Seattle with her eye operation.

Having the kids underfoot or having to be tended created problems and difficulties, of course. I took them to the pool 4 times, going in with them myself 3 times. We were new to each other and therefore uneasy together. All in all, afterwards, it seemed like a pretty frantic time. I think there were only 2 days that impressed me that we were all really happy!

So I reviewed that trip, anxious to see why I didn't ever seem to get the **business** done I'd gone up there to do. I had a long list of "critical path" things that had to be done in a certain order. I had brought books to study. (The damp ruined them!) I'd planned on figuring, measuring, doing calculations and drawings. There were people I had to or wanted to see about things. I'd thought it would be a good chance to get things all figured out and that list whittled down.

I didn't expect it to be a vacation; it wasn't meant to be. But I had thought I'd have a nice, leisurely time alone in the woods to get all this done as well as to just enjoy it all. But it seemed as if all hell broke loose.

So I sat down after I got home and tried to figure it all out. What did I **do** up there? All that camp cleaning I did. Was that wasted time? No. Actually, it was camp **establishing**: a toilet place; an eating place; protection for tools and gear; dangers eliminated. All that had to be worked out. We ended up with a more or less smoothly running living space.

Storms. They cut into my time. I spent about 5 days cleaning up after them. And each family visitation meant another clean-up, of course. That dog pest took some doing, if not chasing, protecting things from it.

So. I figured maybe next time I could use McNabb's phone and not have to go 8 miles to phone. I could cut down on trips out by taking more cash and food. And the next time I wouldn't have to buy camp supplies. I had them now. And I should try to consolidate trips more?

August 1—Tuesday. So nice to have made enough progress to be able to dream about cabin again. Am excited again.

August 2. I go to credit union and get the money for Dennis and mail it. \$2000. No problem.

August 4. Unpacking. Find one of my expensive Time/Life books on "Do it Yourself Building" all ruined by damp up there in woods. Question: what am I going to do with all my expensive books up there? Pleased to find I have \$90 interest on my cabin fund in credit union.

I'll have to make another big trip up there, But family plans complications: them sending Chris up to stay with me and Aunt Dode from Hawaii reunion at the same time.

August 5—Friday. Evening. Late. I phone Mike about above.

Future in cabin. **clothes.** What **am** I going to do with all my pretty job clothes wardrobe up there? Will have no use for them. I must concentrate on getting clothes for that kind of country now: instant raingear: hot/cold weather clothes. Waterproof, rustproof, mildew proof. Plastic. Wardrobe of "mannish" clothes: "grubbies", rain and mudwear. Utility clothes. Ugh.

It's nice to think I have someplace I **can** go and stay when up north and not be dependent on others. Like I can camp in (tool) shelter-if weather nice. Oh! I miss "Chamterre"—the birds, the trees—the peace!

August 6—Sunday. 10 p.m. I have to phone Dennis, for they'll be gone next week end—to Spokane. I do so. **Dennis call:** He reports ok. But has some problems. Said he found he was spending all that money on flooring. That he fears \$2000 for lumber will not be enough. "I should have figured it out more," I say. "You do too **much** paper work and planning," he says. "We just have to **build!**" I hang up regretting that I feel I have to keep a "secret margin" of money. One step ahead of Dennis? For it seems he never has **enough.**

August 7—Monday. Car troubles. My muffler shot. Begin a struggle to get it fixed. **Phone talk with Dennis and Abbie again.** They got my package but have not gotten the check yet! Abbie said the "window lady" called her and wanted to know if I needed any more windows? That they had some. I say no.

I take my car in and hassle that ornery young guy at Chevron. There is a hole in the muffler.....I write and discontinue Time/Life books. (There are other sources of info.) and invest the money in signing up for AARP accident insurance offer. Figure I may need it!?

August 10—Thursay. 11 p.m. Dennis and family going on vacation and promised to call me before they left. When I told them before I left up there that I would send them \$2000, Abbie had laughed and said, "Wow! We sure could have a good vacation on that!.....Dennis is to do the lumber purchase this week end....oh ho hum..I can't wait any longer for call....

Phone call: I am sound asleep when the phone peals. It was Dennis. "I got the lumber," he said. "Yeah. Go ahead and talk. Never mind the expense."

"Almost the whole \$2000 blown," he said. "About \$1700 for lumber." "Not bad!" I said. "But \$90 for tax!" he went on. "Can't you do something about that?" "Like what?" Well, senior citizen discount?" "No. No. **Mike** bought the property. I not the owner—not entitled to goodies." (Meantime: \$90 I thought. Just the amount of my credit union interest.) "Did they give you a discount?" I asked, thinking of all the haggling I'd done on that terrible stormy day. "Hunh? Oh—**no.**" "Who'd you deal with?" "Smith and Carlson." "Oh." I stifled a groan. They were, of the three bids I had gotten the least business-like and informative, but they were, admittedly, the closest and most convenient to our building site for someone as much in a hurry as Dennis was.

Dennis went on—about other things he'd need lumber for. What concerned me was his hang up about doing "diagonal flooring." Somewhere he'd gotten the idea that was the only way to go. To me it seemed wasteful of lumber. When he asked about roofing, I said, "Shingles" sadly giving up on my preference of cedar shakes which were so fantastically high-priced at that time. "Delivery?" I asked him. "Oh yes—Thursday." "Thursday!? What day is this? Oh—~~next~~ Thursday."

"Oh, by the way," he went on, "electricity." And he said something about a tag on the temporary circuit. "You don't have to go to Everett—" "Oh? (good!)"—two poles—P.U.D." "Huh? **Two!**" But—long distance call—I let that one go. "What's the answer on the electricity (hook up)?" "Oh two weeks." We hung up.

I was very disheartened. Furious. \$2000 hard-earned down the drain and only a "shell" up so far.

Dennis didn't tell me just what he'd gotten. Not that I expected him to. I trusted him. He said he'd given up on the cedar shakes for the end walls, which pleased me at the price they were. "I didn't get the roof," he said. That'll be about \$400. Nor did he say whether he'd gotten the roof sheathing or not. I think I asked him about doors. "That window woman—I don't know if she has any doors. Shall I pick some up?" "Oh—I guess—"

I was getting upset and confused—and cross? For Dennis said, "Well, what are you bitching about? You've got \$2000 **left!**" We hung up.

August 11—Friday. After long debate about it I called the kids back in the daytime. My purpose was to tell Dennis not to pay those guys until "terms agreed upon" met: the discount. Or else we'd go to their competition.

I called. **Abbie** answered. I had intended talking to her, anyway, assuming Dennis was at work. "All ready for your vacation?" I asked sweetly. And then went on. "I tell everyone Dennis^s practising (on my house) so he can build **your** house!" "We're not going to," she said. "Shock! what?!" I cried. "He's building that house for **you!**" "But isn't it nice to know that we have a **place** to go to?" I asked. "We're not interested in that land," she said. "Shock!" I said again. "Dennis is here," she said, "I'll put him on." (I'd forgotten about his change in hours.)

Dennis came on. "I'm not interested in that land," he said. Puzzled and hurt, I ignored that issue and began again my pitch about getting a discount. "Hey, I'm mad! I made deals wwith those guys! All those promises—" "But I've already paid them!" he cried. "But I made—deals—" He blew up. And then I got mad! "Well. Have a nice vacation," I said. He only got madder.

Then, somewhere in there—"I **finally** got the nursing log out. Dennis put in." "The last big—^{one}—under the house—that big old cedar—it **moved** finally." Somehow that upset me more. I had this "thing" about nursing logs. Dennis had taught me about them. I had some romantic idea that thing could hve stayed there. "Oh well—it's 'only money'," I said. "What!?" He blew his stack again. "I only hope," I said abstrusely, "that, when I die there, will be something left for **my** kids!" And I slammed up the phone and burst into tears.

The night before, after my lumber talk with Dennis, **my younger sister, "Tiny" had called me.** She asked about the progress of the cabin. She the only one of my family really interested, they having gone through fixing up a decrepit old cabin in Santa Cruz, California, to the horror of the rest of the family. I told her about our hassles and she'd applauded our fighting for our A-frame dream. She said her son, who had also renovated an old cabin in Sausalito, had said, "Ya gotta hassle those guys!" "I did!" I cried. "Good show!" she cried. "We'll be up to see! ("someday")" I'd felt better. Vindicated.

But I felt awful about Dennis and Abbie. I wanted to call and apologize—or something. But they'd be gone. Out of touch. I was deeply hurt. "We have no interest in that place" they had said. And, too found myself losing interest in it after calls and calls and calls, all unanswered, trying to get ahold of them.

Dennis and Abbie went off on their vacation. Meantime I got involved with Mike and Marylyn about Chris's trip up.

August 16—Wednesday. Mike called. He said he had just talked to Dennis and that they were just back and Dennis had said he was going up to the land the next day and "work like hell" and that "Abbie was coming up Friday".

August 17—Thursday. 9 a.m. Dennis called. He sounded so scared! Needed more money—for half-inch pressboard. Then he wanted to know what I was mad about? "Just no discount!" I said. He seemed mollified as if he'd learned he, too, had done things too hastily? He went on to say that he had to get breakfast for the kids and then get up to the land. "I think I will bring the roofing down to the ground. Also, I've decided to use cedar, instead of treated wood!" I said I'd transfer some money to him, and he said to call him that night—after ten, when, as I think I've told? at that time long distance rates were lower. I wondered where Abbie was but since he in a hurry I didn't ask then.

I had a hell of a time making that bank transfer for some reason.

Phone call to Dennis that night: Noah answers. Puts Dennis on. He had been up at land all day—since 12:30 p.m.—with kids. Worked till 9 p.m. lugging lumber in. "Where was Abbie?" I asked. "Oh she stayed in Yakima. She wanted to 'get away from the kids'. Her mother wanted her to stay. He'd have to go over and get her and bring her back the next day.

"It was all wet and raining up there—again!" He went on. And then I got the impression he had rather a different tune to sing than ways he'd been talking before. Seems he'd talked to people? "8 weeks! to get easement for electricity poles—P.U.D.," he said. "a snotty young 'engineer.'" Said he talked to a neighbor who also was furious: "came in here with \$5000—thought he'd put up a little 'shelter place. No way!" P.U.D. wants us to put gravel for a driveway so they can get in. The lumber came at 5 p.m." Dennis sounded furious! and this time not at me! We talked 20 minutes. He gave me the combination for their garage lock in case they not there when I'd take Chris there. We agreed to a talk—later.

Summing it up afterwards I realized things I hadn't realized before: like Dennis needed that log out from under the house because the foundations for the center support beam had to go there. And he was "behind schedule". He hadn't even started them yet. And his fury at PUD was based on his desire to get electricity in there so he could use his power saw. I thought about how too bad it was that he had no man to help him put those A-s up. Mike Godfrey, his old schoolmate, had more or less talked about helping him in his building, but it seemed they were currently alienated because of some friction between their wives. I was glad, though, that he seemed to be finding out that some of the problems he tended to blame me for were things all builders were going through.

I hoped he could manage all right for I now had to turn my attention from cabin problems and concentrate on Mike and the problems of Chris coming up.

I called Bud and Paula and made arrangements for them to help me entertain Chris.

In talking to Mike: I told him we had passed the temporary electrical inspection and that Dennis had connected it and hinted that I hoped the wires were in right! Mike didn't seem concerned. He said he thought Chris' visit would be good for everybody. And, as to him being up at camp on the land, he wasn't any good at helping to build but that he could baby sit.

August 18—Friday. I called Dennis about the key. He'd just gotten in from picking Abbie up on the plane.

August 20. In newspaper. A long article. About the building booms in Clark County (where I lived at time) and in the Seattle area. They asked officials if it were true they were making getting permits "difficult". Yes, they said. And they consider there'll be a 2% rise in cost in construction for every month of delay. (All Dennis needed, I'm sure, in his scheduling.)

Also: "Snohomish County water supply: a very high content of asbestos found in. Nobody knows whether it is dangerous or not—cancer causing."

August 21—Monday. Notice from Sultan Estates: A meeting of lot owners Sept. 17. Fun! BEing a property owner! Meetings and all! Guess that times my next trip up!

August 22—Tuesday. Dennis reports. PUD won't put poles in unless we grade a driveway in through area from cul-de-sac, which is a **County road easement** and not **our** property! They also want us to clear and top the trees there.

When we had found this out, I had, unfair as it seemed to me, gotten an estimate on gravel: \$88. And the neighbor, Dwayne Case, had offered to loan Dennis his pick-up to get a load. But Dennis hadn't time enough off his job to do this. So nothing had been done about it so far. Now, Dennis reports that, although PUD has their stakes in for the poles, it will take 8 weeks to get the guy wire easement. Dennis needed electricity to be able to use his power saw. Now, nothing done, he wouldn't be able to. He would have to go ahead and do all his sawing by hand. With that unhappy report, which I could do nothing about, I had to leave him to the problem and turn my attentions back to my role in family plans.

AUGUST... CHRIS VISIT

Aside: My very trying time to entertain grandson, Chris, in Seattle added to other conflicting and unexpected commitments does not really pertain in this tale of how the cabin was built. We only went up to the land once. And that I shall include as part of cabin history. The rest does not pertain. A different story.

Dennis and Abbie were taking two weeks vacation. They were, at the time I drove up from Vancouver on Tuesday, up at the land, where they intended to stay and get some work done. So they left the key at their house for me to be able to take Chris there. I wasn't to meet

Chris till the next day, so I was alone in the house. I made some calls, including to Bishop, who said they were p'ning to go up and see the land that week end. I agreed that would be fun as they had not been there since we'd bought it from them. (Post hoc: They never did go up.)

After I got Chris we went to stay at Bud and Paula's. Thursday, Abbie called and said they'd come home—got rained out. We all planned to go back up that Friday and take Chris and show him the place and camp overnight.

August 25—Friday. I took Chris and went to Alki. It was raining and cold, raising doubts on my idea of spending 3 or 4 days camping.

At Alki, during our family council in that little old beach bungalow grandpa Ed had willed to his three kids and their progeny, Chris came up with a memorable remark. They were telling Chris how happy they were to have him come and visit and he was welcome anytime, and so forth. "If I own part of it, why do I have to be invited?" Chris asked. "Oh!" Abbie cried.

Dennis and Abbie were really struggling, financially, at that time, as witness this family council. "Oh, by the way," Abbie says, "You owe me for the phone calls I made to Snohomish county. \$7." "I'm going to need—\$10—" Dennis put in. "Uh—could you make it \$20—\$21? for hand drill." Sigh. "PUD. I won't have any electricity." I gave him a twenty. "Ya got more?" I gave him another.

Later. "No gas," Dennis said. "I can't get up there without gas!" "Well, you can't use my credit card," I said. "Oh sure I can!" I loaned it to him. Later. Looking sad and sighing again Dennis said, "I'm gonna need—a couple hundred—and some nails—\$25." "And the phone bill!" Abbie sings out.

At some other moment: "Can I get anything at the store, Abbie?" "Oh yes! would you mind—?" It came to about—oh well—that's the way things were going at that time—sort of—hand to mouth, shall we say?

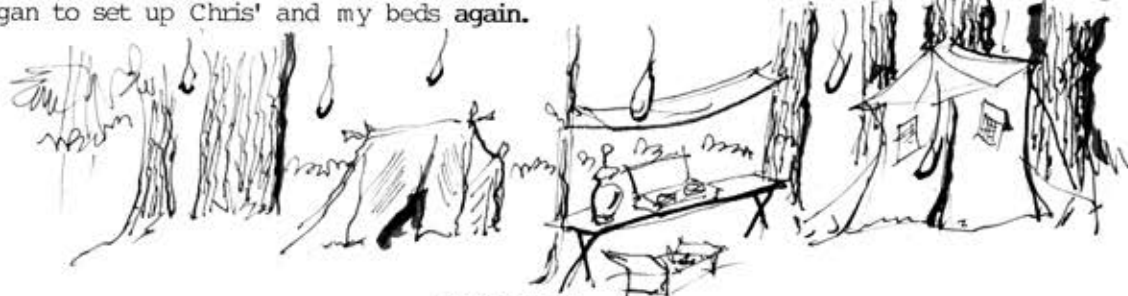
We settled that Chris and I would go on and they'd come up later. So Chris and I went through all the crowds, traffic and activities of Seafair.

When we got there I had him help me fix our cots in the tool shelter so that Dennis and family could use the tent. "Tool shelter"? Well, the kids had constructed this rather flimsy storage shed out of plastic Dennis had salvaged from his job at Sears. It was sort of a plastic lean-to, the frame made from alder saplings. To this, since I'd been there, they had extended a plastic canopy over their large, folding camp table on which they had put their camp stove and propane lamp. This, plus the "Palmetto" tent nearby was camp.

Chris and I hastened to clear out the shelter a bit and set our cots up before the early falling nightfall in the woods. We'd no sooner done so than the rest arrived and Dennis starting struggling in with myriad loads in all that pouring rain. "Take those cots down!" he cried. "We're going to need the shelter!" Not understanding in the least, I said to Chris, "Take the cots down." He did. There was no further discussion of the matter or any suggestions as to where Chris and I were to sleep. Everyone was too busy lugging stuff in in that pouring rain. Everybody was cross, grumpy and grumbling.

Later on the sun came out. "Let's have some fun around here!" Chris cried and marshaled Noah and Sarah and they all sped off to explore the woods. And then came back to ask if they could "make paths". "Sure!" I said, and they were soon very busy and did a fair job clearing out what I called the salmonberry patch. I was just puttering, "minding the kids" and staying out of Dennis' and Abbie's work area and getting myself in a dilemma by letting the older boy use the machete, but not the younger one.

Dennis and Abbie were busy working on the cabin, I did not know what they were doing. The kids and I were in the sunnier area behind the shelter. And, when I heard Abbie crashing around in there, I peeked in and asked her what she was doing? Silence. She had cleaned a small space in that cramped hovel and was laying out building paper and marking it as if making a dressmaker pattern. "Abbie? Wouldn't it be easier to do that on the table outside there? It's lighter there—I'll lay some papers down—" Silence. I was pleading now, hoping to lure her out so that I could get Chris's and my beds set up again. Silence. Furious, I went and checked the kids. When I came back Abbie was doing her pattern making outside on the table in the wet. "Abbie? Let me spread some papers down?" (to give her a cleaner, drier place to work.) Silence. I went in the shelter and furiously began to set up Chris' and my beds again.



THE SWIM

I took Chris and Sarah down to the pool. It wasn't very warm at all, but that was the whole idea, to let Chris use the pool I'd talked so much about. The only person in the pool was a cute gal about 18? She and Chris, both good swimmers, struck up an immediate, bantering friendship. "Anyone ever tell you you have big ears?" she joshed Chris, as I cringed. But, "All the time!" Chris countered and they began having such a good, splashy time that I engaged her as "baby sitter" for Chris and left them there.

And took Sarah, who was cold and wanted out of pool, into what they called "the gazebo" there. Actually, it was more a rough "clubhouse". There we built a fire in the big fireplace there and Mr. McNabb, the caretaker, came in and joined us for a bit. And then Chris came in, wet and shivering, but claiming he was ok. I got them dressed and we went back.



Earlier, in that cold, pouring rain, Abbie had been standing in the shelter, shivering. Now, when we got back, she was still bitching about the cold, the rain, the slugs, the dirt. "For heaven sakes!" I cried. "you could always have gone down to the gazebo and built a fire and taken a shower and all." (Why we "joined the club.")

Dennis wanted an estimate on what the gravel would be. So, the next chore, I took the kids and went over to the quarry nearby to find out.

I found it hard to do business, what with the kids acting up, a menacing guard dog, a very busy quarryman and I not armed with data needed. I found out very little—only that it would be very expensive.

When we got back, Dennis was sore that I hadn't found out. And then I got sore and went and sulked in the car, though it was now dinner time. I had told Abbie, "I brought food. Canned stuff. I'll get dinner".

Well, whatever the reason for my sulk was (and I had many!) I didn't know. I just stomped down in the rain and locked myself in the car. Byicaded myself. Nothing. Then, they sent Chris down. "Uhh—tell them I'm looking for something," I said. I was. A pack of cigarettes I'd hidden. "Ok," he said. And went back.

Then Dennis came down. I rolled the windows up. "Yes?" "Abbie says **you** are going to get dinner! We're hungry!" "I don't know **who** is!" I cried. "I'm confused!" He went back, after he'd said, "Abbie doesn't know **what do do!**"

After he left, I took a deep breath, climbed out of the car, cocked my white rain sombrero rakishly over one eye, and reeled down the trail back into camp. I was drunk: so mad I'd sat there and drunk that bottle of wine I'd bought-for later. I knew I looked a fool—had all kinds of oddments of raingear on.

Back in there, "OK!" I said. "Clear the decks! The witch will cook you dinner!" I opened cans and ordered everybody about, standing in the rain, hardly knowing what I was doing, I concocted hash and canned veggies. "Ok! It's ready!" I turned around. Nobody wanted any, for, they were already eating!—hot dogs and candy and potato chips—



August 26—Saturday. The rain had eased off, but things were most unhappy. The boy cousins, Chris about ten years old n Noah about half that—not in school yet did not seem to hit it off very well. And Chris seemed bored and unhappy in the woods. I took the kids out to a drive-in and bought them ice cream and felt Chris out. Back, I presented a plan. When they offered, I agreed: **They'd take Chris back with them and I'd come down the next day.** They packed and left.

August 27—Sunday. This time, about fed up with all the bickering and friction, instead of leaving my camping stuff there for the next time, I selected and packed all my stuff and lit out for Alki.



At Alki—Another little scene—Abbie "throwing" the swim pool keys at me and I pressing them back on her. I ended up calling Bud and Paula's and asking if Chris and I could come over there. After dinner, Chris and I went over there to stay, getting there late.

This is why I was there when I called about the windows, which had to be picked up in Bellevue.

August 29—Tuesday. At Bud and Paula's. I was tied down with Chris, whom I had to get on the plane the next day about five. He didn't want to go with me to get the windows, which meant I'd have to leave him alone there, as Bud and Paula were both at work. I felt uneasy about it, but Chris didn't seem to mind.

THE WINDOWS

My trip over there to see them—to see if we could use them—was sheer, dramatic hell. Feeling terribly worried and guilty about it, I just left Chris by himself in the house with TV. Bud and Paula would be home later, after a dinner date—or play—or something. I left Chris the phone number where I was going, and told him I'd be gone about an hour or so.

I left about sunset? I think. Whatever, I left just in time to get caught in that **horrendous traffic tie-up**. (See clippings) It was bad enough not to know where I was going or how to get there—some obscure little place on Mercer Island. Traffic was re-routed and I spent at least an hour just sitting with others in wall to wall cars—nobody able to get across the bridge.

I finally made a daring detour and managed to edge into the stream of cars inching across the bridge.

It was 7 or 8 p.m. and dark by then and I got lost and couldn't find the house. When I did find it there was this distraught young couple all upset because a relative had been separated from her baby, she on one side of the bridge and her baby left with people on the other. It was a very, very dramatic evening for everyone.

My adventures in: I got very, very lost in that dark, obscure, hilly street on Mercer Island. A car was following me. Scared me—I a woman alone at night—all that. I finally found the place; could tell it was it because of the windows stacked in the carport. The house was quite unpretentious, ramshackle. But new construction next to it.

After my talk on the phone to the woman, I was very surprised when I met them. I had envisioned very sophisticated, rather jet set people—she with that charming accent and merry charm; he an architect in a prominent Seattle firm. I had imagined them—about forty?

"Hi!" called a young man, coming out as I drove in. He was rather slight and red-headed and, later, found out his name was **Dennis**. We laughed about that. He was followed by a small, dark, not too young Asian woman with a sleepy, dark-skinned baby in her arms, and she seemed, not merry and charming, but rather on the defensive. Perhaps she caught my shock? Obviously a Korean or Viet Nam war marriage? They ushered me in.

The place looked temporary as they began to explain it was, but it was quite well and cleverly decorated with "art" foreign things. I, a bundle of ragged nerves by now, began to tell them of my wild trip—the wreck on the bridge and all. She said, "I was trying to help you!" (the tailing car) "I could see you were lost!" "I thought you were trying to run me off the road!" I said.

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not home
call back
8/1/50 AM - 4/1

As we talked, things began to ease, they becoming friendly and easy to talk to so that I lost a little of my nervousness. It seems he just a draughtsman in an architects firm, not an architect himself, as I had understood. When they seemed to be having some kind of a slight altercation, "What are you trying to say to each other," I asked. "She," he pointed at her, "Put an ad in the **Seattle Times**! I told her the local paper." "But," I pointed out, "if she hadn't made a mistake, I would never have seen that ad and—" I told them about Dennis and I and the fight about the windows—and the "miracle" of the windows would never have happened!

We got down to business about the windows. We examined them and measured them. They were just right! And Dennis drew me up some very expert architect's sketches of how to put them in—the framing and so on.

We were out in the carport where they were stored. He was telling me excitedly about their new house he had designed and they were building next door. But it was too dark and too much foliage there and we too rushed for me to really see it. I explained to them about Chris and how I had to get back.

"But don't you want to take the windows with you?" Dennis asked, seeming disappointed. "Are you kidding?" I asked, pointing to my tiny Toyota sedan. "She got them in **her** car!" he said pointing to his wife. "Oh I just can't take them tonight," I begged. Not only was I so tired and distraught, but where would I put them? I needed the room in the car to transport Chris and my stuff from camp. And Dennis' garage was jam-packed. No room to leave them there.

They seemed upset. "You want to get rid of them?" "Well—yes!" "Mmmmmmm!" — I assumed they needed the money. "Can you possibly leave them stored here? I **promise** you I—'we'll' **pick them up by mid-month.**" (Though when and how I was going to manage that I didn't know.) "Well, oh sure. Ok." "You want the money?" I asked looking at their dilapidated house. "No. No." "But I've got it—just a matter of bank transfer." "O. No." "I can pay you a down payment." "No. No." They were being very nice about it. It was a sale "on faith". "Now, tell me how I get out of here and back to the U district?" "Just go the way you came." I left, we all good friends.

But I took a wrong turn someplace on that dark hill and had one hell of a time finding my way back to the freeway and bridge. It was after 10 p.m. before I got back. I'd told Chris I'd be back soon! It took me two and a half hours. But he seemed ok. Bud and Paula had gotten back and they let him call his parents.

Seeing about windows for the cabin was one hell of an errand, believe me!

The next day. I called (my) Dennis to tell him about the windows. Was greeted by "Loma! I haven't **time** to go get them!" A long silence. "I didn't ask you to!" Then he allowed me to explain the situation. "I just called to tell you I **got** the windows!"

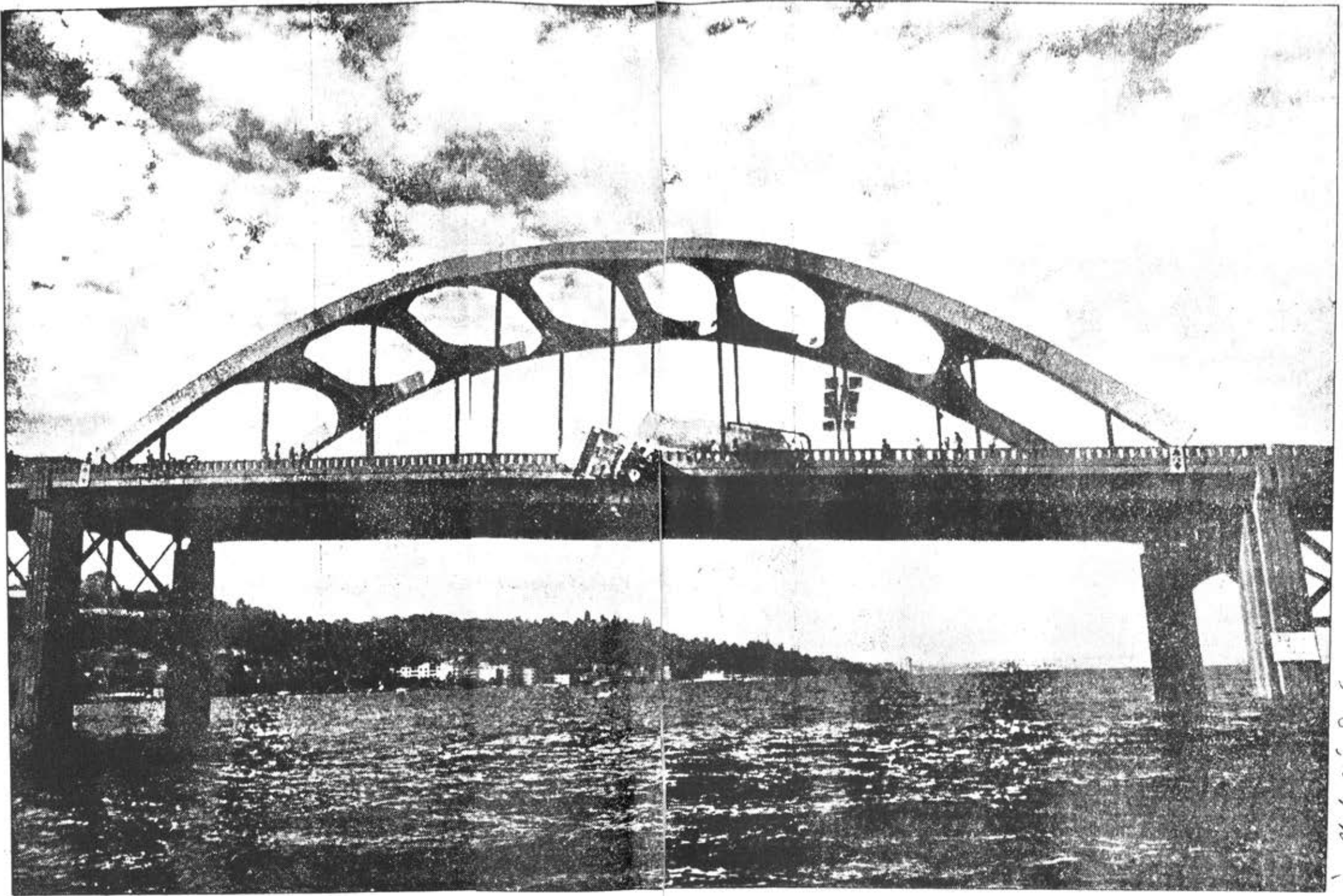
Then—"I think I'll be on my way," I said. "You aren't coming back here, then?" he asked muttering something about Abbie having gotten chicken for dinner? "I doubt it," I put in, "the freeways—and—so on—" Silence. "Well, you kids **rest up!**" I said. "Yeah. Uh—say goodbye to Chris." "Yeah." I cut him off rather crisply.

I got Chris off on his plane with some help from Bud, and set right out from SeaTac at about 5 p.m. to head for home where I had an important dinner date the next day. It was one sheer hell of a trip home. But all that another story.

That 9 days seemed like one sheer uproar. I left with everybody mad at me—the first time—without even saying goodbye (nicely) to Dennis. I carried one happy after-memory of that trip: Dennis had managed, despite all that uproar, to get four A's he had built. It stayed in my mind's eye Dennis perched high on that cross beam, alone, like some wood imp, his auburn hair matching the color of the rawwood, his eyes contemplative and dreaming. "Oh! I wish I had a camera!" I'd yelled.

In Seattle. They were all to go up to Monroe to the Fair the next week end. And I—would hardly have time to unpack and then I'd have to go up again—to that meeting, and to get the windows, somehow, and to try to see my aunt visiting from Hawaii.

LABOR DAY WEEK END: I home. Dennis and Abbie were to go up to the land and finish the A's. (In this weather? Raining steadily here in Vancouver.) Bishop



Saved by trailer hitch

*(The Business Highway)
Impact story on this - post hoc -
was that this - (4 contiguous) accidents on
Evergreen bridge - blew the I-90-10 years! Hold on, please they released an OK! I checked
next day
I tried to tell Dist 4 -*

Only the attached trailer prevented the cab of a tanker-truck from falling into Lake Washington after yesterday's crash on the Mercer Island Floating Bridge. The tanker was empty. Damage to the bridge was estimated at \$10,000. The five-vehicle crash, believed to have been caused by a runaway girl in a stolen car, made the bridge virtually unusable from about 4 to 8 p.m. Picture was taken from a boat. — Staff photo by Matt McVay.

*Could somebody get
Cause back -*

This happened the evening I had to make a rush trip over to Mercer Island to see about the windows for the cabin.

I was gone much longer than the hour I thought I'd be!

Girl arrested after crash on bridge

Seattle police have arrested a runaway girl believed to be in a stolen car which caused a spectacular, four-car, tractor-trailer accident on the Mercer Island Bridge during yesterday's rush-hour traffic.

The State Patrol said two persons suffered minor injuries in the accident, about 4 p.m., and that traffic on the bridge did not resume normally until about 8 p.m. Meanwhile, motorists seeking alternate routes caused traffic to back up on the Evergreen Point Bridge until about 7 p.m.

The accident happened a 1/4 mile from the Seattle side, near the west-end high-rise of the Mercer Island Bridge, when a sedan headed eastbound in the right lane suddenly made a U-turn across all lanes and struck a westbound semi-trailer-tractor.

The tractor-trailer, driven by James A. Dawson, 39, Maple Valley, struck a car driven by John Maki, 31, 1616 N.E. 156th St., Bellevue.

The trailer, owned by the Federly Marion Freight Lines of Issaquah, crossed the roadway and went through a concrete railing. The tractor portion dangled precariously over Lake Washington,

held only by its attached, empty trailer.

Meanwhile, the stolen car was "still spinning," the patrol said, when it was struck by a westbound car driven by Vivian A. Hosmer, 59, 1930 102nd Pl. S.E., Bellevue.

The Maki car, also spinning, collided with a car driven by Erin D. Carew, 23, 1119 Corwin Pl., Seattle. Carew helped Dawson out of the tractor-trailer.

Dawson and Maki were treated and released at Harborview Medical Center for lacerations and other injuries.

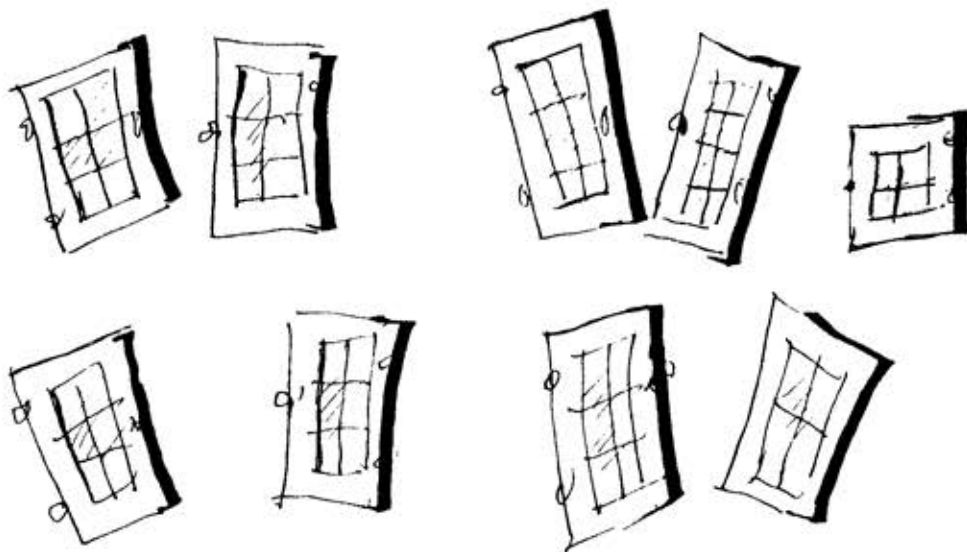
The tractor-truck, the stolen car, and the Maki car were described as total losses by the patrol. Damage to the bridge was estimated at about \$10,000.

About 100 gallons of fuel from the truck spilled into the lake but there apparently was no danger to marine life, the patrol said.

A trooper found a piece of identification of the apparent driver of the stolen car; a Seattle police officer, who knew the 16-year-old runaway girl, found her yesterday evening and took her to the Youth Service Center. She tentatively was booked for delinquent runaway and delinquent auto theft.

(Photos, Page 1 and A 3.)

August 29, 1978 Seattle Times



said he was going to take his family to the Monroe Fair and they'd stop by "Chamterre" and see it. (They never did—as far as I knew.)

Those poor kids—(Dennis and Abbie) Another holiday when they counted on building and this steady downpour down here. Wonder if it is up there?

Talk to Mike and Marylyn on phone: They say they plan to **come up for Thanksgiving and check out** what we've been doing up there. Gee. I hate to have them see it in winter the first time.

SEPTEMBER 1978 Back in Vancouver

Sept. 2, Saturday. Recovering from trip. In two weeks I have to do it all again! After all that, I'd like to bypass the family completely next time. Am tired of being a "guest". Therefore, even though it might break me, moneywise, a motel! Next time freedom, autonomy, **rest**, privacy.

This next trip: first I will have to check about the aunt visiting from Hawaii, and then I'll have to pick up those windows, ~~somehow~~ without bothering Dennis about them and take them up to Chamterre. Then I can camp out there in the shelter for maybe one night—why I brought all my camping gear home with me—not depend on kids. Then Estates meeting Sunday—potluck—I'll take canned ham or something, not having access to stove or refrig. Then, meeting over, head for home **one more time** or—may have to camp out one more night? That's an awfully long trip from Chamterre straight through.

Recover? I'll have plenty of time to. The long, long winter, alone down here. Many, many rainy days to suffer until spring and we can get back to building? Two? Three? years this has to go on? I'll **never** move into cabin! How complex it got! The story of Chamterre—a dream—a struggle—a try. I don't want it to end up a "failed place" like Doolittles! I want it to end up a **nice** place—a sanctuary—a loved place—someplace for my kids and grandkids to remember and feel nostalgia about—"grandma's woods". I want it to be—if not "perfect"—at least comfortable—safe. A bit rough, perhaps, but a place to enjoy—where everyone can go for a change of scene—a beautiful place.

Cabin business review: I sit and review and go through my papers and finances. I find myself amazed at how little we really did get done that week, business wise. I never did get a chance to discuss building or business things with Dennis. I left utterly confused about what more he'll need, when. He was supposed to give me a list. He never did.

I was dismayed, too, to see what investments I thought we were ahead on—little things—backsliding on—the machete rusted, the expensive work gloves — one lost. Then the struggle and expense to get that **temporary electrical circuit** up there, and it sitting there, unused. "It's all so much **harder** than I thought it would be!" Dennis cried at one point. What **did** we get done? Well, Dennis and Abbie got up three half A-frames, the lower half. They were trying for four, but Abbie mutinied, said she just couldn't do any more—the mud, the rain, the cold, sore muscles and all.



Financially: I've "shelled out" \$2700 to Dennis. (And we barely have the "shell" up.) I've got \$2300 left and "millions" needed yet. I thought Dennis had gotten all the lumber he'd need with that \$2000. Not. "We-ell-I haven't gotten this—or that—only half—" The prices have shot up on lumber. True. And the things code has made us do has increased our expenses.

Also—amateurs, we have made trial an error mistakes. Papers here—whoops! time's run out on septic tank permit. I've got to send off \$10 to renew that.

That Labor Day in Vancouver. I sat there and belabored my papers and tried to review everything. That trip. After I got back it seemed like a dream. What a wild summer! Seems like I was driving, driving—forever driving and lugging stuff about. It all seemed so frantic, such turmoil, that trip. What went wrong?

I thought back. **Dennis and Abbie.** Well, at the beginning of our "contract" I realized I really didn't know them very well—their life style, their hopes, dreams, and so on. We had only visited each other, not lived close by to each other.

The building crew: Actually, we didn't have one. I had rather assumed that Dennis had men friends whom he could call on to help him; borrow equipment from, trade off jobs—things like that. I thought there'd be excited interest like I got from the guys at the office where I worked: they were anxious and eager to "get in on the thing". Among themselves, they traded off and helped each other "just for the fun of it"—or even for pay.

Dennis seemed to think that his friend, Godfrey, now in the construction field, would be a big help. So I had visions of Dennis and Godfrey (and another friend or two) as a sort of partnership or crew, one in which I'd have been willing to contribute money or whatever. But somehow it all got so—domestic! I got a jolt then, up there the last time, I'd said something about Dennis needing a partner (male I meant) and Abbie had said, "I am his partner!" (And laughed.) This last time she'd said, "I'm his crew!" (And laughed.)

My ponderings went on. It wasn't the family or domestic inter-relationships that fretted me so much, but was the business of Chamterre. I tried hard to recapture the feeling I'd once had: at least I have Chamterre, a place to

lay my head, escape to—land on. I can always, last resort, camp there. But I no longer felt free to do so. Somehow I'd come back feeling as if I were an intruder there, as well as intruded upon. That night I was very weary of the whole thing. It wasn't fun any more. Close it up, Dennis! Seal everything in place! Let it winter!—come spring—right now I hate Chamterre! I found myself writing in my journal.

Sept. 5, Tuesday. Evening. I began to make phone calls to set up my next trip. First, Dennis. I asked if Noah got to enter school? "No. Teachers' strike. And after—went and got his new clothes and shoes and all! We got 9 A's up, but they'll have to be undone and done again. Some mistakes in my calculations." "Will \$400 enable you to close the place for the winter?" I asked. "Oh yes! More than enough!" "Roof?" "Oh, I'm not going to do the roof—" "What!?" "—just tar paper." "Uh—I gotta find a way to get those windows up there—" No answer. No comment. "Too bad Abbie got soured on the whole thing." Noises of assent. "Mike and Marylyn—coming—Thanksgiving" he rather whined. (Then he knew?) I gathered he wasn't too happy about it. "What are we going to do about it?" I proffered. Only a kind of whine. When I asked him about closing the place up for the winter, he murmured something about he wasn't ready yet. We hung up. I felt as if things were all up in the air. Rather bad news.

Then I called my aunts.—I spoke to (aunt) Dode to make my promised date to see her before she went back. "I'll be there! Week after next at Sea Tac!" "Oh, honey, where'd you get the idea I'd still be in the area? I'm going on to Olympia and then to California. Now you get up here next week!" Since I couldn't, I hung up making lies and false promises.

Dilemmas! Dilemmas! I'd hinted to Dennis that maybe I'd just go on up to that meeting and bypass Seattle, then realized I couldn't. I had to pick up those damned windows and get the pool key back from Abbie. I could write ahead and reserve a motel in Monroe, but I had no idea what everybody would be doing or where they'd be. Sleeping out on land was now risky—seasonal weather unpredictable and I needed to be able to dress up—to look nice for the meeting, my first with other owners who seemed a bit snobbish and awed me a bit.

Dilemmas. Dilemmas. Five months since I retired, expecting to be in cabin by winter. Out of that time I'd spent one third of it up there. But when up there happily busy. Here I just impatiently have to kill time.

Sept. 7, Thursday. I make a reservation for Monroe motel. Go credit union and arrange to send the \$400 to Dennis. Write him a letter. Am very depressed.

Sept. 8, Friday. Got my pictures I took at camp. Not too good, but surprised they turned out at all. That one of the A-frames. Dismayed me. When I checked with a square, et cetera, that one "A" is crooked! What Dennis had said: "Something wrong. A's won't meet."

During week: Got to thinking how small those windows are going to be—will have to have lights on all the time—with PUD at the price it is! And Dennis won't have time to bother with things like skylights. / **Read in paper:** "Rich developer telling how hard it is to get occupancy permits on new houses." Oh dear. / **Renewal on septic tank comes**—I write to the "window people".

Sept. 12, Tuesday. Call to Dennis: They didn't go up last week end. "What about the (crooked) A-s?" I asked him. "No problem. They were just done too hastily," he said. "What about the windows?" I asked. "If we leave them up there—they're wood—they'll rot." "Why, we'll put them in the house!" "Who will?" "I will! You just get them up there and I'll take care of them." "What about PUD?" "I'll get the electricity in before winter." "The gravel," I say. "Key, why can't we just get half a load? What about money? The \$400? What else will you need?" "I'll make a list," he said. "Ok. I'll be up there. Goodbye."

Meantime: the Aunties. We finally made contact. By phone. Dode: "Oh darling! so glad you called! We tried so hard to reach you! My nice visit was only marred by not getting to see you! Bye bye, sweetie!"

Sept. 14, Thursday. I get notice that my motel reservations in Monroe ok. For Saturday night.

Outline - - - -

TRIP TO SEATTLE

Sept. 15, Friday. Have arranged to stay with aunt Alice in Puyallup Friday night. Intend to pick up the windows on Mercer Island Saturday. Sunday have meeting to attend at Sultan Estates. Don't know if kids will be at camp or not. Other than that everything up in the air.

Friday. I leave home. Weather is fairly nice. Overcast...Rest areas are closed for season, so, for trip break, I grab an exit where I see a restaurant. (Napavine?) and buy a big lunch—which is no good...storm kicks up while I eat...storm passes...I go on.

Friday afternoon: Puyallup. Get maddeningly lost trying to find new exit from Puyallup into Puyallup. Finally get to Alice's where...(bad evening.)

Saturday: Break away from Doolittles' and go back route (via Kent.) to go Mercer Island for windows. Stop off in Kent to get car serviced, planning to call old friends there. Not work out. Weather is now very nice....Go on...Get terribly lost getting to and on Mercer Island. Finally find place.

2:30 p.m. Have gotten windows and had a nice visit with Alkires and neighbor and postman there. All ok...Go on to Monroe, where the weather clouds up. But a very nice trip!

4 p.m. Get into Monroe. Shop and sign into motel. Have brought stuff to camp with, maybe Sunday night, depending if kids are there and the weather. In view of which I make tentative arrangements to keep motel room for Sunday night.

Go up to land. Kids there. All ok. They have the bottoms of 10 A-s up! We get the windows into camp. Then deluge of rain! I invite them down to the motel to get out of it. They balk. I go on.

But they have arrived at motel by the time I do. They are all bedraggled and discouraged. We spend the evening crowded in the motel room with only snacks for dinner, watching TV. I try to rent a motel room for them. No luck.

Filled up. They go back to Seattle, saying they'll be back up early next morning, as they still have a few things to finish up on A's. I settle with motel that I will stay Sunday night, too.

Sept. 17, Sunday. Wake up to rain and dilemma. Meeting at 1:30. Have to dress up for. But told kids I'd come up to land, where now would be too wet and muddy for good clothes. Decide. Put on "grubbies" and go search for restaurant. All closed. Buy snacks at Safeway and go land.

Kids arrive as I do, late and grim. Rain and mud. I leave and go back to dress for meeting. Kids stay to work in mud and rain. I go meeting. It lasts till 4 p.m. I break away after potluck dinner to try to intercept kids who had planned to leave much earlier.

Just as I am leaving, Mrs. McNabb dashes out. "There is an emergency call for you!" It's the kids. Their car broke down. Come and get them!

I rush back to the motel, unload car, tell manager I'll try to get back by check out time next day and rush and rescue kids from where they are stranded along the highway. We drive in my car back to Seattle. As we leave, the sun breaks out! I dump them and drive back to Monroe. Am late getting in.

Sept. 18, Monday. My watch has stopped. I rush trying to get out by guess of check out time of 11 a.m. Pack. Leave. Get gas. Find restaurant and eat. And go back up to land. Take some pictures. Check out with McNabbs. The sun is now shining brilliantly.

I drive back to Alice's via the Kent route. Get hopelessly lost trying again to locate friend's house. Get to Puyallup exhausted. Park was closed where I'd planned to take a rest stop. Buy steaks and go Alice's. Not there. Comes later. Forgot about my coming.

There I do my usual "nursing stints". Find self so tired I stay another night.

Sept. 20, Wednesday. I break away from Doolittles'. Start long drive home. Horrible rains. Get lost on freeway. Took wrong turn. Do so again! Lost! Get back on freeway and battle my way home.

8:45 p.m. when I got home—EXHAUSTED. I'd driven 604 miles this trip. I got mind-crazing lost 5 times! I don't know how many roads I re-drove. Same roads.

TRIP TO SEATTLE—Fill in notes

Getting the windows: As said, I got hopelessly fouled up trying to find Alkire's obscure little house, coming in from the south off that complex interchange. I had a nice tour of the beautiful homes and the island of Mercer, though, it by then a sunny day. I'd never been in that part of Mercer Island before. When I finally found the house, Dennis was there by himself, and he took me on a proud tour of the house he was building next door. My enjoyment was marred by my being a shaking wreck from lost battles. Also I was a bit jealous that they had gotten so much further along with their house than we had with ours!

She came home later and we all stood around and chatted, neighbor and the mailman joining us. That was fun. We all got along fine. Then Dennis very neatly packed the windows in the back seat of the car for me. They just fitted! I left with all of us trading fervent promises of going to each other's house-warmings and seeing each other again. (We never did, of course.)

My trip up to Monroe with the windows. A joy. I had gotten the windows! Success! The worst (of this trip) was over. I made the freeway turn-off without a mistake this time. It was all free and clear on 405 into Monroe. I had the road to myself and beautiful music on the radio. The sun was gone again, but there was no rain. It was just right for driving, and the car

drove easily with the extra tire pressure I'd had them put in in Kent to carry the weight of the windows. The knots went out of me and I began to relax. I kept looking over my shoulder to the windows, coked so neatly there by the "other Dennis". The cramps went out of my back and I found myself sitting up straight, singing along with the music and lirting to myself: I did it! I did it! I sailed along. The urban blight melted away and it got greener and prettier. The jagged mountains appeared. The music soared. For the first time I felt: I'm going home! I'm going home! I sailed into Monroe.

The cookies: I stopped in Monroe and bought a great many fancy, expensive cookies, my contribution to the potluck at meeting. I was running a bit late. It was already 4 p.m. And hovering clouds. I wanted to get those windows up there and into camp before rain. I went and signed into motel. **What!? No cookies?** I had to drive all the way back into town. The girls at the bakery where I'd left them laughed merrily! I took the cookies back, set some aside for Noah and Sarah and flew up to camp.

The window delivery: I would need some help getting those things in. I did not know if they were there. Yes, their car was there, but not a sight or sound of anyone. Bleep! Bleep! I sounded with my silly little car horn. Silence. Nothing.

Remember we had parted rather coolly, strained relations, the last trip. Then Sarah came hurtling out of the woods—all of them. "Grandma! Delivering windows!" I cried. A bit of eye-play—then, all was well. "Let's get the windows in—now!" I said, a wary eye on the sky. Noah had a cast on his arm!?

But, "Can I help?" he asked. We all grabbed windows and Dennis led the way in. "Oh! Oh! Oh!" I cried and began to clap, applause. "Ten! Ten! Ten! Aframes up!" as they all beamed.

Camp looked good. They had a fire going, a canopy extending from the tent and some kind of "flooring" over the muddy area. I wanted to stay there and exult, but "Let's get the windows in!" I cried again, for the first ominous rain drop had just fallen on my nose. We had just gotten them all in when the heavens rent and the deluge came.

It was so sudden, so utter. My good traveling clothes and shoes were getting ruined. The rain was putting the fire out. "Well, I said, "I've got a motel room down there. Be sanctuary. Out of the rain. Has a pretty creek running by outside the window—television—wanta come and see?" "Why?" Abbie. "We don't have any food. We have to go to the store—" she went on.

I was tired, hungry, hadn't unpacked. "Well, I'm going," I said. "Whatever you decide—If I don't see you again—" The little kids were newly subdued. Sarah wanted to come with me. But I just put my head down against the wind and rain and tromped out to the car, revved up my motor and drove off.

They were at the motel before I'd hardly closed the door there.

The motel was not fancy at all. It was old and out of date. The shower was dingy. There was no telephone. But I found it rather quaint and charming with that swift, deep creek and lush green grass practically up against those big old "picture" windows. And it was cheap—compared to others I'd stayed in. I paid only \$28 for 2 nights. There was no restaurant or eating facilities. When I asked the rather strange management just got a shrug (you were on your own.) I had no real food with me, just camping snacks—things like that.

The kids were soaked, bedraggled, cold and grumpy. They had brought what little food they had with them—cokes, a few snack things. "Ok", I said. "Anybody want a shower?—a drink?—" No No. "TV?—pillows?—warmth?" I turned the heat up, the TV on, threw pillows to the kids so they could watch an animal show; got out what few snacks I had. Later Dennis watched the Mohammed Ali fight. Nobody seemed to have much to say. I mixed myself a very wanted drink and stretched out on the bed.

Later. "Ready, Abbie? to go back into those woods?" Dennis asked. "No," said Abbie. "My back is killing me; my muscles are sore—" "I want to finish," Dennis said. "Just one more night?" "No. I want to go home," she said.

At one point, during the litany of their woes working in the mud and rain, I asked, "What do you mean you wouldn't do this again?—not even for your own place?" "No. It's too much!" they agreed.

I suggested they let it go—finish up some other time. That I'd go up and close the place up. That maybe—later—we could find some man to help Dennis.

Meantime, I found out: Noah hurt his arm in accident at school; they had written Mike and Marylyn and sort of begged out of Thanksgiving get-together—not enough money, etc; that they had not touched the \$400 I'd sent them; that Abbie was no longer baby sitting for extra money. "It's nice to be just our own family again," she said. I remembered and asked them for the pool key, the season over, and McNabbs saying we were responsible for the keys' return. They gave it to me.

"Well," they said, "guess we'd better go." It was quite late then and still storming. "I want to stay here," Sarah said. "I could sleep here." "Hey, look!" I said, and I put on my rain gear, pocketed all the cash I had left and battled the storm to go talk to the landlady-manager. "Can we rent another room?" "No." I told her the sad tale. "No." "We'll pay." "No. We're full up." "Well, could we pay you to put couple of extra cots in there?" (motels used to do that.) "No."

I went back to the kids. "Well, I tried!" "Well, we'll come back early tomorrow and get those A's straight and then leave by 1:30." "Ok. I'll try and see you before you leave." And I saw them off into the storm. ("No room in the inn?")

Sept. 17, Sunday. In Monroe motel. I wake up early, tired, befuddled, hungry! A train whistle blows in the distance—echoes of my childhood in Yakima—train stop town—I realize I have dilemmas for the day; I have made conflicting commitments.

My first meeting with my new future neighbors—Sultan Estates. I want to impress, be dressed up—versus—promised the kids I'd be up there (mud and rain) when they got back. Their plan to leave at the time the meeting starts—I lie and puzzle it, noting it raining, though not hard. Some sun would help.

I opt to take a chance on "grubbies" and chance to come back and change.

11:30 a.m. Oh misery! It's raining raining raining—and I am **so hungry!** I drive into town. Nothing is open except Safeway. I go in and buy english muffins and bananas and **gulp!** And take the rest with me and race up to camp. The kids will be hungry.

I drive in just as they drive up behind me and stand mute and silent as they start lugging stuff in. The place is a mess. It is raining like mad. The lumber Dennis bought is all soaked and wet and warped. The new wheelbarrow is standing full of water—and beginning to rust. I go back to the car and bring in my emergency food. Proffer it. Abbie says, "Ugh!" and starts to cook pancakes in the rain and mess and mud, singing all the time, "Oh, we love pancakes! La de da!" I try to take some pictures of this amazing scene. They keep moving out of camera range. Dennis starts clumsily moving around to go to work —

I stand around and watch awhile and then decide I can't stand it. I just turn around and leave and head back for the motel. I figure, since they're so late in coming, they'll maybe be there till 4 or 5. I'll see them—later.

Back at the motel: They are "room servicing". I beg them, "Can't we let it go?" They agree. The place is a mess.

12:45 p.m. I bathed, dressed, ready to go meeting. Hey! It's not raining! and—as I drive through intersection of Main Street and Highway I spot a restaurant right at the crossroads. (Why didn't they tell me?)—all that starving and search for food!

THE MEETING

The meeting was to be held in the "community park", a chain-link fenced area containing the swimming pool, the caretakers' mobile home, a roughly comfortable

clubhouse with a big fireplace and picnic tables. It was to be a "potluck"; that is, after the meeting there would be an everybody-bring-something food spread. (Free food! I could hardly wait!) My first meeting. I was, understandably, a bit nervous about it.

All dressed up and armed with my cookies, I approached cautiously, driving by first, to see what I could. I delayed by driving up by the land, circling around the cul-d-sac. The kids' car was there and I could hear hammering. I walked partway in and hallo'd! "How's it going?" Only Sarah came tumbling out, looking like a little gnome in her white pointed rain hood. "I'm going to the meeting," I said. She ran back to tell them. I left.

I went back to the "community park". Cars were gathering. I went in.

The meeting was like any other of its kind. First, the shying off of people, then the long, boring formalities and "business" of rules and procedures to attend to. Then the heating of passions and verbal fights and walk-outs. And then only "the gang" left. It became a long and noisy meeting. It lasted till 4 p.m.

It wasn't too comfortable in there. I was in a spring pants suit and, although they had a huge fire going in the fireplace, it was cold. Cement floor, and people kept opening doors and windows to let the smoke out. The picnic table benches were hard and uncomfortable. It was very crowded in there—maybe 30? 50? people—and—I was so hungry!

My social fears relaxed. I had envisioned this group as rich retirees, but it was kind of a motley crew. Nobody that I was too impressed with, though leaders began to emerge later. As for my fear of being over-dressed, there were many as dressed up as I was.

The meeting, itself, was interesting. I learned a lot, but it was noisy and ragged. I couldn't follow what they were talking about. The leaders that emerged were, of course, the ones nominated and elected to the new board we were there to "vote" on. And, they were the only ones to stay for the dinner afterwards. "The Gang".

I went in with a young couple who seemed as confused as I was. A lot of stiff chit chat. Then me and my cookies—I had no plate for them! Lu McNabb, the caretaker's wife got me a platter for them and took me under her wing, taking me around and introducing me, rather proudly, it seemed to me.

I gravitated with my plat map trying to figure out names. There was a rather rough looking couple my notes called "the gold dust people". They were making a big furor about having gone—"east" in Washington state and finding gold. They were showing off samples. (I put this in post hoc because the lot they purchased here became a problem later.)

Typically, I didn't enter into the meeting very much, only speaking up a couple of times and mostly making notes. I refrained from quips except 'sotto voce' to seat mates, who seemed appropriately amused.

During the meeting they voted the McNabbs a vacation to rousing cheers for "service beyond the call of duty" or however that goes. That was kind of fun. But by 4 I was bored, restless, cold and hungrier. I started to worry about the kids up there working—wanted to go and tell them about all the rules and regulations I was learning about. I'd mentioned that my kids were up there working. Everyone marveled. "They are? In the rain!?" But it was only I who seemed excited when, about 4 I cried, "Hey! the sun's out!"

There was a big, electric pot of coffee burbling away in the corner during that long cold meeting. But nobody touched it. Not even coffee for my starvation. I had to smell and suffer.

The meeting ended in sudden chaos. Most of the people just swarmed out. The "In group" had been elected. And it was one of them in the few who lingered who remarked. "How come none of them ever stay for the dinner?"

I certainly intended to, and worked hard on finding excuses for loitering. But I, too, almost joined the exodus and got a little dismayed as I laid out my cookies on a table that wasn't at all producing the bounty I had expected. And families were commandeering tables and laying out mysterious covered dishes

and utensils, which made me realize I didn't have anything to eat **with**. I was **starving!** Where was all this good food?

But after the exodus of the people, suddenly food poured out from everywhere! The buffet table was loaded with casseroles, salads, goodies. With my car keys in my hand, (to go out and see if I didn't have at least a plastic spoon in the car) I wandered hintingly. "I—I—I—forgot a spoon—fork—plate—" said. "Go ask Lu," they said. Lu ran and got me eating utensils.

I stood in line with my wobbly paper plate ready to test how much of the food! food! it would hold. I feel so mean," I said. "Warm fire—all this good food while my kids are up there working."

I got my plate filled and sat down—where else?—at the "lonesome ladies" table—with Lu and Irene. But lo!this guy I'd been talking to with my usual explanations about being an artist ("No. No. **Commercial!** etc.)comes up and "intrudes". "May I sit by this pretty lady?" (me.) But sudde nly he got up and went an joined in at "the gang's" table, and I was left at the fast emptying women's table, trying to hear what Lu and this woman were gossiping about. "Is Mr. Case married?" Lu was asking. "No no. He and his wife—separated—he's retired—early—back problem—"

I realized they were talking about "my friend". Actually, he was the only man there that seemed the slightest bit friendly toward me. Not a bad looking guy, but **much younger** than I. And I'd been rather impressed at his seeming know-how when he made a convincing speech about working for the water service in Everett. Sharp guy, I'd thought. Makes sense. And they had elected him to the board. Then I realized he was the one up on our street who had offered Dennis the use of his pick up. His name was Mr. Case.

Other social encounters: When I'd first come in—people were rushing up to me—this one gal I sort of liked but was puzzled about where I'd seen her before said,"Oh I didn't recognize you! All dressed up! The only time I ever saw you before was in the pool!" "That was the **real me!**" I quipped. (later I recalled her name: Marge Delp) *one of the board In-group.*
"Are **you** the one? A-frame? We walked in there —Come. I want you to meet someone." She dragged me over to a doddering old man they all seemed to respect.

"May I?" He put his hand out. I put mine out. He gripped my hand. I his. "I'm so, so glad to meet you," he said. "That **son** of yours—that A-frame—He is doing and **excellent job!** That cabin is going to be so strong! They don't build like that anymore!" I gripped his hand. "Thanks!" I said, "Thanks!" (Later I found out it was old Mr. Whitfield, head of the real estate dynasty that owned half the countryside. **Much** later. At the time the name Whitfield meant nothing to me.)

Then, all hell broke loose. "**Loma! Loma! Emergency call!**" Lu flew in.

It was Dennis with his laconic voice."Car broke down. Can you take us to Seattle?" "Where?" I asked, as Lu watched me. "Where?" "Oh,—Monroe." "Where?" "Oh—Abbie—Monroe—at A&W—" (a dingy hamburger place near ramp to highway.) I gathered Abbie was there.

I flew around, made apologies to Lu and people at meeting. It was all kind of melodramatic. I raced down to motel. I'd have to clean out car—the kids carry so much stuff with them—unpacked the car and raced to Monroe.

Abbie and the kids were waiting at the A&W, Abbie looking distraught and confused. "Where's Dennis?" I cried. "Oh—up there?" "Where?" "Oh—there—" "Where's the car?" "Oh—there—not far—". I piled them in the car. Set out. Dennis flagged us down in the worst possible place to stop—right on the on-ramp. Cars were angrily honking at us as I ordered him to get in the car. "Now, where's the car?" "Oh just down the road apiece." "Hurry!" Abbie kept saying, "the tow truck is waiting!"

I drove and drove and drove. "Close" they'd said. It must have been 5 miles out of Monroe before I finally saw it on the shoulder, lights blinking. "Turn around!" Dennis ordered me. It would have meant making a U turn in the middle of the freeway and there were cop cars behind me. "No way!" I said and

versus Dennis' fury I drove on for miles before a place I able to turn around. Then went all the way back and parked on the shoulder, put my blinker emergency lights on while Dennis walked down the road to where their car was. There the tow truck finally came by and Dennis talked to them and then came back, telling me "Follow them into Monroe!"

Meantime, as their car was towed off, Abbie said to Sarah, "There goes Mrs. Bear." Sarah, at that time, had this thing about bears; all the stuffed toy bears she had.

We went back into Monroe where the tow truck met us at a garage. "Got any money?" Dennis asked me. "No—no—". I did lie a little, but I had to get back to Vancouver. Dennis paid. We left the Buick? was it? at the garage to be fixed. I gave Dennis my car keys for him to drive.

As we headed back for Seattle, Abbie, very subdued, and the kids in the back seat, I began to search through the glove compartment, cussing. All that paying into AAA and when emergencies—! The sun was in our eyes, now. After all those rainy days. The kids were whimpering. "Cookies, anyone?" I asked and brought out those goddamned cookies—hardly any were eaten at the meeting.

It was —sad. We left the car at Monroe, having unloaded all their stuff from the back seat, including "Mrs. Bear." Back at Alki, I unloaded them. "Mind?—if I don't come in?" I drove back to Monroe, headlights blinding in my eyes. It was late when I got back. I was very tired. The motel room was a mess.

Sept. 18, Monday. I wake up—late. I have to pack up all this stuff and get out of here by check out time—11 a.m. I also have to go up to the land and check things out. What time is it? **My watch has stopped!** I turn on TV to find out the time. No use. I finally ask the cleaning people outside. 10:38 a.m. By 11 I am packed and out of the motel.

The weather is cloudy. I get gas, then stop at that too-late-found restaurant on SR-2 and buy myself a huge breakfast. While I eat the sun comes out. I head up to camp and land where I want to take some pictures I never got a chance to take and check out everything and check out with McNabbs. And then I have to head for the long trek home to Vancouver, stop and see Alice on the way—stay there overnight—

I get up to the land. McNabbs not home. I go into camp. The kids have done a wonderfull job! All is clean and stored. There is nothing for me to do. I fuss around trying to take some pictures. I would love to just spend two days there—resting—but—

12:45 p.m. I say goodbye to Chamterre. I go.

McNabbs home. I stop. I try to tell them about our dire tale of woe—the car and all. They don't seem very interested. I go.

As I leave Monroe, the sun is shining brightly. After all those days of downpour.

TRIP BACK

I hit the freeway, taking 405, the "back way" home. I meant to stop at the old Highway office and talk to Bishop, but I was too tired, dirty and in grubbies. I forfeited. I did stop in Kent again and try another search for friend's house only to find it empty—deserted. I went on. And almost got clobbered by a truck en route.

Puyallup. I stop and buy some steaks for they never have any food in the house. I am so tired. I seek out a remembered park to rest. Closed. I park by roadside and—rest. I go to my aunt's. Nobody there. She forgot I was coming, she says when she comes back. I stay two, instead of one night, "nursing" her.

Wednesday I leave for Vancouver. I make a wrong turn someplace—so absorbed in thinking about everything that happened. I grab the first off ramp—detour off freeway for awhile, get back on it and get home—exhausted.



VANCOUVER: HOME

Sept. 20, Wednesday. Thank God the camping trips are over—can settle in for winter. Am proud of myself: over 1200 miles I've driven just the last two trips without an accident; without car breakdown. And I without car insurance and with loved ones in car! Had some narrow squeaks and heart pounding moments, but did it! did it! Check it: 3900 miles since April 13. Average 780 miles a month. I feel like I've been driving—forever!

Call to Mike and Marylyn: More quibbles about Thanksgiving.



Sept. 23, Saturday. Call to Dennis and Abbie: Abbie answers. "How's it going?" I ask. "Why—ok—". "No problems?" "Of course we have problems, but it's ok." She puts Dennis on. "The car?" I ask. "No car. Engine blew up. No engine." And then, "Godfrey and I are going up on Tuesday. PUD called and said they were ready to put the poles in if we'd get some gravel in. Godfrey and I will get the gravel—one load—and scatter it. And then I'll have electricity—can use my power saw!" We decided the stumps in the graveled area could just rot. Or maybe the trucks would crush them.

"What about your car?" I ask. "Well, I can sell the jeep—hate to—can use it later—but maybe get \$1000 for it. Godfrey knows of a car near him for \$200. I tell him he can use part of the \$400 towards a car. "Well,—ok can pay you back. Have to pay \$230 tuition for fall term at the University Monday—can pay you back—."

"Don't forget to winter the water," I say. The water stand pipe had to be buried in sawdust, furnished by the club, so not to freeze. "Oh maybe Godfrey and I can do that while we're up there." He began to sound more cheerful. "Get the frames up and straight—We'll get it done! "

"Can you manage the gravel and lumber out of that \$400?" (I had a "floating fund" for more he might need.) "Oh yes, don't need much lumber—" "What about the roof in case you get that far?" "Well, I've got the sheathing—" "No no. I mean the other stuff? (waterproofing felt.) "Oh no, haven't got that yet." "How much will it be?" "Oh \$150 1st time I asked, but price gone up, I think." (Ooch.) "Well, we'll sweat that later," I said. "Yeah."

"First thing is to get transportation—car", I say. He sound quite complacent. I tell him about Don (at Doolittles") and the (new) cedar shakes he has there for sale. "His price \$85 per square now. Last time priced \$65 he said. Well, I don't trust Don," I say, "Let's forget—shakes.". "Yeah. We'd need about 17 squares—that would be about \$1700." "Yeah. Let's forget it."

I told him about Mike still thinking about Thanksgiving. We hung up. And I full of thanks giving all the next week thinking about Dennis having some (male) help!

Call again. Abbie answered again. "Do you want to talk to Dennis? He's still just sitting in the same place!" Dennis came on and thanked me profusely for my phone call. "I forgot to tell you about the meeting," I said, and proceeded to tell a few things about the business part of the meeting and the guys there, and so on. And I told him about Casesaying he'd worked for the water department. "Oh really?" Dennis put in. And he chuckled when I told him about the (usual) volunteer help: five guys offering and only the same two ever showing up for the actual work. We chatted a bit more and hung up.

Sept. 26, Tuesday. 9 p.m. Call Dennis, so anxious to know what's going on. Abbie. Dennis not there. At work. "Oh. I thought he had the day off and he and Godfrey—" "Oh yes, they'd gone up there, but she didn't know what they did." "Something about the gravel for PUD?" I asked. She didn't know. She said she didn't know what was going on—about getting a car or any of it.

Sept. 27, Wednesday. What a mockery! All this fine "Indian summer" weather—versus all that summer of rain at Chamterre now that Dennis can't get up there. (School and no car.)

Sept. 30, Saturday. So curious to know! Call Dennis. Yes, he and Godfrey went up Tuesday, but they had very little time as Dennis had to get back to work. They cut down three more alders in the driveway area. Left the stumps in since they small and we agreed either winter or PUD trucks destroy. They ordered one load of gravel—\$60— and spread it. "We've got gravel all over the place!" Dennis said. The PUD truck up next week.

They bought some more lumber and got cross pieces upon the A's. And all braced. Said they're still crooked, but—no time to fix. They buried the water pipe with dirt. Didn't have time to go down to caretaker and get the sawdust to do a good job.

Though he hates, to, he may trade the jeep to Godfrey in exchange for a pick-up "in good condition" and a chain saw. ((Post hoc; the jeep deal fell through. Godfrey said it in too bad shape.) Yes, he and Godfrey think they can trade off helping each other build as Godfrey is fixing up his house. That was the news on that call.

OCTOBER 1978

Oct. 12, Thursday. Call kids. Abbie. Told her I was going to Yakima and asked her if any messages for her family? "Oh we're going over this week end—me and the kids." "In car?" "No, we don't have one. Ride with my brother. Dennis isn't here." "Did he contact PUD?" "Oh I don't know." Then—Oh Lorna! Noah fell and cut his face all up! End of inquiries about cabin.

Oct. 14, Saturday. 10:55 p.m. Dennis calls. "Can I use that \$400 for my tuition?" "But I thought—" He explains about the car deal with Godfrey falling through and speaks vaguely about some guy from work going up there with him maybe the next week end. He goes on about bracing the A's and about his buying a new hose for up there. And something about calling Mike and asking him for another \$1000 for the roof, which I evade talking about until I give it more thought. I mention storms? "Oh no." "Well, I hate to think of all that lumber rotting up there." "It's not rotting. I've got it covered." "That woods eats things up," I say.

I told him I was going to Yakima. "Understand Abbie went." And I squeezed in something there about Abbie losing interest in the cabin. "Oh no she hasn't!" We chatted about Noah's face and got to reminiscing when I asked him if Noah would be interested in his old baseball glove I'd found. Then, can I please use the \$400 for tuition? Pause, "Whatever," I say. "Thanks, mom, thanks!"

Later, I called him back, a little puzzled by what he'd said. I'll pay you back if I keep my job," he said. I asked him again about Godfrey helping him. He was vague. He mentioned again he was going to call Mike and ask him for another \$1000—this time to buy end wall wood. I had thought the wood all purchased. I was getting alarmed. I'd started out with \$5000 and now I only had \$2000 left.

Dennis didn't know if PUD in there yet—And he has no way of getting up there—in the winter. Yes, they got the tent out, but the other stuff—(still there I assumed.) Some guy from work was going up with him (not Godfrey)—then something about a change in plans to put up the roof sheathing. "Wish I could get up on top of the A's," he said. His voice was low and muffled. I could hardly hear him. He asked me, "But what are you going to do? Stay there?" "What else can I do?" I asked. I'd told him before about my car transmission "going out".

Oct. 15, Sunday. I tried to call Mike to kind of feel him out about whether he was willing to invest more in the cabin. Was unable to get.

Then I called Dennis again and told him I'd tried to call them. "Look!" he blasts at me, "if you're going to report!—Look! if you want **out**, say so!" "Just a couple of things I wanted to check," I said. "Don't you **want** to do it?" (the cabin) he asked me. "Oh sure! Sure! but I'm **scared**!" I mentioned my \$5000/\$2000 finances check out I'd made.

I went on talking till I got some other things straightened out. He doesn't want the whole \$400, only \$190 for the tuition. A loan. "You said 'Mike'," I said. "Oh, I meant Mike **Webb** a guy at work—is interested-(construction)-wants to build his own house. "Well, I thought you meant Godfrey?" (His name was Mike, too! We should have been on **Mike**-crophones, we had so many Mikes going in these conversations!) "Oh no no no no—thn I'm going to ask Mike for \$1000—I wish you'd quit reporting to **Mike**!" he said. "I'm going to **do it**!"

Later, "Well, you still hanging in there" he asked. "Yeah." "Hang in there, baby!" were his last words, reassuring, kindly. Afterwards, it occurred to me that he and Mike (his **brother**) had some financial trades and transactions pending on their inheritance of Ed's (their father's) house. Perhaps that's what he had meant?

Oct. 20, Friday. Just back from my **horrid** trip to Yakima. (Another story! I call **Mike**. "What's this about Dennis?" he asked me. "I don't know what you're talking about," I said. "Well," Mike continued, "we **do** want to come up Thanksgiving. Maybe not to see the **land**—but—". "Well, you're perfectly welcome **here**!" I cried.

Oct. 21, Saturday. 10:15 p.m. I'm sound asleep. **Phone**. It's **Dennis**. He said they were going up to the land this week end. "Why?" "Oh, PUD and all." He sounded quite blithe and happy. And he was **elated** about my information on the history of grandpa Ned Chambreau's sojourn at Barlow Gate. (Research I'd done on my trip while I was in The Dalles.)

He and that guy from work had just been up to the land. "The **electricity is in**!" he cried. "I plugged it in. The meter read 000 and then started going up." He sounded so excited and pleased! "Now! it's going to be easier! I can get the tops up—" and away he went. He said it was a **nice** day up there. Pretty. The vine maples hadn't turned yet, but the cottonwood leaves all down.

Hating to break this good news and jubilation I broke in and asked, "Mike? Did **you** talk to him about Thanksgiving?" We got off on family talk. Then—"You got any transportation yet?" "No." "What happened to the Godfrey deal?" "Oh—we both decided—no deal." That's all he enlightened me about that. But I hung up feeling happy. It looked as if things had changed.

NOVEMBER 1978

Nov. 2, Thursday. I get my first Chamterre utility bill—PUD! I found it exciting—a sign that my new home was actually on its way!

I called Dennis and Abbie that night. They were full of woes. Sarah was sick. And Dennis was angry! His new forestry class at the U, they had charged him for a field trip to Port Townsend. "A real bummer!" he said. "Money, you mean?" "Yes!" "You mean it wasn't included in your tuition?" "No!" "Well, you didn't have to go, did you?" "Oh yes, I do, or I won't get my degree." We chatted and hung up.

Nov. 4, Saturday. I call **Mike** and **Marylyn** and hung up all excited! They are coming up for Thanksgiving! Arrive the Wednesday before. "Don't plan dinner. We'll all go out! Will leave Friday—they **may** go north—(meaning Seattle?)

I called **Dennis** and **Abbie**. A short talk. "They'll be there—Friday night." (If Mike and Marylyn come on up, I assume?) Dennis spoke about his forestry course. He said he had his degree "jelled"; it only a matter of credits.

Nov. 17, Friday. After 10 p.m. **Dennis** calls. He sounds tired. How're ya doin'?" I tell him about crashing through the garage door.

[Arriving home—in a hurry—sun in my eyes—couldn't see the gear shift setting. Car still in gear—went on into the garage by itself, as I got

out to open door for it. Landlord did not like splintered door. And I did not appreciate the protection and privacy door gave as I was without it as the winter weather started.

I told Dennis about the trip schedule Mike and Marylyn had sent, showing they really were planning on coming. And I told him we'd call them when they got here. I mentioned the strike at Sears (where Dennis was working.) He said he was ok; getting \$8 an hour and \$500 retroactive pay.

CHANGES

The Mike Chambreaus never made it. Read on.

Nov. 19, Sunday. I wake up to snow on the ground! Before Thanksgiving! Very unusual. I worried about the kids' coming in that—that long trip, their small car, no place to stay when they get here—Worry, worry made me—

About 10 a.m. I phone Mike and Marylyn. (Henceforth M and M. And D and A.) Chris answers. Mike and Steve gone. Marylyn in shower. I tell Chris about the snow. He thinks that would be neat! Marylyn comes on. Yes, they are leaving Wednesday noon. By midnight before they get here and then they will go Seattle and back Sunday night. (I am alarmed at the imprudence of the plan.) No, they don't have chains. She will remind Mike to get some. We hang up.

I go to the store in the storm, where I talk to a guy. He tells me that they expect four inches of snow for that night and that there are seven inches in Seattle already. "Aw come on," I say. "I just talked to my son—" "No no! guy went to hunt in Richland—so much snow in mountains he gave up and came back—".

By evening the snow has obliterated the windows on cars standing out and the wind is **WHOOing**. I watch another four hours of this and I

Call Mike: And tell him. "Don't you think—(gulp)—we'd better—call it off?" "Yeah. Let's call it off." He asks me what I did about the garage door. I tell him the landlord wants \$211 to fix. "Don't you pay that till it's fixed!" he cries, "or you'll never see them again!"

I call Dennis and tell him the kids aren't coming. And also that they had mentioned that, if they had time, they'd like to see Bud and Paula. "I thought it was to be a business trip about the land," I said. "So did I," Dennis said. I mentioned I was worried about that wood sitting out in all the weather. "Are you still worried about that wood? That wood's ok!" Also, I'd sighed, "Well, I guess we can always sell," I had said. "We-ell-maybe—in the spring, we'll all feel better." He reassured me. "I'll get in touch with Mike," he said.

Nov. 20, Monday. The paper comes with big scare headlines: "Snow paralyzes state!"

I call and get Marylyn and tell her. "I think we made the right decision," she says. "So do I," I said. "The reason I called was to tell you how it is. Sometimes the news media exaggerates." "You said something about wood," Marylyn said. "Oh, Dennis got hot—but I—all that lumber we bought, and, of course, he—no car—to get up and check on it—" "But isn't it covered with plastic?" she asked. "Oh yes, Dennis tried—" "We'll make it up to you! Want to talk to the boys?" So I did.

Then I called and canceled our reservations for the dinner I had so been looking forward to at Vancouver's famous historical restaurant.

I spent Thanksgiving alone. We all spent Thanksgiving separately.

All those months of planning. Mike and Marylyn had never even seen the property they had bought. Chambreau, Chambreau & Chambreau, builders, had not yet gotten together to even discuss all these diverse attempts that had been made. Besides that unexpected, unseasonable **blizzard** Dennis and Abbie unable to travel—too broke and no car.

Family reunion disappointments
and setbacks
It was very sad.

SUMMARY: NOVEMBER 1978

Where were we? I was stuck in Vancouver, retired since April. Winter was coming. I had car troubles. While I waited for "Chamterre" to be done, I had gotten my rent raised, and I was battling that.

Dennis and Abbie were stuck at Alki in Seattle, in that dingy little house Ed left. Dennis was signed up for a long coveted forestry course at the U of W. They had no car. They were broke. The rent was free in that inherited house but they involved in long litigation anent Ed's murky will. Dennis had "too many irons in the fire"—job—support family—school to complete—building cabin, for which he had to eke money out of a tight-fisted mother.

The cabin. All of us, a minimum of 200 miles away from each other trying to do something we'd never tried before. Amateurs trying to build in the middle of a land boom. Making mistakes. Learning. In a climate where the weather was a freaky, chancy thing.

Mike and Marylyn, so far away, comfortably settled in California, reluctantly "willing" to make an investment but stymied by distance and their own busy life.

How did "Chamterre" get built?

I began to assemble all my notes and papers.

INSERT?

5 years later I was still going through notes and papers struggling to "edit" bales of wild notes. For the first time I started trying to write up a rough draft. I found I had written this:

I have never seriously tried to write something. I do not know how to do it. I may never get this written ("Hang in there, baby!") But I keep thinking of how someday, years and years hence, somebody might stumble into these woods and see a moth-eaten cabin, perhaps still unfinished with rebars rusting all over? and wonder, when they see a piece of cement dated 7/17/77 who in hell did this?

What was the story?

The rest of November I spent doing a great clean out of old papers and boxes of stuff.

DECEMBER 1978
Christmas month

Mike. When I'd mentioned Christmas exchanges, he'd said, "Well, if you were further along on your cabin—otherwise—a small package."

Dec. 3, Sunday. Call to Dennis. to check on our financial condition, and his, the news about the strike still going on. He not worried about the strike. But the money I advanced him? "Oh, I used it all up! I'll pay you back!" We joked about not having to worry: we can cut down the cedars and sell them! He: "I passed my exams!" "Hey! some good news!"

Dec. 10, Sunday. Dennis family check again. All ok. Abbie had a lot of her family there. Dennis not too worried about the strike. "Just have to look for another job," he said.

Pre-Xmas week. D and A. Call about Xmas presents. I had sent them a big bag of local walnuts. They had sent me a huge package. Nothing from the Mikes.

Later in week call. Chat. And tell them I signed up for a senior citizen trip to Mt. Hood on Xmas day. (A first on that type of solution to a first Lonely Lorna Xmas.)

Later in week. Call to Dennis. Evening. I had opened their gift to me, curious at what that huge thing could be. "We are thinking of moving to Monroe," Dennis greeted me. "You can have free rent! Living with us!" I changed the subject. "I peeked at your present!"

(It was a huge rural mail box stuffed with little presents I saved for Xmas eve.) "Big enough for all your books!" Dennis said. (What he didn't know was that in order to have more money to build the cabin I'd had to give up ordering all those expensive Time/Life "How to build" books!) Abbie says you're going to the mountain for Xmas. And he, too, seemed to think that a real exciting thing. "To the lodge?" he asked. "No no. Hood River. Be different," I said—"not to have to drive—"

Another call to M and M checking on their package and to tell them about Dennis passing his exams. All was ok.

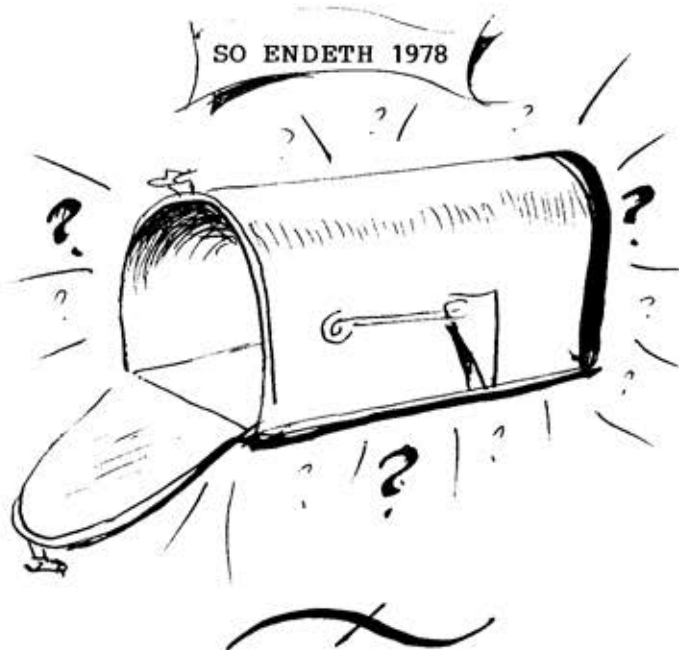
Christmas Day. Mike and Marylyn's package came! And Dennis surprised me with a merry Xmas call! I left for my (experimental first) senior citizen tour. (An interesting adventure told elsewhere in my diaries.)

That night I called the Dennis family and told about the trip. He said his grades were ok. "Got it made. Come June all that schooling over. All I need now is wheels!" he said. I chatted with the kids.

Dec. 31, Sunday. Call to D and A. Abbie said there was no snow there. And they didn't even feel the earthquake, though I heard about it. Dennis said he paid back \$230 into our cabin fund. And—they are **not** going to move to Monroe.

After Christmas

I put the mail box in the garage. Stood and contemplated it—
will I ever see you at Chamterre? I wondered.



(91)

JANUARY 1979

New Year's Eve I spent alone, watching TV. One of the nice guys in Landscaping had insisted on lending me theirs while they house remodeling.

Jan. 4, Thursday As I sit in my "fourplex" apartment in Vancouver, a storm **WHOOS** and rages outside. I wonder what I'd be doing if I were in "Chamterre" in weather like this. What would it be like? If a killing freeze, what would I **do**? Would I be trying to build a fire? And would I have no supplies, and so far from a store?

Jan. 9, Tuesday. I get a bill from Snohomish County PUD for \$3.70. "Minimum" it says. Whether we use or not. And we won't be using for months. I am stunned. And this for only the **temporary** connection. This means I'm going to be paying electric bills at **two** homes while all these delays go on. That means more unexpected expenses. I must remember to tell Dennis about this billing.

I worked about four hours on cabin financing. I have spent \$4350 on Chamterre so far. That's not counting cost of my trips. Will you tell me where in **hell** I got \$4350?

Newspaper headlines today: THE COLDEST WINTER IN VANCOUVER AREA IN 38 YEARS. Only the second time the Columbia River has frozen since they dammed it. I worry: what will such an unusually severe winter do to our building site?

Jan. 10, Wednesday. A "silver thaw". In news: This weather all over coast, Seattle to Portland frozen. Four power transmissions blown out in Seattle and over a hundred transformers blown up in Portland. Power out. Columbia river Gorge impassable. (The year **we** get power!!? Did **we** do it? I wonder what happening at Chamterre?

10 p.m. I call Dennis to see how they are faring. "I shouldn't tell you," he said. "Will worry you. Fires up there." "Oh yes, I heard," I said. "But not at our place—in Goldbar and Sultan."

He mentions there's a big pole put up. "Must be the electricity." "Yes," I say, "I got a bill. You said you wanted to get the water in." "Well, yeah, but you have to have a permit and I don't have time—with school."

"Did you get the plywood for the roof?" "No, I didn't get it." "You should see what the storm did to stapled roof felts down here!" I say. The storm made me realize we could learn from it about building. I started to fill him in on the results of my cabin expense check. "Would you go for \$3500 spent so far on cabin? \$2700 on lumber, etc.?" "Oh yeah," he says. "But Gee!" I say, "considering they say the inflation rate is 40%, we are doing real well! We could expect a little 'cost over run'. Also, I found my notes on pre-fab estimates of a couple of years ago. The price for the foundations alone, **at that time**, was three times what **we** spent! "I picked up my cabin file again about Xmas," he said. "I was **rusty** on all that stuff." "Yeah! Me too!" I cried. We referred to the interim when we'd not been working on it.

He said he'd just gotten home. At my puzzlement, for it was after 10 p.m., he explained his new work schedule: leaves at 7 a.m. for school and then to work. "Geez!" I said. "But I'm getting it over with." "Yeah."

Then he explained his plans about the cabin. He said he and Mike Godfrey have kind of a "pact": Mike is going to be in Seattle fixing up his house there to sell. He, Mike, has two trucks to haul things with and they will exchange work, each helping the other with building and/or remodeling. Sounded like a good deal to me. Dennis might have a helper, then? He said he wanted to see about taking out a loan to get himself a car since they were still without wheels, but he hadn't had time. It was a long talk.

Jan. 12, Friday. As I follow the news of the effect of the terrible storms gripping the Portland area, I am pleased to see my philosophy about Chamterre is being proved: people don't **need** all the luxuries they think they do. The simple life! I chuckled as I watched people on TV having to do in their own living rooms what I'd done—camping. They so amazed (and proud) that they could survive without electricity! Why, they found out they could cook with camp stoves, use their fireplaces, use candles and lamps and go without TV! Gosh! They said there was a big run on wood, which, to these city people, meant pressed wood "logs". I

thought of all those alder trees lying felled up there at Chamterre. Gee! we could have made a mint selling firewood!

There were reports of hospitals full of people burned trying to light lamps, or smoke inhalation cases from trying to use patio barbecue stoves inside. And amazing! they showed pictures of kids who'd found out it was fun just to stay home and play games—they having no use of cars or TV in all this.

As I observed, rather cynically, the distress of all these poor civilized people "when the lights went off" I was glad we'd had our "rough" camping experiences. We found out that water can be carried in buckets up slippery, muddy paths from a creek; that fires can be built with wet wood; that telephones and TV are not all that necessary; that blankets and warm clothing can serve as well as the latest in house insulation; that sleep can be caught—where you find it. I was suddenly grateful we'd had those experiences. Somehow I felt more secure than I'd ever felt before. We can survive!

Jan. 16, Tuesday. I visit the office. Call Bishop from there. "Say!" he says, "we bought three more old houses to fix up! Our selling that land to you—" "I pushed the **right button**, didn't I?" I crowed. "Yeah!" he says, "things have been popping ever since!"

I went into landscaping and asked Bob and Dave how their land buying was going. "How much land you got? What price?" Bob asked me. "Got half an acre for \$4000," I said. "Wow!" he says, "that's good!"

I had, before I went over there, been studying the "critical path" I'd made about the cabin work. (What has to be done when, and priorities, etc.) I had sighed. This is going to be a hard, fast, furious year! (Enjoy the quiet while you can.) But I found I was getting excited about Chamterre again. A challenge! My fears, as I'd tried to explain to Dennis last summer, were not the building or the money so much as the prejudice, resistance, and ignorance one runs into in bureaucracy.

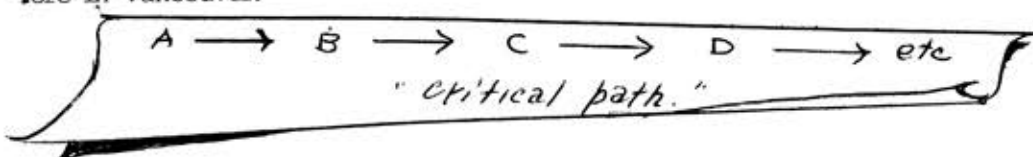
Jan. 16, Tuesday. Evening. Phone call, Dennis. They still all had colds. Just Abbie and the kids had been to Yakima. "The plumbing!" I said, going to be so hard! so dull!—"No. Easy," he said. Yes, his grades at school were good.

Jan. 31, Wednesday. Phone. Get Abbie. Purpose of call to check on when we can get what done when. She didn't know when Dennis had spring vacation. "He has one more quarter to go." "He'll have to pay more tuition?" "Yes." "When can I start bothering him about the cabin?" Oh not for two or three months! And his grades are **not** good," she said. And oh yes! she is glad Godfrey is going to help him! She said she is anxious to see the place again. As for their finances, the doctor wants to take Noah's tonsils out, but Dennis doesn't want it done. They had not found a car. No time to look. There'd be the tuition to pay and she is baby-sitting again to help with finances—getting \$40 a week for a few hours three days a week. "I'll be up there—April," I say. No comment.

FEBRUARY

Feb. 2, Friday. I'd done two weeks work on cabin plans, making lists of needs, etc. One thing Dennis said we were going to need was doors, so we could lock the place up once it framed in. He didn't have time to shop for any and I couldn't shop for doors very well way down there in Vancouver. My designs and clippings I'd kept, I knew exactly what kind of door I wanted, but they were terribly expensive—\$200 and up.

I decided it was time to break away from all that paper and planning and go shopping, if only for grubbie clothes and things I'd need at cabin. Hoping to save money, I began to prowl in the Thrift shops, something I'd never done before in Vancouver.



THE DOOR

I was prowling around in this second-hand clothes store when my foot hit something. Ouch! I looked down. There, stashed under the counter, was exactly the door I wanted! Not only that, but it was in excellent condition and complete with curtain, locks, weather-stripping. The price tag on it said \$35! Only! I got out my tape measure and measured. Exactly right! Even to passing code!

I went back to where the two, cute, funny little old ladies who tended the place were idly gossiping. "Say! I want that door! What's the story on it?" "Well, we need a new door here—". Obviously. A decrepit old building—their front door was a battered mess. "They are demolishing a fine old home here—" "Yes," I'd noted. (The "Historical Renovation" of downtown Vancouver.) "—We knew the woman whose front door this was. So the landlord got it and was going to put it up here." "It won't fit," I said, my now-trained eye scanning the present door. "Yeah. So he changed his mind and we put a price tag on it."

"Do you deliver?" "No." I told them my problems. "I want it but I don't have any way to transport it." "Where?" "Up near Monroe." "Oh we lived up there! It's fun!—Why don't you put it on a ski rack on the top of the car?" "You're kidding!" I said. "No no. We did that!" "Mmmmm—" "We can't hold it very long," they said, "the landlord wants to get rid of it. Don't you have any friends who could pick it up for you?" "Nary a one," I said, thinking fast. "Ummm—"

Could you hold it for me until I figure something out and call my son about it—?" I was thinking fast: could I get one of the guys at the office to help? But this was Friday. I couldn't reach them till Monday—"If I put—say—\$5 down on it—could you hold it till—Monday?" "We're closed Mondays." "Make it Tuesday." "OK. Would you write down your name and telephone number?" I did—and started to pay them the \$5 plus money for the other things I'd picked up—"Oh!" I cried. "My parking meter! I forgot!" and I raced out and put another nickle in the meter and went back in.

"There she goes now," one of the women said. "Who?" "The meter maid." I had just barely missed getting a ticket and a fine. On the way back in, it dawned on me: there was no key to that door? The fancy lock and all but—no key? I went back in and kidded the little old ladies about that. But they took it very seriously—said something about an old man—nearby—maybe he could make a key for me—. But today I was in a hurry—and flurry. We finished our transaction and I went out excited and elated! That was fun! And—I had a door!—if only I could think of some way to transport it—



I went on to other things.

That night I called Dennis, of course, and told him. He was excited about that but he had other problems: they wanted \$600 to take out Noah's tonsils—it getting to be an emergency thing—the kid in bad shape—and the just didn't have it—

Among other things he said it was snowing up there. "Is it there?" "Oh s'posed to." (Later, it did. In the news during the week: temperature got down to 16° ice threatening the dams on the Columbia) Dennis. About the door. He thought it was a great idea. "But I can't transport it," I'd said. "Oh well, when you move," he said. (And I'd just found out they wouldn't let me move in until the building is all finished!) "I just can't possibly be bothered with the cabin till June," he said. We had rather counted on Mike coming up and helping us with — "Have you heard from Mike about the electricity?" I asked. "I have not only heard, but—they are going to England!" he said. "England!?" I cried.

[This report not tell how Noah got his tonsils out, but he did, and all was well, including Noah!]

Feb. 5, Monday. The door. I went to the office to see what I could do about getting help with it. To my friends in Landscape. When I told my story, Bob said, "Look. I've got a pick-up! I'll get it for you! And I'll be driving up to Seattle to pick up loads. I can take it as far as Seattle for you." Dumbfounded, I offered to pay. "No no." But we finally agreed to a small price—\$10? "We'll get it tomorrow for you," he said. "Dave?" "No—can't—oh well—yeah." He, who was in the throes of remodeling his own place was jealous; he wanted that door!

Happy!

The next day, Tuesday. I rushed around cleaning house, for Bob hadn't seen my place, and getting ready to meet them at noon. I gave them a call first to remind them. They were just leaving. I'd gone down to the bank, and gone and paid for the door, and come back. I was so excited! So happy!

Unhappy

Then I went into the garage. The car radiator was leaking anti-freeze in a river all over the garage floor. The gal next door was just leaving in her car. "My radiator's sprung a leak!" I cried frantically. "That's too bad," she said and drove off.

The door: When I'd gone to pay for it, so in a hurry I thought I'd go mad when one old crone quibbled and insisted I owed them \$36 more. The other woman finally explained it to her. I raced back to meet the guys and just in time to discover the car calamity.

Car: I hadn't done it in time. After my disasters with dealing with that nearby Chevron station Bob and Dave had told me to go to their friend's station instead. I had intended to go and have them check the car when—this.

Hurriedly, I threw towels and soppers around and left the hood open to cool just as Dave and Bob drove up, Dave walking up jauntily waving the door curtain on its brass pole like some heraldic banner. "What are you doing?" I asked, "coming with a surrender flag?" They brought the door in, raving about it. "Just right! Just right!" they cried, "A good buy!"

"Win one, loose one," I said and showed them my car. Dave checked it out. "It's ok," he said. "see? there's water in it." "I was going to your guy," I told Bob. "Yeah! Ask for Jeff!" They told me what to do about driving the car, but were in a hurry—had to get back to work. I tried to give Bob a five dollar bill. "No way! You'll need it to buy Stop-leak!" they said. "If you ever need anything, let us know!"

"Boys!" I kept them standing there in the wind and rain and cold just long enough to quip "Je t'adore!" (pronounced like 'shut the door'.) They left.



After trying to pull myself together a bit, and carefully plotting a back route to Jeff's so I wouldn't risk getting stalled on a thoroughfare, I gingerly backed the car out, just as the gal next door drove in. She showed no interest whatsoever.

I got to Jeff's ok. He a nice young man. They went to work on the car. "Need a new radiator hose." While Jeff went to buy one, I wandered around the neighborhood and back. But—What's this?" I cried. A flood of greasy red fluid was pouring out from under my car. "Why, don't know—" they said. "Thought we had it all fixed—" then "Look out!" they cried and we all backed up as my car went into a veritable epileptic fit. Pow! Pow! Pow! it kept blowing up, spewing red oily fluid all over us and the floor.

"What is this?" I wailed in despair, "a terminal hemorrhage?" "Never seen a car act like that!" they all cried.

To shorten the story, while the guys went on working on the car, I went and got something to eat, bringing maple bars for them for a treat. That's all they'd take for pay. The whole thing only cost me \$4. They said the car seemed to be all right—they got a lot of rust out of the radiator—might need a new radiator—.

And they said they'd had many other complaints about that guy at Chevron I'd had so much trouble with. "I'll be in for a tune up in April—ok?" (before my trip north) I told the guys. "Ok. Now be sure to watch that heat gauge!"

Driving, from then on, became—no fun.

Feb. 6, Tuesday. Late evening. Talk to Dennis. He had good news: only 4 weeks to go to school till he gets a spring vacation—March—Monday through Thursday—till the 15th.

Feb. 13, Tuesday. In the news: "Terrific wind all over state of Washington. Seattle—winds to 100 miles per hour! Bridges, schools closed—power out IN SNOHOMISH COUNTY!" (Gad! It took us all summer to get it in!)

Feb. 14, Wednesday. I set out to get help on planning the plumbing. First I go to the office and call Bishop. He is full of woes of what happened to his property in the storm. No, he doesn't know about any electricians except that they charge \$30 an hour. None of the other guys seem to be helpful or know anyone. One guy says plumbers are getting \$40 an hour. I leave discouraged. Decide to go way out on the highway and look into that "discount—" plumbing outfit. At least price things and look.

I found it and left much encouraged. Two nice young men answered my questions for me. And I got to actually look at things I'd just been working with pictures of. And the prices for new items were cheaper than the 'salvageds' I'd been looking at—and—they said they'd give a whopping discount for large orders. Since we needed everything I decided that might be a way to go?

So, evening call Dennis about it. I needed some technical advice anyway—measurements, etc., which he gave me, but we didn't talk long, they watching a TV movie and he all snuffed up with a bad cold.

Feb. 15, Thursday. Snowing! Mail brings Snohomish County property tax bill. Another financial setback: I can't get the senior citizen property tax discount because I am not the owner of the property. (Mike and Marylyn are.)

Plumbing designing. I make about a dozen phone calls trying to find out if I can run that sewer pipe in diagonally. Nobody knows.

Feb. 19, Monday. Been working on plumbing, but allotted time up on it. Have to get on to other plans. And income tax figuring. I've set aside March to work on the electricity planning. The plumbing I've got solved, but I have to check it with others and the problem is to explain what I've figured. And I certainly can't do that on long distance.

My mind is roiling with plumbing! I'm sick of it! But we have to get the plumbing permit and approval before Dennis can even start on the floors. It has to go in first. I need to do some long planning discussions with Dennis, but can't on even on late evening (cheaper) long distance phone calls. He is so tired after work and school. And it's be too late to wait till I go up in April—problems—

Feb. 21, Wednesday. Downtown there is a big outfit called Glover's Do-it-yourself-Plumbing. I go there. A young man tells me all about plumbing and gives me lots of How-to sheets to answer all my problems.

Feb. 24, Saturday. Been backworking on the plumbing. Find that even in that short interim I've gotten rusty on it; forgotten how to do it. Besides, I find Snohomish County's codes and "requests" are too vague. And too obsolete compared with other research I've done. And much too crudely presented. Can hardly read those very bad, murky xerox copies. Same old problems I had on highway job, working with these so-called bureaucrat "engineers". But I think I have it licked. Today I am going to do the final drawing for submission for approval for permit.

I finished the drawings, put them in my briefcase, got dressed up and went down to Glover's to have them checked, wondering if they'd do so, since, but can't on delivery difficulties, we wouldn't really be able to buy there.

Loma, the plumber

At Glover's: When my turn came, I asked them if I could just get some advice? "No problem," he said. "That's what we're here for."

I have one question," I said, and got out my drawings and laid them out. "Say! who did this drawing?" "I did." They all gathered around and admired, over and over. I told them who I was, how I'd come to learn how to do this kind of drawing, mentioned highway dep't. and all. They began to treat me like a queen!

The young man spent almost an hour helping me, going over my plans, getting out the plumbing items we'd need. He designed it for me. He spread out all the pipes and fittings on parts I'd had doubts on. "I think, if you don't mind," he ventured, "I have a better idea." And he showed me and drew it out, and wrote down all the names of the fixtures, etc.

I felt a little woe; it all meant back to the drawing board for me, but, at least, I'd have it right. When we were through, he said, "When you get it all done, bring it in and we'll lay it all out on the floor for you, and, if you have a polaroid camera (I did) we'll take a picture of it. A lot of people are doing that!" I was pleased at that great idea. Even Dennis couldn't argue with me, then! "But—I meant to get started on the electrical," I said. "Oh, that'll be much easier!" he said. "Bring it in and we'll help you!"

Then, I broached my bright idea that would solve everything but that all the guys and engineers had told me no to, "Can I carry those pipes diagonally?" "You can!" he said. I thanked him profusely. "I can draw highways, but not bathrooms!" I called out as I left and walked out and right into—

But, that's another story, and a long one, and not pertain except as to my professional pride and victories. And right into— The man I ran into was one of my highway engineer enemy bosses. And the story is one of why I took an early retirement from the highway department. Told elsewhere. But this man had, just a few days previously, asked me to do some consultant work for them and I'd told them to go to hell. He stopped me and pleaded with me again, but, as I say—another story.

I went back to the office and had a wonderful talk with my landscape department friends, bragging and gloating about the success of my plumbing plans.

Feb. 26, Monday. Late evening. I called Dennis and told him excitedly about the Glover help. I didn't go into the free lance as consultant job offer. My family never did understand about my highway job and it was too long a story to tell.

MARCH 1979

March 7, Wednesday. Electric bill from Snohomish county saying "If your bill seems high, please remember this was the coldest winter in ten years."

March 8, Thursday. I did it! I did it! I got all the three plumbing plans in the mail! Suddenly all my ailments cleared up!

I finish the end wall drawings.

March 14, Wednesday. Talk to Dennis. "Those drawings are great!" he said. "All we have to do is go ahead—it's all laid out." He only has one, easy quarter to go on the long haul for his degree he said. School was ok. Goes there in the morning, comes home at noon, goes to work at 3 p.m. Gets home about 9. He mentioned again his spring vacation, said he'd have more time to get up there—something about the A's. Had some good news about how well Noah was doing in school. He, Noah, will have to go to school clear till the end of June because of the strike. It was a very happy talk. "Say, can I borrow \$230 again?" it ended.

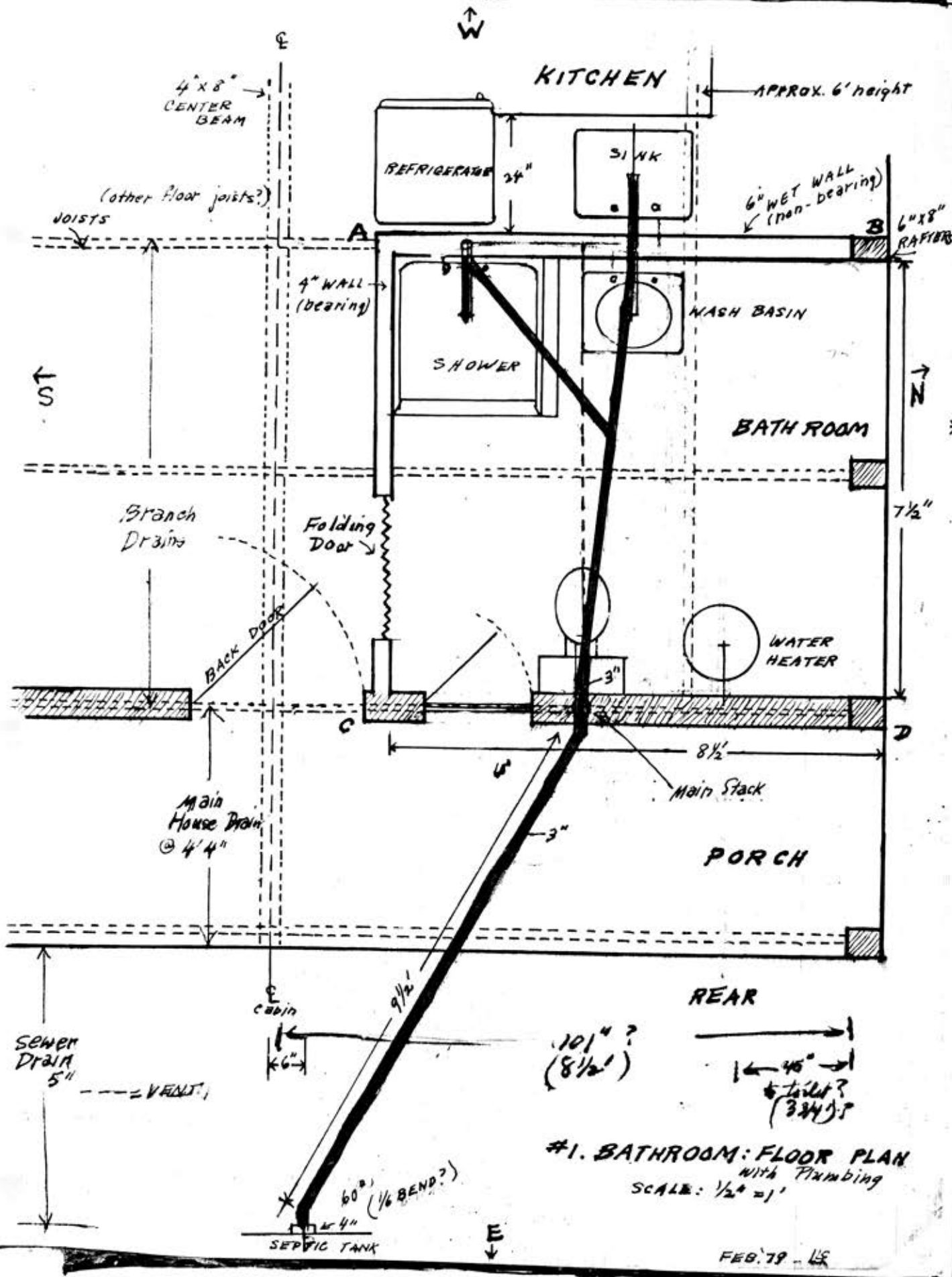
The next week I spent fretting about making another trip north. In April? No place to stay. Former possibilities—changes—now impossible. Where in the world would I store the door if Bob took it up? Problems.

March 22, Thursday. I took my new attempts at electrical plans drawings down to Glover's to be checked. This time the admiring, helpful young men of last time weren't there. A new young man waited on me, acting as if he'd prefer not to. But he did spend an hour and fifteen minutes helping me.

When I brought out my drawings, he sighed, "I wish your son would come in

One of plumbing plans attempts—

Can I put this pipe in diagonally?
I asked Floor's



#1. BATHROOM: FLOOR PLAN
WITH PLUMBING
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'

FEB. 79 - LK

and I'd show him—and you wouldn't have to do all these drawings!" Stunned, I said, "But I like to do them!" An interruption. Another young man there. "A-frames?" he asked. "I live in one!" Wishing he'd wait on me, I hinted, "I've never been in one!" "Why, there's two here in town," he said. And he drew me a map of where one was—over by Jeff's service station. "Why I was going there anyway!" I said.

So, after I left there, I stopped downtown to get gas. In those days of The Big Gas Shortage that was one of the problems I had in all that traveling north—one never knew when, or if, one could get gas. And I was chagrined to have to pay 81¢ a gallon downtown versus price 72¢ when I got out to Jeff's, where I was going to see about a car tune-up in April.

Jeff said he'd be glad to tune the car up for me. "You call me. You can leave the car here and I'll take you home and pick you up. We'll check out that radiator for you."

I then went in search of that A-frame, but couldn't find it and went on home.

Car problems: As I pulled into the driveway, facing west, the blinding sun was in my eyes over the house top. It was a repeat of the situation when the car had rolled on through the garage door. This time, I no longer having a sh needle on the car now—one had to shift by sound—click, click, click, I shaded my eyes and checked. The car was **not** in park. I did the last click. Whew! I felt vindicated. Nobody had believed my story that the sun was in my eyes and that the car was still in gear when I went to open the garage door—

March 22, Thursday. Early evening. D and A call. Abbie answered. "Well, how's your vacation going?" "What vacation?" "Why—why—" "Oh you mean Dennis not going to school?" "Yeah." "Well, that doesn't make any difference: he's at work, you know." "Oh. I'd forgotten. Car?" "No. No luck. He hasn't had time to look." "You mean he's looking on the 'open market'?" "Yeah." "Your brother-in-law (car dealer in Yakima) not helping?" "You mean—Phil? No!" Then she's asking about me. "Oh, I'm still in 'public housing'—be so nice to get on our own land again." "Oh yes! I just love that place! So anxious to get up there again!" "Abbie! You mean it?" "Oh yes!"



The electricity was becoming my major insoluble problem. Dennis couldn't. And Mike I'd just had a short note from with no mention of electricity or possibility of his helping with. I was still seething with the shock of that latest treatment at Glover's. I swore I'd never go there again.

The next day I made an "escape outing" and wandered until I found a remote park, signed as a "Wild Life Sanctuary" that I hadn't known was in the area. There I spent the whole day. And I reviewed and brooded on that Glover's episode.

Glover's. That young man and my electricity plans. "Lady! You can't do that!" Sigh. "Lady! All this isn't necessary!" Sigh. "Lady, let me show you—we don't do things that way! Sure, it's a pretty little story book house and you've done some 'charming' and 'clever' drawings, but-lady!—some facts—this has to go here and that one there."

He was showing me some meter boxes and paraphernalia that would have to be draped all over the street side of my house. "My, they're ugly," I couldn't resist commenting. "Couldn't PUD come up with something more esthetic?" "Ma'm, there are prettier ways to do it, but—it will cost you money!" His eye was hard on me. "I see." I titter—make a joke. "Look, if I'm taking your time—" He sighs. "No no." "Well, I'd better be going." I start to gather my papers—

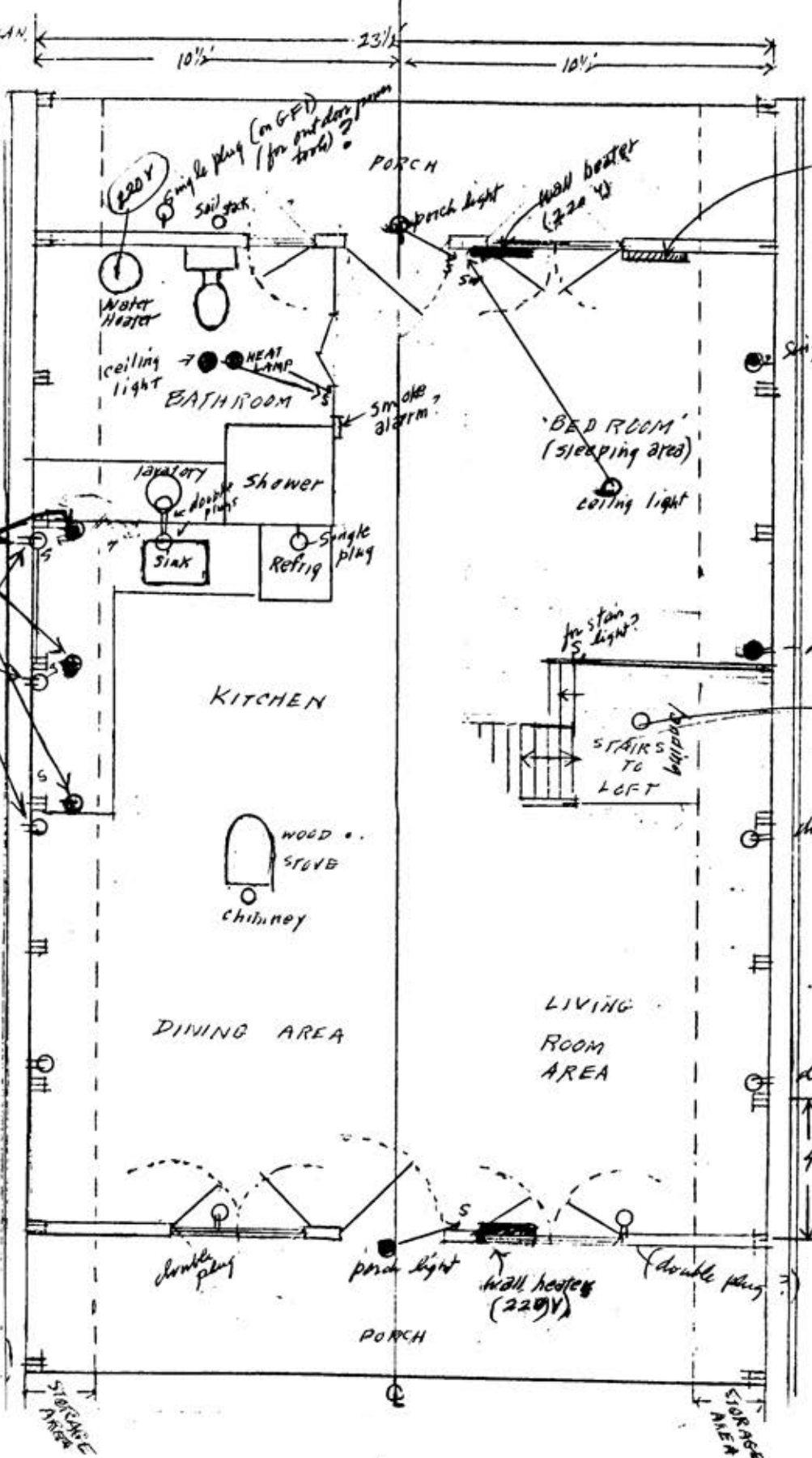
"No! No! Now—wait! You know what you could do—" and he's off again. "You could go underground." Now I'm impatient. "Look, why don't you send your son in?" I had made some cracks about "picking brains", a little worried about how long I could get away with seeking this free advice without actually buying anything. And his attitude so opposite to the gracious

Part of electricity plans attempts—

NOTE: THIS IS AN OLD PLAN BUT DIMENSIONS + SCALE FAIRLY ACCURATE

REAR

SCALE - 1/4" = 1'



SERVICE PANEL?

(1 GFI)

single plug?

- exit (main) light
- ceiling light
- wall light
- single rec.
- double receptacle (plug)
- S - switch

double plug

STAIR LIGHT (plug in)

double plug

double plug

4' between rafters

FRONT

treatment I had gotten about the plumbing, I assumed he wanted some "proof of a deal"? Whatever, to his insistence about sending my son in, I found myself blurting out, "Oh yes, I will. In fact he's coming down," I lied—and left. Furious.

The next four days I spent hassling the electricity problems the best I could by myself—just roughing it in the best I could. The guys had told me the electricity would be easier than the plumbing. I found it just the opposite—complex and mind-boggling.

March 27, Tuesday. I set out on errands, among them Glover's, though I was afraid to go in there again. But I had a couple of questions I very much needed answers for. I also wanted to try to find that A-frame. This bit of trying to design a type of house I'd never actually seen except in pictures was getting to be a strain.

At Glover's they were very busy but the girl called "Bill" over, the young man who'd given me the A-frame address. He was very nice. He said he'd given me the wrong address and drew me new directions. And he waited on me.

After I left there I went to the library, where I studied electricity books for awhile, and then out to Jeff's, where he made an appointment with me about the car for Monday. Then I started on the A-frame search again.

"A" TALE

Neither Jeff or any of the guys seemed to know about any A-frame around there. I went and drove around and around and around in the murky rain in obscure, unfinished little "lane"-like roads. I simply could not find it, though I sensed I was zeroing in on it. One young man I stopped and asked. Didn't know. Then an older man. I stopped and asked him. He twinkled at me. "Turn the car around." "What?" "Turn your car around." I was in the middle of what looked like a vacant lot. "It's right behind you!" he said. "Now—see those trees over there? It's in there. Just go straight ahead." And, as I left, he looked awfully merry about something.

Following directions, I found myself leaving the barren, ugly, to-be-developed bull-dozed area and plunged into a deep small grove of big trees. Firs. The "road" was nothing but pot holes and a sign said "Private road. Dead end." I consulted the notes the young man had given me. "Pompidoma Road" What an odd name. But that's what the sign said. Suddenly there it was! At the end of the trail (as A-frames should be!)

It was a gorgeous house! An A-frame palace! Huge! Lovely! Tucked away in that last stand of big firs. But, though all doors seemed wide open, it looked utterly deserted. Feeling like Goldilocks at the three bears' house, I tiptoed around—through piles of construction debris. "Hey! Anybody here?"

Then I happened on two men. One was tall, handsome, rakish, about fortyfive. The other squat and surly. They were up working on the roof. Although they hadn't answered me, they acted almost as if they expected me. "You-owner? or building?" I asked. "Building," said the tall one. I explained why I'd come—about being curious, etc. "Oh go ahead and look around."

They went in with me. I gasped at the utter luxury of the place. "How big is this room?" "Oh—don't have a tape." "There's one!" I cried. He measured and then disappeared. "Go ahead and look around," he said. But, first, I noticed some skylights they'd just put in further on. "May I?" "Go ahead," he said.

He seemed kind of giggly and silly—easy to talk to. I wondered if he was drunk? "I'm the contractor," he said. "We're just doing some remodeling here. You?" "Oh just do-it-yourself," I said, and explained. "A-frames. Hard," he said. "People wonder why we ask so much money." "Yeah", I said. His helper acted in a pet—wouldn't answer or join in the talk. "Go ahead and look around," the tall one said.

They went out and I roamed around all over just marveling! Such utter luxury! The children's room alone was as large as my whole A-frame! Then—I noticed on the plush carpeting were two glasses and two "pop" bottles. All were half filled with amber liquid. There was no sign of life in the house.

I went outside. They were working on the roof—at least the helper was. Up

there on that slippery roof—in the rain. I stood and watched awhile. The merry contractor moved into sight and began to tell me dire tales of men who had been crippled for life falling off roofs. His helper looked glum.

"How much are those skylights?" I asked. He handed up another roll of roof felt to his helper. "Oh—\$400!" he called back. "We can get them for \$150!" I watched, thinking of Dennis having to do our roof. "Don't they have one of those things you hook over the roof?" "Oh, we can't use one of those—with this—" he said.

I watched. Fresh from all my books study, I ventured, "Isn't he getting the marks on—wrong way?" Tall man laughed. "Oh we can put the roof on any which way." I watched. They were putting styrofoam on the roof! "Styrofoam?" I asked. "Here, let me show you," he giggled. "Yeah. We're making a refrigerator out of this house—what owner wanted. Roof repair." I watched. Boy, they sure were doing a half-assed job—the ripples in that roofing felt—

"Well—" I started to wander off. "I've gotten some ideas and some of my problems solved." "Hey!" he called. "We'll be here two—three days! If you want to come back—any more questions!"

I left, elated. I had no more questions. I called Dave Rodin and told him about it. Either he, or Bill, that guy at Glover's, who had rather shyly told me about this house—one of them—told me that house had been built 6 years before. And was now for sale for \$90,000! I made a note.

I never did go back, at least not in the three day period. Things intervened. Months later, when I was out that way, I tried to find the place again. Couldn't. I wandered around and around and around in what had become a very posh development all around it.

That night: I called Dennis and babbled excitedly about A-frames.

Random notes: The rest of the month I struggled with the electricity, gradually grasping the concept of circuits. And I wished I had more time, didn't have to rush it so—was doing such a messy job—that I felt it too crude and amateurish to send to Mike: he'd just advise: Hire an electrician. (At \$40 an hour?) I found myself writing to him, "If we don't make it this year—building permit renewal"—\$150?—no \$64—

—one more day to finish the electricity plan—ugh—then office-xerox—and then—April 1—my "anniversary"—retirement—and then—time to trek north again—car—camp—no bed—no comforts—long agonizing hours of driving—body new crippling pains—"no room in the inn" up north—all I wanted was a "greeny dying place"—cuss!

March 29, Thursday. Evening. Tired. Another full day of work. My goal another last xeroxing day at office tomorrow—then zit! (thisisit!) for the planning and drawing stage—set aside the electricity—begin to work on something else necessary scale drawings to see if my furniture will fit in. Dreary, but also the fun part: moving, in imagination, via drawing board. (Will the bed fit? Where shall I put the couch? etc. etc.)

March 30, Friday. Today I fear! That office xeroxing stint. Got a lot of it to do—stealthily—i.e.—nervously. Wish I knew what fate has in store for me for I can't decide what to do or how to spend money—Chamterre et al. Am starting to resign myself that it'll take another year—(maybe never?) The whole idea of Chamterre was for me to enjoy retirement in it, not trying to effect it. "Mortgage" my boys say. "Not to worry." At last resort they'd mortgage Ed's house, they say, but—in the news; mortgage rates have gone so high they are impossible! pffft.. thus goes a dream—

Afternoon. I go to the office and sneak in my xeroxing. I'm lucky. The xerox room is empty—everyone gone. (One understands, of course, that outsiders are not supposed to use those "expensive" machines.) I nervously and hastily do all that huge pile of copying. All that paper. Tempted. Best paper! I've found for drawing. I debate. No—go back and steal some. No. Put part of it back—oh hell with it—go back and grab rest of pile.

And sauntered down hall—nonchalantly—bad girl, not giving a damn—WHOOPS!

Right next to the xerox room, where I had been illicitly using that noisy machine, in the lunch room, was the Big Boss, the District Engineer, Dick Carroll, who had fired me! His back was to me and he was pretending to be talking to some nondescript underling gal. I say pretending because it was somebody he would ordinarily "not even see", much less chat with.

I slithered past and into a dark, seldom used office and there I hid and tried to use the phone to call Bishop in the Seattle office. I dialed and dialed. Nothing. the line was dead. And then I remembered: the telephone man had been around working.

I found another phone and called the realtors about that other A-frame Dave had told me about and I'd gone to see; that dismal little one they were asking \$61,000 for. "A real deal for \$65,500!" I was told. I hung up discouraged. And here I was trying to build one for \$5000. I went out into the sudden hail storm and went home.

APRIL 1979

Sunday, April 1. I write in my diary: A year ago—on All Fools' Day—I quit my job—took early retirement—thinking I'd be on my own land—in my own place—have, at last, a studio—etcetera etcetera—by now. April fool, Lorna!

But

Here's to April! I made it! I made it! (through the winter—to this April.) I dig out my huge critical path" (things to do this year) chart, and, making kind of a ceremony out of it, I get out my green pen (for God!) and check off this period's tasks. Check check check, etc. Well, maybe it's not perfect, but, at least, I waded into it and got it all "roughed in". **On Time!** Made my deadline! And now, for the next period—April—May (I hope to God it will go better.) I'm tired. I'm broke. I'm sick. But I did it! what I set out to do—right on the dot!

April 2, Monday. I take car to Jeff. He drives me home. Later calls and says he has the car fixed. Comes and gets me. Says he can find nothing wrong with the car. What a joy! What a relief!

I then begin a long fret about the details of my trip: where in heck can I stay—wonder if I could get the car farther in on the land if I could sleep in it? But I'd need the machete—and where is it now? I gave it to Dennis—

April 3, Tuesday. Phone. Telephone company, calling from Monroe, wanting to know when I'm moving in: if I want phone connected? Yikes! We haven't even started to build yet!

April 4, Wednesday. Phone aunt Alice. Can't stay there. She's in hospital. I call Paula and tell her I'll just come! I will stop there, though they, all that family, have no room. My anxieties about this trip increase.

April 7, Saturday. Letter from Sultan Estates. Dues up \$1.50. And \$60 year for water! This I hadn't expected. They had six water lines burst in the winter. But not ours. It's a very nasty (and misspelled) letter.

April 8, Sunday. Dennis phones. They got themselves a VW station wagon, and they went up to the land. Everything ok. The wood and windows dry, the shelter still up. Lu had gone in and kept a check on things. (Nice of her.) He said the meeting was on the first. (sooner than I'd expected.)

He said ours about the only woods left up there; that contractors had come in and bulldozed all around us and have houses up for sale. Said he didn't even recognize the place. He said they **could** make room for the door there at their place—in the garage. "We gotta get you moved up here," he said.

I hung up disappointed; I'd wanted to be the first to go and see the land after the winter. Also, the meeting was at a bad time for me. And I'd have to go into the office again and see Bob about the door.

Also. I'd left a note with my phone number on it at that other A-frame Dave referred me to and I'd ferreted out, asking them to let me come and visit and see their A-frame. They never did call me.

April 9, Monday. Jackpot! Dividend on credit union money! Wow! And \$497 back on income tax. Whee!

Evening: Talk to Paula. "Can't figure out where we can sleep you," she says. "Whole mob descending and Wendy about to give birth."

April 10, Tuesday. I go to office to see Bob about the door. Why, of course he'd take it. Next month. Take it to Dennis—will help me wrap it—no problem. "I've got it all wrapped already," I said, and I again offered him money. Again he refused. "Everybody loves that door!" I said. "If I could just avoid the freeway going up," I was wailing. Art showed me on the map. "But isn't that mountainous?" "No no. Not bad at all." "I tried that way once," I said, "and got lost." They showed me on the map just how to hit those back roads through the forest lands around Mt. St. Helens.

After that I went and searched for cabin things. Bought a little camp toilet seat for Noah and Sarah who were loathe to toilet in the woods—an "Easter present." (Post hoc: they never used it.) And I bought some asparagus roots, excited about having my own land. Now I'll start a garden!

April 11, Wednesday. I began making phone calls to set things up for trip. When I called Alice, Howie, her electrician son from California was there. An electrician in the family! I'd forgotten about him! I talked to him. guess what about. No, no. He wasn't going to be working in Vancouver—Longview, maybe. No, he can't do "moonlighting" work, as he has no Washington state license. I set it up to see him at Alice's on the week end.

I called Mike. "About your electrical plans (I'd sent him). Looks all right to me—only one advice—" And he told me what that was.

Then I called Aunt Angela and set it up to stop and see her on my way through Olympia.

APRIL TRIP NORTH

April 12, Thursday. My birthday! I was ready to go and left about eleven a.m. Car radio: "Easter week-end. Holiday. Gas scarce. Stations closed." And gas up to 84¢ a gallon! And my car, it seems as if the gas going down faster than usual. . . .

Decide and do take that Route 12—head toward Morton—very pretty country—road to self, except for logging trucks. Downpour of rain—Elbe—Eatonville—makes me think of Alice family name of Eaton—lost—but find my way again—as a rainbow! . . .

Puyallup. Need gas. Go out of my way to find that Union station. No gas they claim. "Out." I am using up what little gas I have left, making detour to pick things up at store and then clear out of my way to find a gas station open. If I can't find one I will be marooned at Alice's over the week end. I pleased to find my memory is right and there is a station open, justifying all my backtracking. But they, too, are going to close over the week end. . . .

Then on to Alice's, all supplied, now with the things for my little Easter/birthday for her and me, but now driving in what the radio says is one of the worst storms of the season. I got there about 4:30 p.m. and was alarmed to find so many cars there, leaving no place for me to park. The whole tribe was there! I'd been led to believe that Alice was there alone waiting for me to help her out after her hospital sojourn. . . .

Ensued one of those wild Doolittle evenings—a "birthday party" revolving around the few little cup cakes I'd brought. I felt Howie out again about doing our electricity for us. Again he said he couldn't—no license. That was that. I stayed overnight.

April 13, Friday—and Saturday were very trying days at Doolittles'. Howie finally did give me some advice and briefing about my electricity plans. I left and went up to Alki and stayed with Dennis and Abbie over Sunday.

April 16, Monday. I left there about 12:30 p.m., stopping to park down by the beach and put my make-up on there, easier than underfoot in that chaotic household. All in a cold downpour of rain.

TO MONROE was a very unhappy, nerve wracking trip in the pouring rain, I still not sure of the way. I managed to connect with the last freeway I needed (405), and the sun came out a bit there, but it was raining when I drove into Monroe. This frustrated any plans I had of camping out and taking some pictures. So I stopped at the motel. It had changed hands and the price was now up to \$20 a night, but the rain—I signed in. And then went on up to Chamterre very anxious about my first view of it since the previous fall.

When I got there, our street, which had run through almost totally vacant woods when I left, was a shock. There were two new houses and one lot had a tacky looking, beat-up trailer on it. The new utility pole they'd put up at the entrance to our land was not too bad, as far as uglifying the place went. But it was in an inconvenient place, complicating any future driveway plans but, at least, it was brown wood and could be mistaken for—a tree? mused the artist in me. The gravel we had had to order so that PUD could get their truck in was scattered all over and very coarse, but I was able to drive my car in on it a ways. I went on in to camp.

How did it look? My first impression? Well, Abbie had said that the cabin construction looked so **tiny**. And so it did. And it looked so **bare**, especially the west woods side. Seemed as if something was missing. I finally decided it was because the ferns were all flattened out.

I prowled around, checking things. Dennis had said that one time that the wood was dry and all ok. Not so now. The wood was soaked and the plywood all warped. When I got into the "shelter", as we called our makeshift plastic storage hut, I felt **woe** at all the mess and rusted things. And—good thing I hadn't planned to camp out for my cot and lawn furniture were gone!? Had the kids taken them to their place?

I grubbed around in the mud and rain until about five o'clock. By this time my enthusiasm was coming back somewhat. Then I left, stopping at the caretakers, the McNabbs. Enjoyed seeing them again. They are nice, old fashioned people.

Lu McNabb had told me that she tried to keep that lumber covered. Bless her! I worked like a fiend when I was up there, re-doing it, trying to get it better covered, for the wind had displaced a lot of the plastic.

Abbie asked me. "But what are you going to **do** up there? What **is** there to do? Ya just walk in and walk out..." I found a great deal to do!

Then, tired, cold, wet, hungry, I detoured clear out of my way into Sultan looking for a fast food take-out—like the "Col. Sanders' Take-out Chicken" places—where I could get something to take back to the motel to eat. The only thing I found was a very nice new restaurant next to that store near Sultan. "Family Store" it was called: "Family Restaurant" this was called. But it looked like a place to **dine** and I was in no mood or condition for that.

So I drove all the way back to Monroe, upset at how the lovely, bucolic countryside was becoming plastered with real estate and commercial promotional uglinesses. Aimless exploring of Monroe still revealed no possible eating solutions, so I went back to the motel foodless. I was tired, aching, cold and wet and my car—all that careful packing I'd done—was now chaos; a **mess**.

I found the motel, which had been "charming" at \$14 a night, now just plain cruddy at \$20 a night. To get my money's worth I began a lavish use of their hot water, washing all the rusty, dirty tools from camp and my nightgown.

That night in that strange little motel was a far cry from all my former luxurious motel experiences. I spent a rather unhappy night listening to the pouring rain outside and thinking about my dampened Chamterre dreams. And about...

April 17, Thursday. I woke rather late—after eight. Outside it was drizzling. I had to check out of the motel by eleven and get back to Seattle by five. Promises to keep. There was, really, not much I could do up at Chamterre; it was too early in the season; the bleeding hearts were just starting. Last year when we went up at Easter, they were in full bloom. And no sun; I'd be unable to take pictures. So I sat and worked on the tools.

Then I packed and checked out, making a reservation for May—the meeting—when I'd have to come up again.

When I went out there were patches of blue sky and the sun was coming out. I didn't stay long:

While I was there, a pleasant, good-looking young man, who seemed to be alone in a mobile home on one of the lots on that street, came over to talk. He said he had to give up his place; had a job come up back east. I enjoyed talking to him; neighbors like that would be nice. He told me and, later, McNabb told me too that guys were coming in and stealing cedar trees off those lots there! Cedar was much in demand and very high-priced at that time. That worried me—our place so unprotected.

The sun was shining and it was very pretty as I left and went exploring around the adjacent countryside, only to feel woe: big tracts to the west of us sold—developers—and a new road cut in. ["There goes the neighborhood!"] A mist had come up and it looked rather spooky as I left that area.

I stopped and got gas in Monroe where it was cheaper and there seemed to be less of a supply hassle than cities-ward. Then...

Back to Alki—where I stayed all night with the kids and went on to Alice's the next day. There I stayed two nights and got terribly embroiled again—helping.

Friday I set off for home, stopping to see Aunt Angela and talking to her and my cousin, Jimmy.

And then on home. A very easy trip—going back.
Got in about 6:30 p.m. 520 on odometer.

VANCOUVER

April 20, Friday. My first day back home I am unhappy to find that the new neighbors behind me—an aggressive-wifed retired couple—had built a fancy patio on which to have their noisy dinner/card parties. This meant I'd be unable to use my tiny patio I'd enjoyed so much, for it was only a few feet away and she a very busy hostess-with-the-mostess, and there would be a constant disturbance even in my temporary "studio" bedroom there.

Also, that nice young couple next door were moving out. Changes—while I gone—I didn't like.

Dennis and Abbie's current situation: I began a review think on. Things seemed to be better with them, though finances, of course, the ever-present bugaboo: how to pay for Noah's tonsil operation and the "new" old car Abbie's father had helped them buy.

It was the nicest car they'd ever had, a '75 VW station wagon, too fancy to use for Chamterre hauling, as Dennis said. It was a used car and they were having some trouble with it, of course. "You just made my day," Dennis said, bitterly, when Abbie announced she'd found out that those models had "converter catalyst" troubles.

Yet Dennis was pleased at coming to the end of his six-year try for a degree in "forestry science". And they almost had Ed's house paid for and could think of selling and getting out of that so fast deteriorating neighborhood. Also, Dennis was very excited about finishing up the cabin with Godfrey to help him.

April 21, Saturday. Mail—from Sultan Estates. "No, you don't have to pay the water fee yet. Yes, they are mad about all the new building going on, but nothing they can do about it. See you the 6th." This quotes from a letter that must have come from Irene Brown, the secretary/treasurer at that time.

Week-end thoughts on my current situation: I had rather hoped to get out of town during the summer by camping quite a bit at Chamterre; but Dennis prefers to not have me there while he and Godfrey are building.

So it looked as if I'd have to spend my summer in dull Vancouver, wishing I could be up there in those nice woods and have the use of the swimming pool.

Discouragement assailed me as I thought of how I'd taken retirement at age 62 instead of 65 so I could enjoy Chamterre while "still young". Hell! I'll be 65 before I even get in there, I thought.

April 23, Monday. Mail. My car insurance I'd been trying for approved! Not bad! I'm designated a "safe driver"! Premium \$143 a year. But no collision; car too old.

April 28, Saturday. Mail. A shock—An offer from land developers to buy our property "as they are buying other lots in Sultan Estates." I was shattered. We hadn't even started—my dream cabin in the woods—and now the area already turned into just another crass development. It made me want to call Dennis, but hadn't they gone to Yakima for the week end?

I called anyway. And found them there. They hadn't gone because Sarah was sick. When I told Dennis about the offer that shocked me so, he didn't show much interest. Only—"Nice to know the land's valuable," he said. "Ask 'em what they'll give." And then he went on...yes, the car was ok...he busy working on mid-term papers for school. About my coming up...well, I could stay there, only they'd be gone to a family party...Abbie's family. "Oh, no no," I said. "I'll...figure something out."

April 30, Monday. Shopping for the cabin, I ran across a kind of plastic "glass". I wondered if it would work for the upper part of the A-frame window where putting in glass panes would be highly dangerous — Something I would have to look into. I bought some wood preservative on sale.. "Highly poison" it said, but I figured I could work on that sometime when the little kids weren't flying around...I got new brush rake as I'd found my other one broken when I'd gotten up there. And I bought a big tarpulin, which I thought would come in handy to cover the car with and/or make a tent. And last, I bought a little parsley plant to start my garden up there!

May 1, Tuesday. More shopping

for trip. Stock up on canned and such food, so I won't have to drive 8 miles to the store up there—leave me free to do other things. My contribution to the potluck at the meeting will be olives and pickles; I will quip that it's had to make a casserole over a can of sterno...will take folding cot with me. All that! But it gives me a good feeling—whatever happens I'll have a bed and food. Clothes problem: want to dress up to meet all those people, but all that dirt, mud up there. And I found out it makes stains that won't come out. And must have sleeves—to combat flies when one works..and warm things; I nearly froze at that last meeting.

My sense of adventure came back as I fussed over these preparations: 64 year old woman sets out to camp in woods for a week, armed only with a cot, plastic for tent, little horde of canned goods and snacks and sterno. I'll show 'em! Don't need all that fancy stuff! Weather? I've weathered every kind, except winter, up there. If I take the right things...tools..and all..can survive. And car? Problems? Well, I got my car insurance! By God, I made it! 5 years of driving without insurance! And car's all paid for...and still runs....

Wednesday. I get the car packed. Not all that heavy—my equipment—and lots of room left in the car! Toyota? Wanta go? Try again? I'm game if you are...bless your little blue skin!...I will have to stop at Alki and deliver Dennis' old baseball mitt for Noah; Dennis wanted it....

Thursday. Rain. That ruins all my plans...camping out..painting the preservative. Realize I packed with the idea of fine weather...

SECOND TRIP NORTH—1979

May 4, Friday. Packed. Ready to go. Raining. And forecast for rain all week end. Leave about 10...Toutle Creek. Rain, rain, rain, though not heavy...odometer should turn 50,000 this trip...Morton..Elbe..Puyallup outskirts. Hungry. Find excellent little restaurant....

Am bypassing Alice this trip. On to Auburn, where I have a date to visit Arnie, a former boss, and his wife, Merla. Lost. Call Arnie. He rescues me. Nice visit. Arnie gets me to the freeway.

A horrid wreck on that route—a little blue car—**just like mine!**—totally flattened under a big semi-trailer. Traffic backed up for miles. Scary.

Kent..fire engines and big fire near where another former boss lives...strange...

On to Monroe. Rain has stopped. **Monroe**

Weather's nice! Mountains pretty.

6:05 p.m. 228 miles.

Camp out

8:50 p.m....Have made me a little "pup tent" out of the plastic. I could have set up the cot in the shelter, but this kind of fun and a challenge; I want to see if it works. I began to work on my

Diary

The rain lessened for the first time as I got nearer to Monroe, and, as I sailed into town, the sky to the west was clearing to show a bit of sunset. To the east were the snowy, navy-colored mountains...and spread before me the whole green, verdant valley. (I'm coming home! I'm coming home!)

I sped on to Chamterre, amazed and delighted to find no sign of rain there. And the same when, there, instead of the usual deserted place, there was a whole neighborhood to greet me! And the carpenters were hammering, working on that house, their radio blaring.

"Well, I didn't expect a greeting committee!" I joshed them. We stood around and talked so much that I had to hurry to get my camp set up by nightfall. It didn't rain until I had finished and then it began only very gently. And now it gently plops on my funny little tent.

.....
The Dooxies, the elderly couple putting in that fancy double mobile home at the end of our street, stopped me to chat with them. As we were trading stories about this place, she said, "They say ~~there~~ was an old lady here that had a still and she shot anyone that came near. "That's me!" I cried.

.....
I'm enjoying my little tent. There is a big cedar by my head..and a frog is croaking.....**Later:** Everything's fine, but it is raining harder and the noise of rain on the plastic keeps me awake..and my tent's kind of collapsing onto me with the weight of the water collecting..I am beginning to think how nice that motel will be tomorrow night...**Dawn:** I've never felt so "earthy"—so close to the ground and trees and nature. Yet I'm quite comfy. Surprising how little we need—a shelter, a bed, some food...My lamps Dennis scoffed at have worked very well. First thing I did was hitch up the clips to the batteries; I wasn't scared this time....Birds are beginning though it's still dark; there are not just two kinds, like in Vancouver, but a whole symphony of birdsong!
Beautiful! I am quite happy here among my "fronds" (ferns).

May 5, Saturday. 9:35 a.m. Just woke up. Wasn't raining when I did, but is now. My sleeping bag is damp..and cold...gotta get into shelter and heat some water for coffee and get warmed up...Oh damn! Food and sterno down at car..I go in rain to get..back. Get sterno started...**THUNDER!**...then **DELUGE!** Luckily I have everything covered..wonder when I can check into that motel...? (Sissy!)

I go down to the car and sit out the deluge. Two rather rough looking men appear and are looking at those two adjoining lots. They start to come prowling into our land. I toot horn at them. We talk a minute, but they flee back to their car to get out of the rain.

Noon: It is clearing. I turn on car radio. Paul Harvey—about building codes: "20% of cost of building a house is in paper work; codes, etc." He tells story of a man in California who says codes are a payola system. He got his house almost done, and then they threw the book at him: stop-work orders, restraining orders, threats of fines, jail, lawsuits; orders to tear his house down, etc. etc. He said that if he had complied with codes he would have had to see twelve agencies, all widely scattered, and pay \$2000 in permit fees. he is taking it to court. I was not cheered.

1:15 p.m. The sun's been out quite awhile. I've been working on clearing the driveway. Those young guys came to start working on that house again. Their radio! I asked them, nicely, to turn it down. They did.

3:50 p.m. There came a CRASH! of a thunder and lightning storm. Luckily, I was working in the shelter. I'd decided my little tent wouldn't work, so I'd moved my cot in on top of the pile of plywood...Tired. Hungry. Rain has stopped. I go to car to eat.. Seems as if everything I want is always at the wrong end of the trail...I'll have to check into motel by six...am loath to now weather is better...

That nearest house they are working on down there Dooxies said a nice young college couple is moving in there. No kids. Good!

My work in the driveway area...I study more specifically the assumed intention of getting my car farther in to park it on our own property some day. But find—nope—it won't work: that PUD pole is in the way—sitting right on the property lines at the junction of corner of our lot and the adjacent one. Flits through my head that, if that lot were ever to sell, that odd layout there could cause a lot of trouble. Damn!

I cleaned the brush out a bit in that area. It looks better. And then I can see that there is a dip (swale) at the beginning of the path as it comes off the paving of the cul-de-sac. And that that is what's hurting my back so as I lug stuff in, that unevenness. It seems to be a drain ditch the county has put in? And that's why Dennis brought up that sort of wooden platform to put over it so they could bring the gravel in?

I lug the big, old heavy thing over to where we want the drive. That's better. But I found my back too lame to dig it in right at that time. I figured I must have hurt my back trying to level the plywood to put the cot on. Only after, did I notice the crowbar there. My back hurts from tension? too? hurrying these jobs so, for I was trying to get them done so I'd be out of the way when they want to come up and work.

I leave to go down to the motel. The manager lady, Mrs. Rude (sic!) is very polite. She remembered me! I lug my stuff in...Am very tired, but go to little shopping mall. Too late; everything is closed. Go back to motel.

My room is not so nice as the one I had before; and a couple of noisy, raucous women in the adjacent room...When they don't quit their noise I go into the bathroom and yell, "Simmer down!" They did....and the room is cold...

Though my back is stiff I just fell thud into hot tub..and by 9 p.m. I am washed, clean and collapsed.

May 6, Sunday. Day of Sultan Estates meeting. 9:15 a.m. by time I wake...wakened by people noises. Forgot..have to be out of motel by 11. Had planned to take my time till meeting at 1:30. Now I have to hurry!

11:12 a.m. Got shoved out of motel by cleaners. Is cold out...and nasty, stormy clouds. 12:10 p.m. Went to that Holiday restaurant and had a huge, farmy type breakfast I didn't really want: german sausage for breakfast—ugh!

The Meeting

..was neither excitingly controversial, or fun. There were no fights..and no humor. It was short, which dismayed me, as I'd planned to use up my afternoon there. They closed up and ate at 2 p.m. I was still stuffed from that unwanted breakfast.

When I drove in I was quite baffled about the disorderly parking. For meetings, there no room on road, they just open the gate in the chain link fence and everybody scrambles for a place.

Inside, there was kind of a pre-meeting "meeting"—everybody standing around—nobody introduced or anything, just sort of talking "off the cuff". This one man,

Chase, I think his name is, that lives on our street, said, "All they do is go round and round (at these meetings)." There was one old guy who said he, too, used to work for the Highway department-maintenance. But he seemed to shy off as I tried to establish rapport by thinking of someone I'd known in maintenance. "Uhh...Bud?" I said. "Kissinger?" he asked. "Yeah!" I said; but he backed off.

At this, Smith, the president of the board, asked me rather slyly, "How'd you two get along?" "Oh..." I said. And we joked. (Bud was quite the ladies' man; but he never bothered me.) Smith drew me aside. "Anything you can tell us, we'd appreciate," he said (referring to the present situation; I assumed).

In what introducing there was, I was referred to as "the A-frame gal". A lot of them gathered round. "Oh, we've been in to see that place!" they cried. I was both annoyed (at the intrusion) and flattered (at the interest).

As the meeting started, I laid out all my plans, articles, data, etc. where people could look at them. Left them on the table, for I seemed to be the only "owner" who could produce a plat plan of the area. I noted, too, as the meeting progressed that there seemed to be two kinds of people: those who look at a tree and say Wow! How beautiful! and those who look at a tree and think—\$\$\$\$\$!

During the meeting, there was a sudden electrical storm. Very melodramatic! Hail! Lightning! thunder! Luckily I was in the building they call "the gazebo" at the time, for I had no coat or jacket.

Again, the president of the board, that sharp, outgoing, youngish, aggressive man approached me. "Say? You got a minute? You seem to be sharp about all this—could you **help** us—inform us?" What made me cry out, "I gotta go get my pickles and olives out!"? The meeting was over; they were getting the food out...and I got involved...

nabbing Lu McNabb, who had kind of "confiscated" my bag of plate and silver and was setting a table place with it..and nabbing another woman who was busily scribbling a recipe on a piece of paper.."D"ya mind?" I asked. "That's my **plan** you're using!" "Oh...sorry..."

As the meeting broke up, I waited and told Lu, "I'm going to **try** to stay up there...(on land)." "Need help?" she asked. "Oh..no..but I'm a little afraid of...that...dog..."

The people there...(try to remember the names.) I tried to make notes, but I only managed a couple: Delp and that my to-be-new neighbors in that next house..I met them..Carroll. They are **not** very friendly.

I was disappointed in that meeting.

After the meeting: I left and went back up to the land where I had committed myself to camping out till Friday, when I'd go back to Seattle and spend Mothers'Day week end with the kids.

Driving in I again admired all those blossoming trees down in the hollow of those two adjacent lots. Everytime I told people I was sure they were apple blossoms, they'd quibble with me; "Apples? All I see is blossoms!" Still, I love those gnarled old trees. I'm sure **somebody** planted some apple trees here—a long time ago. They may not bear fruit—i.e. "worth something"—but I do enjoy the blossoms—as if they were trying to tell me something blooming away there forgotten alongside that new paved road—where somebody had just thrown an empty six-pack of beer cans since I'd left.

I tried to back the car in on the gravel and got stuck; but managed to get out again. I began to lug stuff in. I went to put things in the shelter. A **cat** came scrambling out of it!! Later, I found an opened can of milk I'd left there...

I changed clothes and set to work. And enjoyed myself immensely! Fixing up the shelter, cleaning up the place, "prettifying", getting ideas—while the sun shone and the birds sang.

Later, in bed in the shelter, I thought of where I was: Incredible! on a cot on top of a pile of wet, rotting, warped plywood that cost me \$1700! I'm in this glistening, black plastic "hut" that's like a damned tomb! Seems like I've bought a million yards of plastic! It's a new thing used in construction jobs now...How come we didn't have to have a permit for this crazy shelter? They make you get a permit for everything else!...a frog harrumphs someplace...a star is shining in the trees...

3:15 a.m. I wake. I am cold though I am snuggled down in my sleeping bag. I hear an endless dribble of rain, but, it could be worse: it could be storming. But it is so cold my breath makes a cloud...I rig the flashlight up from a tent support stick to make a kind of spotlight...in its waning light I fall asleep...

3 a.m. It's getting light...though it's still pre-dawn...a lonesome train whistle...the birds are starting their breakfast chatter...Love 'em! As I try to write the paper is so damp the pen won't work. I wonder...that wood preservative chore I intended to do this day...useless to wait for dry wood. Will the effort, time be wasted if I do it wet?...This silly little shelter-all flimsy and patched up—but I shall never forget my days and nights in it!

May 7, Monday. 9:45 before I wake. The birds have been replaced by the sounds of men: footsteps? whistling...throat clearing..coughs. Then motors and machines..and what's that loud noise? a bulldozer? Oh no!

It's not raining, but it's cold. I get up and find I have a "game leg". I light the sterno burner and put water on and limp down to the cul-desac to get things I forgot to bring in. It's warm down there. Sun.(And clouds.)

That noise: a cement mixer going at the new house. I get stuff and go back, where I can hear those guys talking clearly even from camp.

Oh I don't want to do that painting today, but guess I have to?

1:25 p.m. I dressed and went down to McNabb's, thinking I'd better phone Abbie. Good thing I did, for they were expecting me there that day. She said it would be all right for me to stay there and I said I'd be there Friday—or before. I chatted with McNabb and went down into the valley to the store. There one can see the weather better. It was a nice day, clouds, but the good kind. And warm down there. I went back.

Though all that time pain in my hip was nearly killing me, I got ready to paint. Ugh—trouble with getting cans open...4:45 before I got done. Thought I'd die my back hurt so. But I couldn't stop. That stuff evaporated so fast I had to hurry to get it all done before it was all gone. And it was misery: I all wrapped up in anti-toxic gear and that stuff eating up my robber gloves. But the sun shone all the time I worked.

Through. I starved. I ate. I went to the car to take a nap. No sooner got there than it began to rain—the first time that day. Caught with no rain jacket, there was nothing to do but flee back to camp. By the time I got there another ear-splitting thunder storm.

I ducked into the shelter and changed clothes in the cold while still daylight and able to see. Then I fussed around in there waiting for the storm to be over so I could get things I needed in the car.

The sun came out, but there was still rain and thunder and every time I started to the car another clap of thunder frightened me back into the shelter. It was freezing cold and so dark in there I couldn't even read. I began to wonder if I were going to be able to stand three more days of this. The kids' "hibachi" grill was in there, but I didn't dare try to build a fire under all that plastic. Besides I hadn't brought any dry wood in...I made a try for the car again...

9 p.m. It has stopped raining. It's dark in here. Still light down below. I'd gotten stuff from car. I changed clothes in car, nobody around to see. Then I sat in the car and planned a future driveway. But it would have to be a future, major project. For time being would have to be ok as is.

There shouldn't be any trouble until that adjacent lot (#31) sold. And I'm sure it will be some day. Irene Brown said the present owner, Bruce Atkinson, owes a lot of money on that lot that he skipped out on paying. And those guys were looking at that lot; if they make him an offer, then something will have to be done about my driveway. This would be especially true because of the unrealistic plotting of these two lots that could make an unpleasant new owner claim encroachment on his property. But, until then...

Those apple trees in those lots below—I really investigated them as much as I could from the road edge without clambering down through all the brush grown up on that steep road fill. A robin scolded me as I knocked a dead branch out of his tree...

After a rest I went and got gloves and saw and worked on felling those little alders the gravel truck had smashed into. Then, having those long, straight trunks from them, I used them to rough in the property lines out there. I was appalled to see how close a house on the next lot would come to mine; we'd be looking into each other windows! The rains started again. I scurried back to camp.

It was dark enough now to go to bed with a clear conscience. I snuggled cozily in the shelter and listened to the rain plop on the plastic and fooled around—carefully—using Dennis' idea of foil as a reflector for the candle. There were no bugs, no mosquitoes, no slugs. All was ok.

2:45 a.m. I awake to find the roof leaking on my bed. Try to fix. No. Give up...

Lu had told me—that a real estate agent had reported to her that we had left **tools** in camp. That infuriated me! In order to know that he must have come in and prowled around—even into the **shelter**, where the tools were. **Dogs**. She also said, "**Everyone** has a dog. Some have two. So far no problem," she said. **At the meeting** someone told me, "It's awfully pretty in there!" "And we intend to **keep** it that way!" I'd said grimly.

May 8, Tuesday. 8:45 a.m. I was awakened from a deep sleep by hammering. Then that awful radio blaring. I stormed down to the cul. Yep. It was those carpentering kids again. I just yelled, "Turn that radio down! Do you think you own the whole world?" They just looked up and went on working. But, after I got back, it was quieter. I wondered if I could talk to Doocies and get them to cooperate and help me get that radio controlled...

Planning for the day—not much left to do in cul except real heavy work and that I'd better not risk..today..until my sore places better..no reason to go to store except..I need water...

8:15 p.m. Guess what? For the first time—I'm lonesome! I am sitting on a bench in the "picnic area". There is no wind, no sun, no rain. Dusk. Blue sky above. It's very quiet—except for the birds—right next to me here—teeny tiny ones...

Earlier: I did drive down the road to see what was going on and to call on Doocies and beg water. I came away very depressed, even though they were very nice and said I could get water there anytime and they showed me their house. Mobile home. Big one. Very magnificent. Very "Hollywood" for there in the woods. And so were their plans for it. I came away feeling like a shabby beggar with my rustic little cabin. Not envy—I don't mean that—but—just—out of place.

I came back and began to work on the shelter. Spent all afternoon on it. The sun was shining and it was fun. Then it began to rain. I put on a rain poncho and went on working. I was proud of myself that I got that big plastic over the roof hip all by myself—by using a long stick! Then I got carried away cleaning out the ferns in back of the shelter. When the sun came out again, I realized we had a clearing there for a backyard sun area?

Septic tank: Doochie was telling me about getting his in—about having to hire a rig—big hole—talking in terms of \$30,000/\$50,000.... Oh dear.

Later: So quiet! Even the creek is; it has gone down so I can't hear it. And—darn!—worked all day engineering a leak-proof roof and now no rain to test it!

These developers: Brauner? Du Jardin? Brauner, they say, took out 25 trees and bulldozed up there on that next cul. Fools! I hope someday—erosion—will wipe them out!

May 9, Wednesday. 8:30 a.m. I was waked at 7:30 by those carpenters! Rain at dawn made me worry about it being a non-able-to-work day? But, later, a spot of sun...can't wear my glasses up here because they steam up!...I left the matches uncovered; now they won't work. But I have my cigarette lighter...Lonesome. Lu can't come up here because she said, too many dogs; her dog fights with them.

7:05 p.m. It's nice enough and still light enough to sit outside in the picnic area. This is the nicest time of day here—when the **weather's** nice. From four to seven p.m. the sun gets in here; it's worth waiting all day for...The land-raper carpenters all gone...a silly bird up in the woods practising ten thousand ways to say "Kill!"...

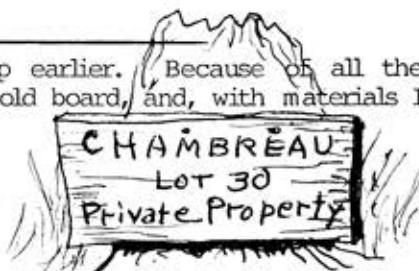
This afternoon: I met Lu driving up to see me as I was driving down to see her on my way to Monroe. We sat, vis-à-vis, motors running on the street where those kids with their radio were working. I yelled at her, "Anything we can do about that radio?" There was no reaction and we went on talking. Then a kid in a beat up car passed us, looking at us fixedly. I remarked on that when we got down to Lu's where she'd invited me to come. "Did you notice that kid?" I asked. **"Yes!"** Scary! these kids... We talked so long I was late getting to Monroe.

In Monroe: A police car was in my way when I crossing the parking lot. I grabbed the chance and tapped on his window. "Say, is there anything we can do about a kid and a loud radio?" "Sure! Call the sheriff! He'll shut him up!"

I did my errands, bought a big take-out sandwich at the bakery deli in the little Monroe shopping center—good!—sneaked my camp garbage into a litter can there and started back to camp.

Lu and I had argued about which way was shorter to Monroe: Florence Acres road or Old Pipe Line Road around by the quarry. I clocked them both and found only .9 of a mile difference, which, to me, didn't seem to be worth all the arguing the McNabbs did about it.

Back at camp: There was the sign I'd put up earlier. Because of all the prowling I'd seen and been told of I'd found an old board, and, with materials I carry in my sketch kit, I lettered on it and then nailed it to a rotten stump at the start of the trail. I hated to do it; I hate signs all over, but I didn't want people prowling around in there, either.



And I noted so many new neighbors on the street already; there could be no more dressing in the car!

I cleaned out the construction area and enjoyed an evening in a clean camp. And it was so nice to have everything dried out! Only...only...

Woe. McNabbs told me I'd need a **permit** to move in!

May 10, Thursday. 9:30 a.m. when I woke—cold, stiff, sore. The carpenters had been working a long time. My perchy bed on the pile of lumber getting rather teetery. And underneath the plywood are those **windows**. I sure hope they are ok? Not raining, but no sun. Bit of wind (new).

My last day here. I admit I am getting a bit weary of the discomforts, but still three days before I get home to my own good bed and comforts.

(111)

I begin leavetaking/close camp chores. I got all the lumber covered, though, a mistake? if wet...My back killing me it hurt so and all that lugging and packing I have to do tomorrow.

I decide to go for water and see why those carpenter kids are making so damned much noise? Yep! They perched on top of the roof. They waved at me as I went by. (I thought they were mad at me?)

I chat with Mrs. Doochie as I get water. Gee! she is as old as I and she said she jogs up and down that hill I just drove up!

7:30 p.m. I've got a beautiful bonfire going here. After freezing all week not until my last night do I discover that dry ferns and cedar tree droppings blaze easily and quickly. Almost too much so! Scary! I'm enjoying this, sitting outside by the fire. It is still light. Those kids are still working on that roof down there. Gotta hand it to them; they put in long days!



I inspired to draw, but too tired. I made sketch notes.

Then I sat and summed up my week. Things turned out fine, really. Weather was ok; lamps lasted; food ideas worked, and I did get the place cleaned up. I look about at my clean, neat, comfortable camp and think that it's too bad I can't leave for a few days, get rested, cleaned up and then come back and just enjoy it, for, by the time I get back again it will be a mess, what with building construction and kids and all.

...I never did get down to the creek. Oh, I did walk down last night, but I'd like a chance to just sit by it and enjoy it.

...am dirty. Mrs. Doochie offered to let me use their shower...can't use one down at gazebo because hot water isn't turned on yet. But I declined her offer for the main reason that I have no clean clothes to put on...OH! Mr. Doochie said he saw in the paper that that wreck I saw in Auburn—the car so like mine—the man was killed. Yuk...

That thumping I hear as I sit here evenings...has scared me several times...thought it was my heart overtaxed? Lu said it's the generator pump.. Well..I haven't seen the moon or stars this camp out. Miss that.

4 a.m. Rustlings in plastic sides of tent, though no wind...??? Sleeping here in this shelter on top of the windows, on top of the plywood, surrounded by our tools and supplies..if I ever get to live in that cabin, I shall have a passionate loyalty to it, for I have "slept with" every piece of it! Quite different from hiring contractors. (Or does one sleep with them?)

May 11, Friday. 8:30 a.m. Last day! Sun in tent: will be a nice day the day I have to leave and go back to the vexations of the cities... A mystery! My packaged breakfast cereal scattered all over and a round hole in the package. Surely not—rats!?

1 p.m. Have been all this time dressing and packing. The carpenters have left. And I find it lonesome! I miss their noise!... I spent a half hour getting a hornet out of the car... Guess I'll have to detour to garbage dump on my way out...

One last look at the cabin. Will I ever see it **this** way again?
Nobody to wave me goodbye.
Odometer 49,951

1:40 p.m. Now I'm ready to leave. And now that I am, I suppose it will be quiet around here, for they seem to have finished the house.....
Mrs. Doochie waved and called out to me..I stopped and talked to McNabbs. Lu said she heard the two gun shots last night, too. She said it was at 2 a.m. She thought it came from Moore's trailer.....
I sneak into Sultan riverside park at bottom of hill to dump garbage there instead of going clear to the dump.

Seattle

Odometer turned 50,000 miles in middle of Spokane Street bridge.

May 14, Monday. 10:45 a.m. Am off on my way home. Noah was home sick.... Bob Barnes had not delivered the door. I called Bishop and had him call Bob on Scan to see what happened. Seems Bob wasn't able to make it up that week end....Ready to go, but sure hate to go home....

On my way...am still in West Seattle...

Oh no! **My gear shift needle broke!** I can't tell what gear I'm in!...Trying not to panic I limped the car up to Nick's service station by Lincoln park, where I used to trade when I lived near there.

Long wait that seemed more so because of my panic and impatience. Nope. He can't fix it. He sent me to a garage back up in West Seattle.

Wait. Wait. Wait. But, although it only \$9 for the needed part it would take them three days to get it. Since I couldn't wait that long and the mechanic seemed to think I a bit sissy not to be able to drive without it, I just set out the way it was, having to guess at what gear it was in.

Burien..get gas. They put up a "no gas" sign right after me....

South of Puyallup. I am parked in a small mall eating a good roast beef sandwich Abbie made me. I got through all right, but it was three hours of sheer hell driving in the city and on freeways without gear knowledge.

On road to Morton. At beautiful little lake with mountain view. I am hot, sleepy. My eyes burn. I would have liked to stop but find myself sailing on before it registers with me I could have...A sign..saying" Northwest Trek"... whatever that is. I drive in. It's a kind of animal preserve park..a doe and a fawn graze on right beside my car. I doze a little..the car sure reeks of gas..I go on.

I have decided to take my time going back. Really no reason to hurry, so I turn off into a pretty valley where a sign promises "Pioneer Farm Museum". But I give up after miles and miles of not finding it and go back.

Igo on...Eatonville...Morton...tired, but a very beautiful drive...hot,tired...two hours yet to go...on freeway now, yuk...Vancouver..a sign : "no gas 90¢"... arrive store near home..made it.

200 miles. $\frac{1}{2}$ tank gas.

HOME

Lovely May evening, but there is no one out in our compound enjoying it. *going to?*
Phone rings. Mike and family. The whole family calling. They just back from Europe. Mike said to go ahead and sell Ed's house and go ahead and buy up that that adjacent lot #31. And they will send \$20 graduation gift for Dennis.

\$ \$ \$ \$
More business!

I open my mail. **There is another offer to buy our lot up there!** This time not a business firm, but private individuals wanting us to name our terms and price!

Feeling overwhelmed by all this suddenly thrust on just me I reach out for only other one of us available at mid-day. I call Abbie and talk to her. She is excited about all this news.

Then I try to call Irene Brown, the secretary/treasurer of Sultan Estates, in Seattle to tell her we want that lot. No answer. I call Abbie back and give her Irene's number and ask her to call to save me further long distance bills. Abbie is reluctant. "Oh, just tell her we're interested," I said. "She'll take it from there." And hang up feeling very **excited!**

I go back and read that letter again. And this time I find it very strange. It is an informal, handwritten scrawl, rather illiterate: ".if you would like to be liquid (sic)"...(How can anybody help but be liquid in that rain country!) And signed and sent by a husband and wife from their home address in a small town in the Monroe area. M m m m m m m m.....

I sit down and work out a letter to them, making a copy. I decline their offer.

May 15, Tuesday. 2 p.m. Phone. Dennis with information about lot #31. He'd talked to Irene. "That's not what we need!" he said. "We don't need a buffer zone! Besides, there are **two** lots in there and those big cedars are not on lot #31." He obviously was against buying the lot, though it wasn't too clear to me why. He seemed unduly upset about it. I tried to placate him, but he ended by saying, "Well, if that's what you **want**.""

After we hung up I thought about it. Perhaps he was right? And there was only brush on that lot? But he'd given me the Seattle numbers to call myself and that is not what I'd meant; it was long distance calls I'd wanted to save on. And letting me know who the owner was I didn't need, either. I had that information someplace. My point in calling them was just to have them alert Irene we were interested, until I could get with it. And that would take some time. Dennis seemed to think it was going to happen right away.

I figured I'd have to go in to office where they had a Seattle phone book and get the number of that finance company, ferret out other information about lot #31, and maybe try and pull some tricks I didn't know how to do just to put a hold on it—even if it didn't have any cedar on it!

I gave up on that and called the office and talked to Bob about the door. He said they might not go up till Memorial Day, and that the reason they hadn't gone before was that his family had come down here instead. Nice guy. Long talk.

That evening. 11:05 p.m. Call Dennis and Abbie again things so mixed up. Dennis said they are going to take Noah's tonsils out **next week**. (One thing I'd called about.) I felt him out about his objections to lot #31. "Oh, I thought maybe the money (used to buy the lot) could be put into the **house**," he said. And he kind of backed down about the cedars; he didn't know for sure, either. "Well, I could put the (septic tank) drain field on lot #31," he said. (Oh no! that would mean we'd have to start all over again on getting a permit—with perc tests, inspections, etc. when we already had our hard won permit it took us two years to get!)

I talked to Abbie: Noah would be going to the Children's Orthopedic hospital, where Paula works. And.. "Oh yes, the kids and I will go up and stay when Dennis and Godfrey work. After all, I'm **part of the crew!**" she said. "But I thought Dennis and Godfrey were going to work alone.. Won't Godfrey bitch about the kids and stuff?

"Oh no! Dennis wants me and the kids **wherever** he goes! Don't know what I'll do...heh heh...just fetch and carry...heh heh.." she said. Somewhere in there she had called out to Dennis, "You'll have to have the stove up there soon, won't you?"

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And then she said they'd only be going up there on week ends. This was another surprise to me: Dennis had said he'd be out of school on the sixth. "Well, I might pop up again," I said. "Just for fun, not business." Silence.

May 16, Wednesday. I went to the office and spent four hours there. I got the Seattle address for that finance company. And I called Bishop and had him check it for me and had a nice chat with him.

When I got home I found two big round containers on the porch that Pat (a neighbor woman) had promised to give me. They were detergent containers they discard at the laundry where her brother-in-law works. Pat found them handy to pack in and I thought they'd be good to pack papers in, as they had lock clasps and were waterproof. And I could just roll them down the trail!

So, I decided I'd begin to get ready to move!

May 17, Thursday. I went to Toyota dealer to see if I could get that gear needle replaced. But I only got a big, nasty hassle and runaround. No luck.

May 22, Tuesday. My phone rings. It's Bruce Atkinson calling me from California. He is the owner of lot #31. He wants to sell. He does have cedar there. He said "Core Industries" made him an offer of \$5000/\$5500. They are buying up both lots to build on. He has to know by Friday will call me again.

I am frantic! Nobody to talk to or advise me: what to do?

I call Dennis: He thinks (we) should buy—even to \$6000!
(Now I am having a heart attack!)

I call Dave at the office. (He has been very much involved in real estate deals of his own.) He thinks it's a good deal! Cheap for "nowadays".

(If I had butterflies in my stomach before, now I have elephants tromping through.) Meantime I'm thinking how I didn't like that Bruce guy on the phone. He sounded like a real "charmer", and extravagantly chatting about weather and trivia on long distance: a real slicker? Besides he's so far in arrears on his club dues on that lot—why it was in the hands of a finance company. This a distress sale? Etc.


That evening. I try to call Mike. No answer. Then, I finally get him. He sounds a bit cool about the deal. I can't say I blame him. After all he's never seen it: he doesn't know what we're talking about. "What lot? What are you talking about?" he opened our talk. "Well," he said, "he and Marylyn aren't too interested in making investments now. They don't have \$5000 and are not too eager for something they'll have to pay taxes on..." I hung up a little deflated, but not too surprised. None of us really wanted the lot, per se. It was more my fear of my hoped for privacy being encroached upon that had aroused my interest.

Called and got Abbie. I told her what Mike said. She didn't seem much concerned about it, either. She said Bob had come and delivered the door; that he and Dennis had finally met and Dennis was surprised at how young he was. (He'd assumed mother's pals were all old fogies?)

May 24, Thursday. Mail. My letter to that last private party offer to buy our lot returned: "no such address". I wasn't too surprised: it was a very peculiar letter. That, too, I just let go.

May 25, Friday. 9:15 a.m. Phone. Bruce Atkinson, calling about the lot. I told him we'd decided not to buy. His voice fell. "Why not?" "Oh there's just too much weird stuff going on." "Like what?" He kept pressuring me, "I'm so far removed from all that: tell me!" I finally told him about the queer letter offer. "Besides, you had that other offer, didn't you?" I asked. "Oh yes... Well, if you ever reconsider, let me know," he said. "OK," I said, "thanks for calling." **Operator:** "Your time's up, sir." "OK," he said.

And that was the end of that.



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JUNE 1979

June 1, Friday. Call to Dennis to congratulate him on his graduation et al. He sounded real pleased and thrilled. He said he had only two more days of school; that they might go up to the land that week end; that Godfrey was anxious to go up there and work. But he seemed upset that I was coming up the next week.

During this time Paula was planning a huge family reunion which I was told I simply must attend. When I brought up car troubles and all everyone suggested I take the bus or Amtrak (train). But being without my car presented difficulties besides just getting around. One of them was I'd need my big cabin file, for I would want to discuss cabin business with Dennis while up there, and it was too big to carry with me.

I then found it hard to keep myself from continuing to buy camping equipment, suddenly realizing I would never camp up there again even if I went up there when Dennis and Abbie went on their vacation in August, for by that time the roof and floors should be in cabin and I could sleep inside. (They'd better be done by then!)

To complicate traveling this trip: a **truckers' strike imminent**—maybe mayhem on the highways.

June 4, Monday. I took my car in to Jeff to see if he could fix that gear shift needle. I had the part Toyota had finally ordered for me. But, when he tried it he found it was the wrong part. Since Toyota had been so nasty, and Jeff said he hated to refer customers to **dealers** to have work done, he said, "Oh I'd just **live** with it (no indicator) if I were you. And, if you're down that way again, why don't you see if they'll give you your money back?" And he refused when I tried to pay him. When I insisted he said, "Oh, give me a dollar."

June 5, Tuesday. Good god! I'm sitting on my front porch when a Volkswagon drives up and a man gets out and **serves me an eviction notice from my landlord!**—whom he never even heard of, he says; just his job to do this. Nor does he know of any reason why.

Nor does the manager's wife when I call her, sore distraught and puzzled. She doesn't know anything about it she claims.

No one to appeal to but my good friend, Dave Rodin. I call him. He is nice—and shocked! But he said that people who have been looking at his house for sale have told him same such tales; that they have lived in places for two—three years and no problems—and then have been suddenly evicted. All over town big landlord operators are suddenly jumping rent on people.

In shock and agony I try to think what to do. Get a lawyer? Ha. Mine just died. I want, of course, to contact family, but what a shame to inflict such bad news on Dennis when his big day the next day: his graduation from the University he tried so long for... (Notes say I did call that evening about six but only that they said Noah's operation scheduled for the 12th.)

Despair. Eviction.

Next day I appealed to the landlord, Jack Hall. What was so puzzling was that I could elicit no reason from anyone as to why I was being evicted. Even Jack insisted it was nothing I'd done; had nothing to do with the garage door accident, etc.

Later, about that time, I clipped newspaper stories about the scandals of evictions going on then (The condominium concept was being born!) But I didn't know that at the time.

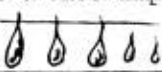
I had been given 20 days in which to get out. I asked Jack for another month. He was very nasty. "No! I can't afford to lose a month's rent!" "What about **me**?" I asked. I told him I'd give him notice. "No! Look!" he said, "I have to **know**! I gotta **rent** that place!" "But I have no place to go," I pleaded and told him why. "Oh there's **lots** of places!" he cried. "You're **lucky**! I could have raised the rent!" Etc...etc....

Alone again, I stood and looked at all my stuff...what to pack, save, forfeit? How in hell can I pack when I don't know where I'll end up?...In a fit of rage I went outside and cut down and destroyed all my bean vines about to ripen and all the other things I'd planted. How—wry—I thought, just when Dennis is getting his degree on how to **save** plants I am chopping them down!...

I called California and got Marylyn. "We'll call you tonight," she said. I called Dennis and Abbie. "Dennis has to catch a bus," Abbie said, "Keep in touch." I called again that evening. "Can you call back?" Dennis asked. "My dinner is ready." It seemed ages before

"Dennis," I cried, "I just can't afford two or three moves! I just want to **get out of Vancouver!**" "I think that would be the best thing," he said. "I'll come and move you...Hey! that was a great drawing!" (Some cabin plans I'd sent him) "No...No...no it wasn't...it was...crude!" "Hey! we'll come down and move you!"

Mike called. They were just getting ready to leave on their trip to Europe...nothing to do but put on "a brave act". "I'm ok! Have a nice trip! I love ya!"...

I went to bed and cried and cried and cried... 

June 7, Friday. A pause after phone battles like mad trying to find out things and possible things I could do. Well, I've got till Monday...and then—we begin to pack!

In the news: Not only does the gas shortage continue, but now there is a **truckers' strike**. How in the hell am I going to **move**?

I also made a visit to the office. Jerry Perry (that's really his name!) who works in titles told me long and interesting stories about real estate shenanigans in Vancouver. One of the current ones was: it seems that Jack Hall sold that place where I've been living—to someone called "Campbell and Associates"—why he's in such a bind...

While at the office, I trying to explain about being evicted even though I don't know why I was, I discover there is a stigma attached to just "being evicted". Everyone is shocked; they are also shocked at being given "only 20 days." (Normal notice for either party is always a month or 30 days.)

Art Lemke brought up one possibility. Housing availability at that time in Vancouver was nigh impossible, but he said his wife worked for a Federal Housing Agency of some kind and that there was a place in Vancouver where they get people "temporary housing" in distress situations.

It seems that landlords were jumping rents sky high and evicting people all over the place. People were going to great lengths to get even the dingiest places to live, etc. Bob and Dave said they'd help move me if I could get in that place. They offered! (I could pay them but how could I get gas for the car? Nobody could get gas!)

Meantime, I start to pack. And I discover that the neighbors, who were never very chummy anyway, are now avoiding me, closing their blinds against me—that sort of thing. And I find myself fending off packing because of the emotional trauma..

- things I've kept for sentimental reasons—things I've lived with **so long**—I'll have to throw away, I guess.
- my A-frame model I worked so hard on...what'll I do with that...space-taker? I don't **need** it, but would break my heart...and seems like an awful bad luck omen to destroy it...
- the hi-fi Mike made me—and all my records—what to do with them? for the hi-fi doesn't work and nobody will ever fix it now, but what a cruel thing to dispose of it...
- as I pack for "Chamterre"—ha! that name didn't catch on, did it?—somehow it's akin to "Bali Hai" or "Somewhere". We artists have have to wait till 100 years after we're dead before appreciated...

I don't think I've ever done this before: pack when I don't know where I'll move to! And the problem of very little storage space either in any temporary place I'd move to or even in finished cabin.

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I spent the rest of the week packing behind closed blinds.

I've got exactly 3 weeks;

Jack Hall says I can't have any more time.

June 10, Sunday.

--- they toll for thee... ♪

Sunday morning. Church bells,
I find them ironic.

2p.m. Phone. Dennis. They went up to the land yesterday. He's going to Everett and check with authorities. Will call me Tuesday. Needs money. More specifically: He's going to Snohomish County and ask if he can go ahead with all those changes (we made). "I'm not going to go ahead and do all that work if they're going to make me do it **all over!**" he said..."Well, we can go ahead and sell this (Ed's) house," he went on. I had to remind him that his fellow inheritor was out of the country until the end of July. He feels me out about my buying a pick up (without much luck!)

10:30 p.m. Phone again. My sister, "Tiny" in alifornia. I must have told her about my eviction for she said she'd been thinking about me, worrying and trying to think of some solution. They have the same problem of landlords evicting down there. "It's **greed**" she raged. "All you can do is stand and scream!" I tried that," I said, "and the neighbors objected and I got evicted!" She laughed. "That's the trouble," I went on, "ya can't even use **humor** any more." And I told her of some of the "funnies" I'd tried to handle this situation with. We laughed. "Well, you **sound** better," she said. "Remember mother's quote: 'This too will pass.'" We hung up. Bless her! I needed that!

I watched television on the set Dave had loaned me; the play "I, Claudius". "I have to hurry and write it down before they poison me," Claudius said. I felt akin... Later... I open the drapes... a full moon is rising over Jack Hall's roof tops...

June 11, Monday. I go to the office. Art tells me it might be possible to move into that place he's told me about!

I went to the Toyota dealer and asked for my money back on that part they ordered that was wrong. The guy was **mad!** He just slammed the money at me and froze up.

Villa West

I then went down to see that place Art said I could move into. I just gasped with horror. It's a slum area, the old, old part of Vancouver now swallowed up by railroad yards and industries. I pulled up where the sign said "Villa West", the inviting name of the place that had encouraged me to seek it out.

I just sat there and gulped at a slum building, for indigents; about as opposite as I could get to my nice new bungalow apartment. It looked like an obviously long-abandoned, rickety old frame school building hurriedly cosmeticked up. One could just **see** the rats!

I went in and talked to the manager, a real floozy of a woman. She said she was the **owner** and it's **not** a government project, as I'd gotten the impression from Art, but privately owned. She said it was an old army barracks from World War I.

She showed me the room available—\$150 a month. At that price, with the savings it would be to me and for a **temporary** I began to think it might not be too bad? There were public phones in the building and a "family alert service"—whatever that was. And the room was kind of a fun challenge to someone who liked to fix places up as I did.

Actually, it was three rooms and old fashioned as hell, but **large** rooms. I could get a lot of my stuff into them. And the building seemed nice and cool. There were **huge** big sash windows that faced west, but would be shaded by big old trees across the street. The trees would not block a view of sky and sunsets—something I didn't have at the other place, where I just looked into other's windows. It even had a gas stove..if I...if I...(wanted to stick my head into the oven!)

I decided it might be kind of a lark—**temporarily!** I'd have time to finish up interrupted business while Dennis finished the cabin.

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I decided I'd prefer it to being stuck in Monroe, where I'd already checked out temporary housing. (Why I'd ended up camping and/or that dingy motel) Monroe, at that time, had no apartments or hotel, and only the two motels, of which I'd chosen the closer one. A friend of mine, who had had to do business in the area had had to resort to renting an old house—only kind available. And all these were decrepit and non-natives overpriced.

As I drove away from the place, I saw a man who looked like a salesman moving personal stuff in. So there would be **men** there? Doubts assailed me. It might be ok as an emergency move, but how could I tell everyone that Lorna was moving into a—whorehouse?

I did other errands that day: things that hurt. I sold an extra drawing board I had and some books. I stopped at the office, expecting to get a good laugh when I told my impression of that place. Not. But Bob and Dave said they'd move me if I had to go to that place. And they said they'd come Thursday noon and take my trash to the dump.

That afternoon: a letter from Mike. It was mostly their itinerary of their European trip, and giving a couple of addresses where they could be reached (in case I died?) and wishing me luck.

The Dispossessed

Later, I had a horrible realization about that place, "Villa West", which I'd already begun calling "the dump". My car would have to stand out in the rough, tough neighborhood, subject to vandalism and the gas robbing that was already getting so prevalent! And I'd had that protective coil taken out of the gas tank, since guys had such a hard time getting the cap off. And where could I get a Toyota lock top, since Toyota was mad at me?

I would lose my nice **garage!** first and only time I'd ever had a garage for the car. What if something happened to my car? If I lost my car I'd lose my freedom! It was an unhappy thought. Also I would be losing my stove-fan, dishwasher, my own private laundry room for my little washing machine—all the niceties I'd grown used to.

Packing. I finished getting everything in from the patio, except the lawn table and umbrella, which Bob had said he'd take. It was little enough to repay him and I'd never have any more use for it.

I then called Dave's home to tell him I was all ready. His wife, whom I didn't know, said they were out playing golf, so I told her I'd catch them at the office the next day.

Then I fixed and ate a "last supper"—steak with all the fixings. I felt as if I could cry and cry and cry. Instead, I tried to enjoy all the things I liked best about the nicest apartment I'd ever had. I also thought about how Dennis had lost his enthusiasm for building the cabin: "It's **too far** to go up there; it's too much **work**; I can't use **my** car to go up there", he'd said...

June 12, Tuesday. I called Villa West about some other things I wanted to know. And I was angered to find there is a **3 month minimum tenancy** in order to get back the \$50 deposit they demanded. And there is no shower, only a tub. But there is laundry facilities.

Bob was late coming. I had gotten a splitting nervous headache in the meantime. He went off taking the stuff for the dump and insisting that they'd move me. He even offered to fix up a TV he had for me. Bless them!

After he left I sat and went through my records and tried to get the hi-fi Mike had made me to work. It wouldn't. I nearly wept at the thought of having to give it up.

Then I watched TV and waited edgily for Dennis' call—to hear what our fate about the cabin would be. **Phone rang; It was Dennis.**

But he seemed hesitant and beating about the bush.

"Err...uhh...I gotta get more lumber...\$1500 worth..." he said.

"L.L.L. That's about all I've got," I said. "Did you go to the plumbing permit people?"

"No. I forgot."
"But the lumber," I said, "Is it wet"
"No, it isn't."
"Well, what did they say?"
"Who?"
"Well, who'd you talk to?"
"Oh, some engineer."
Again I said, "Dennis? What did they say?"
Again he said, "Who?" Then... "I made a mistake, mom. I'm sorry...I should have...I'm sorry...I owe you money..."
"Mmm. Well, well, what's the problem?"
"Oh...that plywood..."
"Hunh? Whadda ya mean?"
"Oh, it's half inch."
"So?"
"Well, we could use it inside," he said.
"Or we could sell it," I said grimly. "So? What's the problem?"
"Oh, it has to be $\frac{3}{4}$ inch."
Silence.
"Mom? I'm sorry! I made a mistake!..."
"Well, did you have any other problems?"
"Hunh?"
"I mean the plumbing, etc."
"Oh...forgot. Gal said I've have to talk to the boss about 'line drawings'.
Forgot...their hours..." He went on some more about being sorry till I said,
"Forget the 'mea culpa' bit, will you? Do we go ahead...or what?"
"Well, we can't go back."
"No. And we can't sell a half-built place," I said.
"But if Godfrey and I get the roof on..."
"Yeah," I said, "If I only had a place to store my stuff... Dennis? Listen..."
"But, mom, I'm **sorry!** I feel so bad about it!"
"Well, we said we'd learn, didn't we?" I said.
"We can sell this house (Ed's)..." he began...
"Dennis? Mike is..." I looked at the calendar... Tomorrow they leave for Europe..should I tell him? No. No. "Mmm. Sell that house, Dennis? It takes **...time!**"
"No, it doesn't, mom."
"Mmm. Well, I have a strange place to go to. Bob and guys..." I tried to joke... "a World War I army barracks..hahaha..slut house...Dennis?"
He was being—silent. "Well," he said, "Rents up here are impossible..They'll all say 'I told you so!'" Dennis lamented.
I tried to pin him down. "Do you want to go ahead—or not?"
"I'd like to!"
"Well, when should I send you my last \$2000?"
"Oh..Oh..I'll let you know..if can just get the framework up!" he said.
"Yeah, **framework**" I said.
"Then..it's just the frills," he said.
(Frills. Like stove and chimney and shower and toilet and electricity and septic system....and...) "I don't exactly call them **frills**, but..about the money..."
"It'll be such a good, strong house, mom!"
"Well, do you **want** to or not?"
"Well, I'm so sorry, mom! I owe you \$800."
"Oh cripes!" I said, "Do you want to go ahead?"
"Would be **nice!** Godfrey and I go up there this week end..."
Well, when do you want the \$2000? Remember my phone will be disconnected."

At last we hung up.

It looked like I'd have to live in that dump.

June 13, Wednesday. It was time to start phoning people and getting things settled, but I felt like that song "...but please don't ask me **now**". When I went out to the car I found the garage door, which had been fixed, someone had painted without even letting me know they were out there. Somehow that made me furious!

Later, I talked to my friend, Pam. I told her about moving into that place. "Oh no!" she cried. "You can't live in that area! I had friends who did! No! No!" And when I told her about the eviction, she said, "Why they can't do that to you! You! of all people! Why, I can't believe it" I was getting this same reaction from everybody. When told her about painting the garage door, she nodded. Yes, they have to "fix something" in order

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in order to justify a rent jump. Then she said she knew Jack Hall and his family, and she told me some dire things about them all. "Jack's just greedy," she said. "Always was, but is getting worse."

That evening: Feeling a condemned-man calm, I filled out the forms Villa West asked for: My annual income? I was shocked when I figured it: \$7700 a year? That is in the poverty level? Why, I don't get in a **year** what Dennis says it will take to finish the cabin!...The rest were humiliating questions that made me feel as if I were signing into an **institution!**

June 14, Thursday. Late in the afternoon, as I headed over to my new home in the old army barracks on an errand, my car radio started playing "Taps"—oddly—just as I drove by the military cemetery. All I needed to go with the hollow, crying feeling I had. Later, I discovered it was Flag Day, but I didn't know that at the time.

On the way back, the sky filled with black clouds; our spell of fair weather was over. Wending my way to the office to settle more definitely about a moving date, I realized I'd be paying double rent in that interim till about the end of the month when they said it would be the best time for them to move me.

The younger people I talked with called that dump "a spook house". And, I was telling Dave about my unhappy encounters and impressions of Villa West that afternoon, "Oh that's right!" he said. "You're right in the railroad switch yard there!"

June 15, Friday. I arranged to have my phone disconnected..and I discovered the hose I'd need to use my portable washing machine at the cabin was all dried and split beyond repair..little things, but....

I began a trying search for rental storage, having found the facilities claimed at that dump impossible—an inaccessible, lockless, dark, dank basement...I checked on my cabin fund; it, too, was in shock from unexpected—\$200 loan to Dennis for his tuition; \$200 garage door calamity; \$1500 Dennis' trials and errors in lumber; now my eviction cost \$150.

I talked to Pam again. She told me that the little old man who did her yard work trying to earn money to take care of a dying wife had been evicted from his place, too. "What's **going on?**" Pam protested. "Everybody's being **booted out!**"

Later on she told me that an old lady member of her family got evicted from **her** apartment. Same story. Seems they are going to build condominiums there, so out she goes!

That evening I was so upset by two angry phone calls, first from my brother and then from Dennis, that I just blew up at Dennis—our first real fight. The calls had nothing to do with the cabin (a family fracas and misunderstanding about a call I'd made to Aunt Alice) but it was the proverbial "last straw" on top of all the other trials I'd been having.

In anger I told him that maybe we should just call off any cabin building and any attempts to work together—that I just wouldn't send any more money.

"I'm trying so goddamned hard!" he exploded. "Sorry I didn't get that place done!"

"I'm just upset," I said. "I gotta go live in that slum and I don't want to. No, you're doing a good job.." We did some more lame quibbling.."Ok, let's call it off," I said.

"Hunh?" he says.

"Well, I won't send you any money..."

"Well...err..." he says.

"I did my financing today, Dennis, and we're not all that bad off..."

"But whadja do to get evicted?"

"I **don't know!**" I cried, at that intimation of sin again. "Nobody, including me, can understand it!"

We talked long and hotly, but were simmered down by the time we hung up.

June 18, Monday. 12:30 p.m. My phone rings. Dennis. He didn't sound mad; quite calm and unruffled and went on talking and bringing up points despite my reminding him of his phone bill.

"Did I want to go out there and live—or not?" (the cabin.)

"Yes! Definitely! Of course." I told him that I'd thought about it a lot

and done some crying about not being able to.

He questioned me some more and then said, "Well then, I'll go ahead." And then he sounded a bit delighted. He said he was going to quit Sears in three weeks and go up and work full time on the cabin. That would be July 6. He said they'd saved some money and would cash in on their Sears profit sharing. Yes, they'd have enough to live on till maybe August. No, he didn't feel sad about it; had been wanting to quit there anyway—it had served its purpose—a half-time job while he went to school.

"Do **you** want to go ahead?" I asked.
"Yes. Of course. But didn't know about **you**."
"Well you caught me at a bad time," I said.
"I didn't realize that place was so awful," he said.
"It's pretty awful, " I said...but let it go at that.

He went on to say they had a new plan they wanted to check out with me before they went ahead: that they'd give up Ed's house and I could stay there. That that way I'd always have a place to live.

"Where will you go?"
"Oh, Abbie and I want to get our own place in the woods.."
"But," I said, "I don't want that place. It's yours."
"No, you can have it and do whatever you want with it. Sell. Whatever-"
"Well, I don't want to live in that house. Never did like it."
"But it will give you a place to go...I only want to know if you want to live in Monroe?"
"You mean the cabin?"
"Yes."
"Well, ok then. We can last till August and I'll try to get it finished up..."
"The building and electrical..." I said.
"Well, you can sell this house."
"Well, I'll be all right in that place: it'll give me three months to finish up here. Things can change a lot in three months."
"Well, ok," he said. "We'll wait till Mike gets back and see how things go."
"You sure you're not mad at me—nobody's mad at me?" I asked.
Oh no."

"Do you want some money?"
"Oh no. Not yet. I bought some stuff—things I'll need. Did some shopping Saturday."
"Well, you want to build, don't you?" I asked.
"Oh yes."
"You like that part of it, don't you?"
"Oh yes. I wanted a chance to try...see what I could do. Godfrey and I are going up Friday and stay all night and get started topping the A's."
"How does Godfrey feel about it?"
"Oh it's ok with him."
"Did you get up there this week end?"
"No."
"Well, I wondered. All that horrible rain we had."
"No, there was no rain. I just forgot about the Sunday gas closures and drove all over with the gas gauge on empty trying to find gas. I'll get it covered over (cabin) at least, " he said.
"Well, I may have to ask Mike for some money," I said.

We kept checking some more to see if we were in agreement: was he sure? was I sure? "It was just that Abbie and I had this new plan and had to check with you to see if you still wanted to live in the cabin, first."
I thanked him profusely for calling. "You sure picked a good time to cheer me up!" I said. He kept lingering on the line and asking me if I was sure? "Oh yes!"

I hung up very relieved. Depressing—the bit about Ed's house—the foreseen trouble legacy—but, as I drove over to the dump again, I felt the knots in my gut beginning to unwind and tears of relief blinded me a bit.

What I found over there didn't cheer me, though. It was just plain horrid: a dump. I wondered why I'd ever thought it possible. There were trucks and rigs with their back-whistles going all over the neighborhood; and teen ~

agers trying to crowd my car off streets as I drove; tacky stores—just a slum! It was noisy, hot, filthy and broken down, that building and my "apartment". That manager/owner babe was a real meany, I could see. And the measurements I'd taken of the so-called "apartment" were right; it **was** that small. I left very depressed again.

June 19, Tuesday: I've got one week to finish this packing mess. I pack all my fine clothes. Maybe, someday, I'll get a chance to go to a party or the theater again—maybe...breaks my heart that I shall have to give up my plants and the asparagus and parsley I got to start at the cabin, but there is no possible place for them at "the Dump".

Noon: The Salvation Army truck comes to pick up the things I had to discard. Heartbreak again as I watched all my treasures being carted off. Pam said I could store some things in that cinder block garage of theirs. I told her how I'd counted up: **I've moved 38 times!**

I have but five days to pack now? What a horrible, cruel thing to demand that an old lady, who hasn't been feeling well, anyway, wind up her **whole life** in 20 days!...I pack only enough eating utensils for just me...That dump will be sort of like a sick version of "camping out"...Giving up my phone; how in hell m I going to discuss anything with Mike?

June 22, Friday. I discover that that dump is not only in the middle of the railroad switch yard, but next to the **sewage plant!**

Bob calls from the office. He said they'd move the stuff I wanted to store at Pam's on the 26th. Then the major move, the 28th. That leaves me only two evenings to finish up packing and clean this place up. I call another guy, Brian, at the office and ask him if he can use some art supply stuff I'll have to discard. Yes, he said, as he has children's art classes (besides being a would be artist himself.)

I realize that unless I stay in that dump through **September** I will lose another \$50, which would make \$100, all told, and that the cabin won't be ready to winter in by September...or even October! Disaster! If I can't move in I'll have to renew the septic tank and building permits—will equal **more** unexpected expenses!...And...I call the phone company...It will cost me \$30 to transfer; there is no hook-up there. This move is going to wipe me out!

! ...and then !!

June 24, Sunday. Dennis calls. He and Godfrey just got back. They spent two days up there. The weather was perfect. "What a switch!" he said. They got four tops on. "It's **very impressive!**" he said. "Looks like a **church!** the points towering into the trees."

"Oh, Dennis!" I cried. "I was just thinking about you!"

"Godfrey got an idea," he said. "Can save \$600 on the roof—can use the $\frac{1}{2}$ inch plywood on the roof. It will take us **one more day** to finish the roof and then I'm going to quit my job and work on it full time!"

There were a million things I wanted to ask him, but he took up our telephone time on technical details. "I don't want to run up bills here," he said.

"Oh I **wish** I were there!" I cried. "I **gotta** come up—August. I'm gonna keep my phone. Oh Dennis! Good news! I'm so happy!"

And he sounded so happy. "How **are** you?" he asked.

"Oh, this (moving) mess! Wish I had a camera...The guys gonna move me..."

"Well, we'll get you out of there in **two months!**"

"Make it **three!**" I laughed. "...or I lose fifty dollars!"

"Yours is going to be the best house up there!" Denis cried.

"Oh thank you! Thank you, Dennis!" I hung up jubilant!

June 25, Monday. Brian and his wife came and got the stuff I'd promised him.

June 26, Tuesday. I called P.U.D. to discontinue my electricity. They told me that my apartment was already rented—service being asked for an "Opal" somebody. I was furious! Jack hadn't wasted any time!

I went out to get gas and search for a locking gas tank cap. Why I don't use self-help pumps: The only place that had gas was a self-help—and it only had premium gas, the most expensive. I'd never done it before, putting in my own gas. I had a terrible struggle to get the cap off—and then that expensive gas went all over the place instead of into my tank! Wasted! And I had to pay for it... But I did find a lock cap.

I went over to the dump and did some last minute cleaning and painting. It was hot and miserable and I worked in a misery of tension for I had to hurry not having a timepiece there and I had to get back to meet Bob and Dave—

for this was MOVING DAY number one

They came at six and it didn't take them half an hour to load all that stuff on the pick-up. They made it look so easy! We laughed and drank beer. Then Dave seemed very touched when I gave him one of the big charcoal nude studies from my Cornish school days.

He had just paid \$300 for a (very insignificant) original painting for their redecorated house. (Later, I was very flattered to see my drawing framed and hung on their bedroom wall.)

Packed up, I gave them directions on how to get to Pam's and called her to see that she'd be there when they came to put some stuff into her garage. Then I gave them the key to the storage unit I had rented. They said they could do it alone: that I wouldn't have to come; that they'd give me the key back Thursday when they came to move the rest of the stuff.

They drove off in the loaded pick-up, laughing and joking and waving—while I stood and blessed them from the bottom of my heart. And I decided I'd forfeit my special San Juan Islands map print I'd gotten from the artist, himself as a gift for Bob. For they were going to make a trip up there, and I didn't expect to go sailing in the San Juans again.

June 27, Wednesday. I had a big cry. Suddenly it hit me.

MOVING DAY

June 28, Thursday. ZIT!(Thisisit!) Moving day.

Weary unto collapse, I finished up all I had to do to leave that place clean despite the way I'd been treated. I always left places clean when I moved out.

Bob came alone. Seems Dave was delayed signing papers for the sale of his house. But Bob started right in packing...Then when they were all finished I followed them over to the Dump. There ensued then a kind of comic opera as they went to the front of the building and I to the back and we drove around and around the building searching for each other.



As they moved my pretty shabby looking stuff in, Dave kept making wry comments about the place. And I almost got hysterics when I opened the fridge there to get them beer and found the beer frozen!

The guys insisted I stay there while they went back for another load. I passed them on the road when I went back for more later. They had a baseball game to play that night, but "We'll get you out tonight!" they cried. I was very touched on going back to the old place to find they had left it clean as clean and only a few small things I could get in my car for me to take.

They went on and I finished packing up and then stood and said farewell to "Pepper Tree Village" (named after the big pepper tree at the entrance.)



When I got back to the Dump I was touched again; the guys had arranged the furniture in the living room and had the TV Dave was loaning me turned on. I offered them a drink, but they said they had to hurry. Dave's derisive remarks, but..."You know...you could fix this place up.." he said encouragingly. We laughed wryly at the stench from the sewage plant. "Oh well," I said, "I can pretend it's the beach with the tide out."

"It's going to be **all right**," Dave said, and they left.

My days at the Dump began...that night...the ungodly noises outside...the ominous penitentiary-like stillness within...It was four in the afternoon the next day before I woke from a sleep of utter collapse—starved—to open the refrig and find the \$20 worth of food I'd stocked it with frozen solid...ruined...

That

was

only

the

beginning...

[Aside: Since this is the story of the cabin I shall not intrude my amazing experiences in the Dump here except as they pertain to the cabin building. That is another story! (That can be found in diaries?)]



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JULY 1979

Moved, I began to learn the horrors of my new life in the slums, details of which, as said, I shall leave out of this tale of the cabin.

July 5, Thursday. Evening. I call Dennis to report that my new phone is installed. "Well," he said, "it looks like you'll have to spend the winter there; Sears won't give me my vacation unless I work till August 17. And Godfrey's gone on vacation, so..." This meant he couldn't get up there to work. I started to lament.

"Now, quit bitching at me," he said. "It's just...everything." "Well, I'd sure like to get up there just once this summer," I said. "In August, maybe..." "But there's nothing to see—nothing done," he said. Then, "Can you winter there?" he asked. "Oh...sure. And where are you going to winter?" "Why, here."

It was another blow; another postponement.

In mail I get another letter offering to buy our lot.

July 11, Wednesday. Evening. I call Dennis and tell him about the offer. "I feel guilty about not letting Mike know about these offers," I said. "Well, Mike never said he wanted to sell," Dennis said and began talking about construction details. "Should I buy a sink?" he asked. "Found a bargain." "Where?" "Oh Salvation Army." "How much?" "\$7." "Oh...go ahead."

Then he began to apologize again, "Sorry I'm so slow...you seem so impatient." "Well, I'm going to be 65 next year..." "I can get a 50 gallon water heater for \$75," he said. (via Sears) I told him I didn't think I'd need a 50 gallon, space being a problem—that a 30 gallon would be enough. "I think we should get the shower stall first. It has to go in before the door goes in."

Then I asked him again if he wanted to go ahead or not, I still wondering what to do about these sell offers. "If we did sell," I asked him, "what in hell would developers do with your A-frame?" "Probably bulldoze it," "Over my dead body!" I said. "Well," I went on, "I managed to get gas today. After Labor Day, when the traffic simmers down, I'll come up." "Not till then!?" he exclaimed.

"Hey!" And then I told him about Pam's husband getting a truck and my idea that I might give them some of our wood up there if he'd take the stove up for us. He bristles. "There isn't that much wood up there." I back down. "Sure you want to go ahead?" I ask again as the time for us to sum up the call comes. "Oh yes. I can put the plywood on the roof." "Not by yourself!" I cried. "Oh yes. I'll just start at the **bottom!**" We hang up.

July 15, Sunday. I send a post card to them telling them I will send the swimming pool key up the next week so they can use the pool if they go up there.

July 17, Tuesday. I call Dennis for his birthday. I remark on the stifling heat in this tenement, hinting how I'd like to get up in the woods during the summer. I had thought maybe I could go up there while they went on vacation, but his next words blew that: they were only going to be on vacation a couple of days—and maybe couldn't afford that, even.. And then he'd use the rest of his vacation to go up to camp and start work. He said he was working eight hours a day again (instead of part time), but they still can't seem to be able to make ends meet. And there was no urging me to come up as in our last talk.

He and Godfrey hoped to go up that next week end and finish up the A's although he hadn't contacted Godfrey yet. When I mentioned that with these delays I'd have to renew the building permit, he snapped at me. "What's wrong with that?" I didn't go into the fact that I just meant it would be costing more money, nor did I ask him what he's done with all those plans I'd worked so hard on and sent him when he'd asked me where I wanted the skylights. Yes, they wanted the pool key.

The next day I mailed the key. And I got a bill from Snohomish County PUD.

July 23, Monday. Mike and Marylyn and kids should be back from Europe today, but I haven't heard from them.

July 28, Saturday. I call them. They're there. We chat. I tell Mike about the three offers to buy. He doesn't seem much interested. "Dennis still wants to build, doesn't he?" "Oh yes!" "Talk to you later," he says—they still in throes of "jet lag".

I call Dennis and Abbie. Noah had finally had his tonsils out that week. Their friend, Floyd, answered. He and Dennis had just gotten back from the land. They'd been **hammering!** "On what?" I asked. "Oh those A-tops. Got them all put together, ready to go up the next week end. No, Dennis and Abbie weren't there; they were at the hospital." **"What!?"** "Oh Noah started hemorrhaging. Abbie had called them and they'd had to come back down from camp." He said they'd be back later. **More bad news!**

I waited and called again. Sarah answered. "Daddy and I are here." She called him to the phone. Seems Abbie was staying all night at the hospital with Noah. He said Noah was ok and seemed glad I'd called...Yes, he and Floyd had gotten the A-tops all nailed and ready to go up...had meant to do it that week end, but the Noah emergency...The three of them. He and Floyd and Godfrey would go up the next week end and get them up.

So all was well. And so July ended.

AUGUST 1979

Imprisoned, unhappily, in my "emergency housing", I spent hours reviewing, stewing, fretting, hassling, analyzing, cussing, trying to figure out my dilemma and how I'd gotten into it and who and what was to blame and what in the world I could do about it. After all those struggles, I still had no home!

August 3, Friday. Evening. I call Dennis and Abbie. Abbie answered. We talked about Noah. "He's fine," she said. Then she called Dennis to the phone. He and Floyd were going up the next day and finish topping the A's. Yes, the tent up, but they only stayed overnight once. I asked about the adjacent lot (#31). "It's still the same," he said. "We will try one day of vacation — no money..." Then...

"This is going to ruin your week end," he said.

"Go ahead."

He went and asked Snohomish County about the plywood — if he could use the $\frac{1}{2}$ inch he'd bought on the roof. "No," they said. It had to be $\frac{3}{4}$ inch, though they they admitted that on a roof that steep it was not needed, but it was code!

"Those bastards!" I said.

"So..." he went on, a bit gingerly, "I'll need some money next week..."

"I have only \$2000 left," I said. "Will it take all that?"

"I think I'll go 'T & G'," (tongue and groove boards) he said. "Lift 100# of plywood up there? **No way!** My knees are **still** shaking from hoisting those A-tops up there!" (This approach suited me just fine: I most certainly didn't want anybody getting hurt up there!)

"Well..." He said he'd call me the first of the week and tell me how much he'd need.

"Are you all going up?" I asked.

"No no...Noah can't...yet. But **I'll** be going up there all the time in a couple of weeks." He seemed anxious to get off the phone.

That weekend. I struggled with a letter to Mike bringing him up to date on what we'd done so far. It ran into four pages. I got it in the mail the next week.

August 7, Tuesday. Evening. Call from Dennis. He was full of good news! They got the A's all up! "And they're all **straight!** And it really looks **great!**" he said. "Like a **real house** now!" And he and Godfrey got a good idea of how they can use the $\frac{1}{2}$ for the roof and save money. He is going up to Snohomish County and see if they'll let him do it. That way the lumber

won't be more than \$1000—maybe less. Can save, anyway."

And he would like me to come up and be there and sign for the delivery of the lumber. For they are going on four days of vacation. And after that they can camp up there and he can work full time: he has till August 18th.

And he wants me to **see** it! He was jubilant! "We're so **proud** of ourselves! The three of us! Those A's up!"

It was a very happy call!

That afternoon I dropped in at the office, where more good news awaited me. "Hey! I got news for you!" Dave greeted me. "About Pepper Tree Village. He (Jack Hall) did a good con job! They raised the rent on your apartment to \$200 (about a \$15 jump) and in six months, Jack's going to turn them into condominiums" He explained to me what that meant: tenants can no longer rent; they'll have to **buy** the places.

So now I knew: Jack had kicked out all those he knew wouldn't be interested in buying. But he could have **told** us! To have put me in the position of being under the stigma of having been **kicked out** was cruel!

August 9, Thursday. I called Dennis and told him I'd come; everything ok. He sounded very glad! "In spite of all the people, it's still nice up there," he said.

I then began to make plans. I would be going up to camp there the four days they would be gone on a vacation. This time I would bypass Puyallup and Aunt Alice. Things had changed in that menage that would now make it less pleasant for me to stay there as I had before.

This would be a short trip. Then, the next one—I realized if I went up after Labor Day the kids would be in school and I could have camp to myself! I wished I knew how to work a chain saw; I could tackle all that brush up there.

The progress in the building delighted me; the place becoming more a home than a camp, but I had a moment of despair. Dennis said he wasn't going to bother with the loft "for now". I'll **never** have that loft, I thought. And it was the point of the whole thing: a place to stash all this accumulated art stuff and **at last** have a private studio where I could "set up shop" and perhaps earn a little extra money. Certainly, in my plans for the cabin, there was **no place** to store all that stuff **without** a loft. And give it all up I would not. It was too hard come by.

I began to gather the things for my trip, finding a difference in my in my attitude about them this time. Like my rain gear—pretty shabby looking—all stained with that sticky mud up there and the poisonous green of the wood preservative no. But I was no longer ashamed of them. They were **work** clothes. And I felt a new warm familiarity toward them. And things like a nail, a tack found in a pocket evoked pleasant memories of camp.

I had to make a trip over to the rented storage unit and unearth all my camping gear. But, this time, there was no fretting and wondering if I had everything or if something else I would be needing? This time no fear, no fussing. I'd done it over and over. Routine. I am "old pro" now!

August 13, Monday. Late evening. I call Dennis. He sounded breathless. "You still up?"

"Oh yeah." They were up there all week end, working. They got everything ready to go on the roof. Godfrey and Floyd all **hot** to get to work! "It's going to be **nice** up there—skylights—a deck—loft all glass so you can see the view..." "Now, wait a minute..." I said.

"Oh, it will be really neat! I'm gonna go Everett tomorrow to see about things I don't know."

"But I wanta know about **money**!" I said. "Got a letter from Mike..." Dennis began to snip a little, "Oh...never mind..."

"Uh...Mike says **go ahead**!" That made Dennis excited.

I caught the excitement; everybody seems to be so excited! "How's the weather?"

"Oh great! great! Dry and sunny! kids went swimming. It was just

wonderful!"

"Uhh...raining here," I said.

"But it's great up here!" he cried. "I'll get up to Everett this week end and get the lumber order, ready for you to sign. Or, if not this week end, by the time I leave on vacation. You'll be up there?"

"Yeah. And I'll be up there after Labor Day."

"But I'd like to have that lumber there by the time I get back."

I hung up infected by their happiness and excitement. The money—I'd figure out somehow.

August 15, Wednesday. Dennis didn't call Tuesday. Fretting, I called him. He said their idea was ok with Snohomish County. "You mean I'll have 2x4's between rafters?"

Then he began, "Now, listen. Floyd's going to be here."

"Where? At camp?"

"No no, He'll be staying here." (At house.) Let me explain here; Floyd was a strange young man, with many serious problems, including a puzzling touchiness. The few times I'd encountered him, I'd found him hard to get along with: we didn't exactly "hit it off". "I don't want you two..." Dennis began.

"Why I don't have any...beef with Floyd," I protested. But rather than discuss that we made it a short talk.

Trip north

August 17, Friday I leave.

Traveling notes:

- Thunder storm threatened...Traffic sweat: hemmed in by trucks, guy in jeep passes me on left shoulder, scaring hell out of me. I'd never had anybody do that before...
- Women's groups are serving free coffee and cookies at rest areas, trying to promote sobriety on freeways...I stop and chat.
- I get lost trying to get onto back roads and off freeway after that scare (above)...
- Seems to be no problem with gas; they are selling it all over.
- News: Another bridge collapsed on Chinook Pass (not on my route)...
- Yelm (name of a town, not gastronomical troubles!): gas getting low...only self service stations. I con a couple of guys into filling my tank for me...
- News: Snohomish County PUD on strike...
- Lost again trying to get through Puyallup cut-off...

Seattle

I stay all night with Dennis and Abbie. They leave for the beach the next morning. As I pack my bag in the car, it starts to rain, distressing me (rain for freeway driving and camping I do not like)...

Distressing traffic tie up: the Spokane Street bridge is up. I agonize trying to get into needed lane...

Get **Monroe**. A parade just breaking up there—for the fair, they tell me. I find gas without trouble though the price is high (\$1.04 per gal.)...Union station (means I can use my charge card).

I shop, shocked at paying 99¢ for a loaf of bread. I buy a jug of water since Dennis hasn't found the hose yet. When I come out of store it's pouring rain. Radio predicts cloudy all week end. Sigh.

I go up to the land.

I feel distress when I see a big sign on our street: "Open house. A.B. Construction Co." I drive around Sultan Estates, checking out new construction. A house with an elaborate glass chandelier—how silly—in the woods! That lot that was all bulldozed clear is all overgrown again—in two years! Not too much construction. One new house for sale. And a house foundation that looks as if abandoned. I regret McNabbs, caretakers, seem to be gone. No car there. Wanted to talk to them. But...

"Well, hi there, stranger!" some older woman greets me as I drive into our street. I assume it's Mrs.—odd name—Doochie? Mr. Doochie and his son are looking at that lot adjacent to them he says his son is buying. Next door to them is a new house built by that guy—what's his name?—no one likes. It is the one with the open house and "for sale" sign on it. That dingy trailer home has a sign "sold" on it. Farther on two new houses and two still vacant lots before getting to our land.

At our end of the street my heart turns over as I see that, on that one adjacent lot they have bulldozed everything out **clear to the creek!** And there is a motorcycle (i.e. young macho tenant?) parked at that new house nearest our land. Pouring rain starts. I feel very sad at this unhappy reception after waiting so long to return. And the destruction of all that former quiet, sylvan beauty distresses me. It looks as if I had merely bought into yet another developers' land boom potential suburbia.

Return

I sigh; take a deep breath. Well, here we go! I start in on the trail for my **first look.** No..no. I delay, loiter, postpone, look around the cul-de-sac. My car is steaming in the rain. So is the cul-de-sac. There are new lot markers on the lots on the **north** side of the street. The area here around the cul-de-sac seems to be the only woodsy place left on our street. Atkinson's lot (#31) next to ours seems virgin and undisturbed and no stakes, no markers, no signs. But oh no! That ancient cherry tree beside the cul has either broken off by itself or been broken off...

a green car just drives around the cul. Lu? Mr. Doochie said they're at the Kiwanis (club.) He pronounced it "Kye-wannies".

I drive into the driveway, very carefully, so as not to get stuck. Birds twitter. The "driveway" looks the same, maybe narrower? Oh, there's the new load of very coarse gravel. I look around in dismay. All my hard work clearing—brambles (blackberry vines) have all but taken over the driveway. The lettering on my handmade property sign is all washed off—faded and dim. It all looks as if nobody has been here for a hundred years—like a setting for "Sleeping Beauty".

It is still raining. But—a glimpse of sun? No.No. It is really raining now. I huddle in the steamy car, which is overflowing with all the junk I brought, and wonder if I should wait out the rain—maybe put off unpacking until tomorrow?

I sit and appreciate: the silence and the sense of property ownership. No landlords, no apartment managers; it's **mine!** I can chase them all out! I sit and savor this feeling. In a minute I'll go in and...**see!** and then...and then...I'll get my boots on and get to work. Which to do first? Set up bed, I guess.

I still put off **the** moment. I ponder: Dennis loaded me with \$40 worth of heavy duty electric line. "What for?" I'd asked. "Why, you'll have **electricity**, a **lamp** in the tent!"

"Gee," I quipped, "I should have brought my electric toothbrush!"



"And the toaster oven's there!" Abbie cried. Gee, I didn't need to bring that can of Sterno, did I?

I sit and think about what I read in one of those pamphlets I'm collecting: "Do not hook up any electric line in **wet!**" No way am I going to plug in that line in this rain! Bring on your threatened thunderstorm! Let's have **natural** electricity!

Still in car I begin to change my clothes and put my boots on. But I feel a sudden urge to cry—and I just cry and cry and cry. Am **tired...**

Oh dear...I brought paper to build fires with, but the wood is all wet! Maybe I'll have to sleep in the car?.....

here we go.....

2:30 p.m. I'm back. (There is a red sports car in cul) I'm back after my inspection tour. And...I'm **crying** again—in a different way. Bless their hearts! They left a **clean** camp! And there's a **new picnic table.** And all their efforts, their building accomplishments, displayed so **proudly!** My heart is full...

...and is there a brightening in the sky?

(30)

I went in slowly, step by step, prolonging the suspense. I stopped and checked the temporary electrical box on tree on trail—ground wire? a plug-in? Yup, Ok. But, not that—now—I tried not to peek as I went in. ("Oh, it will **strike** you—the minute you walk in!" Abbie had cried.)



I **backed** in and then turned and looked.



To be honest it wasn't at all what I expected, (a startling, soaring, "cathedral-like" structure.) In fact, at first, I couldn't even see it. Then, it looked tiny, little, terribly fragile. All that talk about lifting heavy beams and so on. "All those A's pointing! soaring! so high!" Dennis and Abbie and Floyd had cried.

I walked back out and came in again to see what effect. This time I caught it—it does have sort of an—uh—"spiritual lift" to it. Then—

I go back out to the car. **thwoomp**. A car door slams. I look up—rear view mirror. Those "nice college kids" next door now. ("Motorcycle!" Dennis had snotted.) I see a fat female slob lugging in a supply of beer...

I noted things, going down the trail, which by now was getting familiar. That morning Dennis had cried, "I'm going to dig that septic field myself!" The area for the septic tank field was all clean, the brush gone. But the vine maples along the trail, in that area, I wanted to preserve them.

In the building area I noticed the pile of lumber, once dried out, was all wet again. I went under the framework and looked up (this is your Chamterre!) But it still looked small—smaller than I'd expected. I walked around the framework and the building platforms they had rigged up. The whole working area was so clean—so clean. I touched the wood preservative I had put on. It didn't seem all that impervious to wet.

The ferns were growing back, even under the house. The firepit—they hadn't covered it—was all wet. The tent; they had put it in the same place, under the cedars. The salmonberry patch; all cleaned out! Oddly, it wasn't as flat as I'd thought it would be. I went into the tool shelter. It, too, was all clean, and there, proudly displayed, a **new, very well built picnic table and benches** Dennis had made. I began to cry, so touched was I.

Later: I went down and talked to McNabbs and then stopped and talked to Dooxies. The rain stopped. I plugged in the electric cord but decided I'd wait till the next day to untangle all that cord and lay it out through the woods. I then worked on setting the cot up in the shelter, preferring it to the tent, which had too many restrictions—like no candles and so forth.

Evening: I sat outside at the new picnic table, tired, but enjoying and not minding the rain falling on me again. Pee oh! Pee oh! cries a bird. I worked around a bit more and then crawled into the shelter and fell asleep.

I wake later. It's dark. I don't know whether it's night or dawn. But it's only 8 p.m. I find myself a little awed, a bit scared, at the utter silence. Lu said there are porcupines around; they are having trouble with them. And the dogs are scared....I sleep.

5:15 a.m. Body needs wake me. It is starting dawn. The sky is lightening. It has rained gently all night, but I have been secure and dry under my plastic shelter. It is not cold; it's just nicely cool and the air is so **fresh!** I wake just in time to see the moon set beyond the trees through the doorway of the shelter.

I find myself gripped with a sudden lassitude: my ambition rather gone. Not much to do, the kids left it all so clean. I lie and muse—
Irene Brown's house is posted for sale...

At Dennis'—He said he needed more lumber!..."We'll have to get rid of that shed," he said. "And I've got to figure out where to put those skylights and how to make the." Floyd had come in. I felt a little "de trop" as the three of them discussed things they were going to do to the cabin. "Oh you can help out a little bit," they said. "Some puttering you can do—phone calls—things to help Dennis—he has so **much** to do—all the business to take care of **plus** the building. Floyd began to give me some advice on how to save money.

"Dennis must have some connections in Snohomish County," he said. I didn't say anything.

It's dawn. And no birds. No stars. I rather expected to see both. Later—there are some.

Sunday morning: I sleep in so late. Almost noon before I wake. I go to car and dig out some food and gobble it. Sounds of people—voices—a dog barks. A fat woman and nondescript looking man are unloading a car at the house "next door" (two lots over; that new house those kids were building). He nods.

It's not raining, but no sun, either. My throat is sore and I have chills. The whole family at Dennis was complaining of coughs and sore throats.

Afternoon: I have been fussing around at the car. I feel ill and strange. It has started raining again. I curl up and sleep in the car, terribly disappointed at how my so long awaited return and vacation at "Chamterre" is turning out...I wake. Sick, my throat very sore. It is still raining. This is no fun.

Late afternoon: I clean up the car and lug some stuff into camp. Seems a wasted effort since I'll only be here two days. The plywood platform the guys made is getting all wet and warped...

6:00 p.m. I don't feel good, but I work on clearing the driveway...vine maples are getting red...**6:50 p.m.** Put the damned electric cord in. Thought it would take me all night to untangle it. A lot of work for one little light bulb...It's not raining, even some sun. Hey! Patches of blue sky up there!

9:20 p.m. It stopped raining: only drip from trees. The sky cleared and a nice sunset. Worked hard. No tools. Didn't bring machete. Darned dog barking like mad all the time. My spirits rose as weather brightened. Look forward to having light to cook and dress by, and so on. I hurry, starved, to get light fixed as gloaming descends.

It doesn't work! needs a converter plug. I stumble around in the dark and to car to find candles and torches. I decide to move into **tent**. Crash around in dark moving stuff in, fixing zippers, and all. Every move I'd made that goddamned dog that belongs to that "nice college couple" down there barks insanely. I yell at it to shut up. It stops but starts in again. Am I going to have to listen to **that** all night?

I struggle getting the tent fixed up. Battery lamp flickers. All I need...I rig up a kind of flap over picnic table by shelter as protection from rain so I can heat up my canned stew to eat.

It is as after ten before I get the food fixed. Weirdest meal I ever ate. As I do, there are crashing noises up in woods. Abbie had mentioned same. "Weird," she had said. "I was **scared!**" So was I now. But I flash torch up into woods. Silence...My throat is terribly sore! I fall into bed and have bad dreams.

Almost midnight when I wake in tent. I don't like it in there. It's chill and dank, and I can't see the trees, ground, moon, stars. It's very quiet. Even the drip from the trees has stopped. All I can hear is the ticking of my clock: my ears feel "cottony", muffled. I try to sleep again.

4:30 a.m. I wake. I am almost too warm in my sleeping bag, though it's a bit chilly out. The silence I can't believe! I lie and think rather woeful thoughts:

- The neighbors: All the nice people I thought would be up here seem to have melted away...the young people next door utterly ignored me when I was out there working. And Mr. Doochie's son looked right through me without speaking, though his dad said, "Guess the boys were doing a little work in there?" (A **little** work!?)...
- News media confirming my ripoff by Jack Hall: "Condominium crimes" they call it...And "people with small savings getting only 5% interest while people with large savings get 10%"...Unhappy thoughts.
- As I worked in the driveway: Breuner, the guy with the house for sale, supposed to have open house today—nobody seemed to have come..

Though cars circled the cul and, did I imagine? the people seemed rather amused to see this lil ole lady ripping out brambles and tearing her best gloves to pieces pulling weeds out of the gravel pile. (I want to salvage that gravel I bought!)...I did get down to the creek. The pool I'd dug out there was all overgrown.....

I go back to sleep depressed. Somehow it isn't like I thought it was going to be.

Dawn: I wake. A few birds call. I cringe at the sound of...a raindrop or two? I decided I'd better get dressed up and go to town and see if I can find a converter plug. Dennis may not have time to...Dawn. Silence.

August 20, Monday. I don't wake up till after ten! Weather is gray-how am I going to take pictures? I hoped there'd be some sun and I could get things dried out. This trip is a real bummer.

11:15 a.m. While primping at picnic table, a bit of sun. I rush to car for camera. Sun gone. Clouds. And a **termite!** Wings stuck on car window. Swarming time. And all this lumber sitting about-oh no! I give up trying to take pictures. Sun not stay out long enough. A huge, dead alder branch hanging on the electrical box! What if that fell on a skylight? I pull it down-heavy!

1:30 p.m. before I even get around to eating breakfast. Been fussing around trying to find food and getting things a bit oragnized. My ears are still all plugged up; I can't even hear the breeze in the trees.

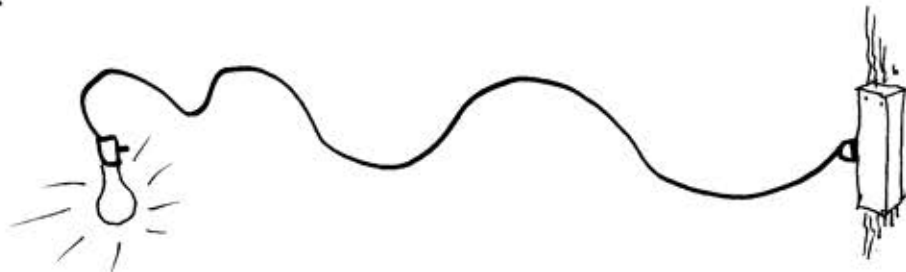
6:35 p.m. Back from trip to town. **It works! It works! The light comes on!** One thing...I didn't have the switch turned on? Dummy!

Before I left I did clean the path. It was hot, dirty work. Hungry, hot, dirty, I came back to camp. Am in the midst of a "spit bath", just about to take my pants off and wondering why Lu hasn't been up like she said she would when here she is walking toward me on the path with her dog! By the time she left it was four o'clock and I was afraid the hardware store might be closed. I dressed hastily and set out. It seemed so dumb, all that long drive for a few minutes shopping.

On the way I realized I felt very strange; disoriented, and ears plugged and throat raw and sore and-swollen glands!? Outside of me, the mountains and valley couldn't even be seen, veiled by smog? smoke? maybe forest fires?

At the hardware, trying to explain to the guys what I thought I needed, I found I didn't have any voice, either. And they laughed at me and my adaptor plug request. I got one anyway, now full of more doubts about how ever to get electricity into camp. Lu had said, "Maybe there's a switch you have to turn on." On my way out, I looked. It said "off", but I couldn't understand what the directions meant or what "trip" was. I was afraid to try it. Then, later, as said, it worked-why or how I don't know!

I shopped a little, after cough drops bought made my throat feel better. But began to realize that, not only was I very stiff and sore, but after three night and two days up there by myself, I'd almost lost my ability to communicate with people.



I went back on the quarry road". All the rural roads had been resurfaced except Old Pipeline Road. Lu said they can't do it for there are water lines under there and the oil (used in road surfacing) seeps into the water.

I stopped at McNabb's to stock up on water. As I filled my jugs they told me they had had a fire up here. All that long dry spell this summer, the woods were all tinder dry. One of developer's bull dozers had knocked over a tree which hit wires that sparked and started a fire. They were frantic, there being no water provision for fire emergencies. They had finally bulldozed dirt over the fire.

I stopped and talked to Dooxies. He offered to help me with the electricity, but he has **bad** emphysema; I didn't want him walking up that hill, so I said I'd be ok.

I went back and fixed the lights and then an errand out to the car, where I was very scared when I heard a car pull into the cul. I went out to check. Here was Mr. Dooxie puffing up the trail with a work light to help me. Bless him!

Evening: Now I have two lights! (with lantern). I felt it was kind of a red letter day: electricity in Chamterre! But, in a way, I was rather sorry: I kind of liked the candles and sterno (primitive?) bit. It did seem a shame that I felt better and had lights just as I had to get ready to leave.

Lights! Idea! Using the new light and flash I tried to take some pictures of the framework of the cabin. Light? Now we have **bugs!**

I fixed some beans and canned spinach and found myself feeling much better. It's nice. Warm. No wind. Darn! Now I'm having fun and don't want to go!

10 p.m. In tent. Oh! I'm tired! Ears and throat hurt again. Got Dooxie's work light here, but no place to hang. Try hanging it on chair. First time I've undressed to go to bed. Let me sleep...

12:40 p.m. Wake, feeling ill. Tent and sleeping bag damp. But—a light. I read for awhile. **3 a.m.** I wake again. Hear myself moaning. throat sore again. So silent! I take lamp and go out of tent to see stars and-relieve myself.

I flash lamp around camp, checking. All undisturbed. Not a bug, animal. I wonder where the dog and mouse are that bothered me last time? I turn the light out. There are the stars and the dark, gigantic forms of the cedars enveloping me as if to take care of me. The bones of the cabin tower dimly in the light from the tent. The silence is **utter!**

I wish I could take some of it back to the noisy "Dump" with me. There is no wind. Not a breath of air stirs. It is warm. I should be sleeping outside, I think; it may be my last chance. But this trip is too short to start moving things around again. Besides I don't feel good; not up to it. Dread of autumn and winter and going back to that Dump assail me.

Sultan Estates. My impressions of it this time. I rather think the boom is over?—Breuner can't seem to sell his fancy house he slammed in here. A lot of real estate changing hands, but mostly grab and hold tactics. The original "old guard" seem to be either dying out or fleeing from the brash, insolent young that are beginning to move in. Rules are ignored and broken. The sense of "community" I felt before is gone. There is a certain aura of failure here. That may be good? Chamterre may be restored to my original attraction to it: a remote hideaway?...It's getting cold...I snuggle up...nice not to have to worry about the lamp battery going out...

5 a.m. Slept out. I wake with definite signs of a cold: cough, snuffles... Sound of trains WHOOing far in distance. That's the way I **like** my trains! Not slamming around outside my bedroom! I told Dennis about the trains at the Dump; about the guys banging and yelling. He began to laugh and nod. "Sure! They do it on purpose! It's a game," he said. "They call it 'humping'. Used to do it Spokane." Men! Grrr.

Dogs. That one next door seems to be the only one up here this time besides Lu's hideously crippled old one. She says people had lost two dogs up here—to porcupines. The quills get infected, get in their eyes, too. They had to kill them. Fine with me—no dogs up here—don't have to listen to them all night. Except that they do warn? It scares me when they start a ruckus.

Doochie: when he was up here: "Well, I don't see how you're going to get a thousand dollars worth of septic tank in there," he said. (Ooch! that's what he'd had to pay for his) But he had made a mistake and had to do it all over again. They seem to make a lot of mistakes, these builders: like the bulldozer falling a tree into power line and starting a fire; and again, a bulldozer broke into a water line. And that abandoned lot: it seems that Breuner bulldozed it and then couldn't pass the perc test because of "disturbed land."

Lu said those "college kids" are named Carroll; and that they may buy that lot #32 next to them on the side toward us. But she said that other one, the one next to us, #31 (Atkinson wanted to sell) won't perc. (Goody! means noboy will build on it?)

August 21, Tuesday. I woke about 8:45, not feeling good and to leaden skies and a discouraging weather report on the car radio. I tried using the toaster oven to make toast, marveling—toast at Chamterre! But it smoked, and I gave up. I ate a little, but I felt too nauseated. Really feel sick; just want to lie down and sleep. But no place to be sick up here—and how am I going to get home? I tried to make a fire. Went out. Too damp.

About noon: Sun comes out a bit. I feel a little better. Chase around trying to move things into sun to dry. Read fire regulations I picked up in Monroe. I go down to creek to check if we have water here and find barely a trickle. And the brush looks either trampled down or died down so that I am able to see, for the first time, that the creek makes a sharp bend and comes back onto our property! It would make a nice, private picnic area some day.

There is the sound of someone cutting wood down below—some bird activity—but the sun does not stay out. It is getting dark and depressing in here. There's a faint knocking noise in the woods—woodpecker? or man?

I work on papers, getting things lined up I want to talk to Dennis about when I go back tomorrow. No use going down there early; they won't be back till late and the traffic is bad at all times. Rain threatens. It sprinkles a little. I feel lonesome, depressed and sleepy. I go down to the car and work on papers there and read and fall asleep in the car.

I wake to the grumble of thunder far off. I hope the rain holds off until I get stuff packed and lugged out and packed into car. I'm hungry but I have nothing to eat...I found a lot of things in my cabin file missing that I sent off to Dennis and they misplaced? or... never refer to anyway. I wanted to sit at picnic table and do up some sketches for ideas for Dennis, but-no! **Thunder!** And then **the deluge!**

I retreat to shelter and sit there and think about how much better it is this year than last year when I huddled in the storm. Now I have electric light, two cozy, dry shelters, a fine new picnic table, cabin all ready to roof—how far we've come since then! Yet I'm glad I had that other experience.

I note...that our electric meter is beginning to register: 000001.

...that our "cornerstone" foundation with the date "7/17/77" inscribed on it is getting weathered, but still stands out well. History.

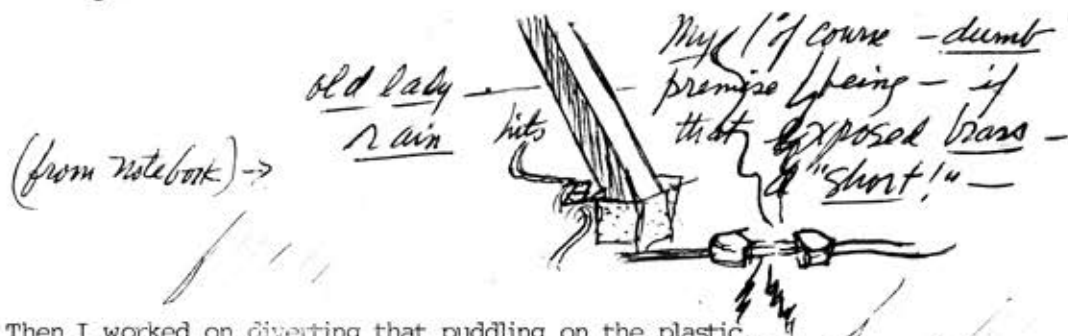
A whistle startles me—no—only the "Kee-yoo!" bird...My ears are getting better, but I can't tell whether that distant rumbling is thunder or the **plop** of rain on the plastic...

6 p.m. A real storm! And getting cold. Trying to get to tent trailing this electric wire—I'll never make it—when water collected in plastic suddenly dumps—almost, but didn't—get me! **Yelp!** A clap of thunder—close! Should I turn off the electricity? Where is the best place for me for me to be? Here?

Or in car? Is that 150 feet of orange electrical wire snaking under cabin and along wet ground out to the hook-up dangerous? I wonder as I sit waiting for the next boom of thunder and if, one **pow!**, and I'll wake up in heaven? (Preferred destination.)

It's all very melodramatic for my last night here! I'm waiting for this to ease off so I can fix myself a little canned turkey stew. **Whoops!** another flap full of water dumps. I decide to do a little electrical "engineering":

Gee! I picked up that cable in my wet hands and, in wet boots, started running around with it. "Fun!" to think that there was a lethal jolt flowing under that orange plastic. (If only it doesn't short someplace.) Dennis will scoff, but, the plug connection of the two lines I wrapped in duct tape (I didn't have any electrical tape) and hung it up **off the ground** under the shelter of an A-rafter.



Then I worked on diverting that puddling on the plastic...



Through; it all seemed to work ok. But...

The storm does not abate. I go ahead and open cans of turkey and veggies and fix a little stew over the Sterno flame. Yuk. That's turkey? Tastes more like salty wood pulp...But the rain continues to pelt down; I decide I'd better move into tent to eat.

I take Doochie's light up to the tent. While trying to find someplace to hang it, something goes **ping!** A rain drop has exploded the bulb. I rage for half an hour trying to figure out how to get that bulb out of that cage. Finally did. So then I had to whip back to shelter and borrow Dennis' last light bulb. By this time I am in a **rage!** What a **bummer trip!** I finally simmer down and settle in.

8:45 p.m. Been reading...in a most uncomfortable position: will have a crick in my arthritic neck for driving tomorrow. The rain drums on the tent. All about me is getting soggy and soggy. I feel like I'm drowning...or maybe should start growing gills and fins...**9 p.m.** The water is coming into the tent, which is **not** waterproof But I...sleep...

1 a.m. The rain is only now beginning to plop less on the tent; but another leak. I slept well, but wake up feeling like a boiled weiner steaming in my hot sleeping bag. Going to be rough packing out all this wet, dirty stuff. (I think of Mike's question: do I really **want** to live up here? But...where in hell **else** am I going to live? I sit and chew on my woes.

2 a.m....3 a.m.... I get a bright idea: Hey! Why don't I stay another night? Why rush? Got things I still want to do. I could go to the gazebo and take a shower, phone kids and tell them I was sick (true), take my time about going into Sultan and disposing of garbage, etc.etc. etc.

Though my head is starting to ache, I go back to reading book of short stories I'm glad I thought to bring with me.

August 22, Wednesday. Woke at 7. What a **long night!** spent waking and reading off and on all night long. I ran down to car to check the weather. And noted the electricity meter already read 1K. Weather looks maybe promising: a sunlit mist like a veil over all—a golden mist. Everything drip! drip! drip! like living inside a sponge!

I hassle trying to figure out what to do: problems. And I get a new slant on my rainy sojourn in tent: nice, for where else could I be forced to just laze and recover from a cold?—Kind of like being in a sanitarium. I go ahead and start packing up, one eye on the weather which keeps being-to say the least-freakish. And trying to use the moments of sun to dry things out.

5:40 p.m. I packed till about three—while it was still sunny. Got most of the things dried—a long, hard job. Got all that electric wire coiled. Then, dressed, and leaving the cot and the foam rubber mattress to dry out, I set out for Sultan; to take garbage to dump, get light bulbs, other errands.

That Sultan trip: First, they were working on the road; I had to wait in line for permission to proceed. Got stuff at store. Went into the new restaurant next door. They were slow as slow waiting on me. Aggravating, as I was in a hurry, but I got an excellent sandwich for only \$2, which pleased me, as my money getting low.

By then the sky was black as ink and all clouds.(I'd never gotten around to taking some cabin measurements I needed: if the weather turned out nice, I'd call the kids and tell them I was staying over.) I set out for the garbage dump. It starts pouring rain and I get lost and can't find the dump. Finally do. It is **closed**.

I go back to Sultan. By now it's a **deluge**. I was just about to get back on the highway, meaning to stop at that public park and dump my garbage there when **BANG!** I thought my car had exploded. And then more—**BANG! BANG! BANG! CRASH!** It was as if great stones were being hurled at my car! I was scared to hell, but nothing I could do but pull off to the side of the road and stop.

It was a blinding hail storm; hail stones an **inch!** I'd never seen or heard such a thing in my life! I just sat there, cringing—afraid they'd break my windshield. It lasted so long that, when it eased a bit, I dared to flee to the park where I parked under a tree for shelter from the onslaught and watched one of the most awesome storms I'd ever seen. It didn't let up much, but I didn't wait. I dumped my garbage and fled back to camp, scared of what I'd see there.

The road back was a road of leaves—downed. The guys were still working on the road; in open rigs. They let me through, one of them bruised by hailstones they said! I raced into camp.

All seemed all right, except that it was all carpeted with leaves, my so laboriously cleaned path included. And the foam mattress put out to dry was soaked, of course. Staying another night out of the question now I just proceeded to pack the car. And then I ran around checking and making hasty measurements.

Suddenly the storm was over and it was so **pretty** there in the woods I was loathe to leave, but...I poured myself a drink I'd bought and then toasted the four points of the compass and said a prayer (like the Indians do?), and then just leaned against one of the A-frames...and looked at the beauty of the woods now in gracefully swirling mist like something out of a fairy tale..(It's going to be lovely living here!)...Now. I gotta go. I left regretfully. Thunder boomed somewhere far off. Sob.

I stopped at Doochie's and returned their work light and then checked out with Lu.

And then I set my jaw—and the nose of the car—into what was, now, a fantastically beautiful sunset making the whole valley so **pretty** as I left. I looked back over my shoulder as I braced to hit the highway and the freeway and the traffic; clouds had formed a strange phenomena in the sky—exactly like **two big eyes!** It was all very...melodramatic.



I went back to Seattle and stayed two nights with the kids and then, Friday, I set out for Vancouver.

SEATTLE
our "business meeting"

I stayed Wednesday and Thursday night. Dennis was still on vacation. They had taken part of it to take a little trip to the coast. They were back when I arrived there from my camping trip.

Dennis was all excited; he was going to spend the rest of his vacation working on the cabin! It seems Floyd had arranged to take Monday and Tuesday off his job and they planned to go up there and work. Dennis wanted to get going up to Monroe and order the lumber so it would be delivered and they could start to work!

But—it seems Abbie needed their car; there was a birthday party Sarah had to be driven to. "Well, well.." Dennis paced, and then gave up. "I **did** want to get started Monday," he said, "but..."

I came up with the idea that he could use my car. I would be glad of the time to just sit and get papers and things that I hadn't had a chance to work on at camp better organized. Agreed. So I unloaded my car and, somewhere in there, I got a chance to sit down and hassle my finances and found ways I could juggle them.

Then I sat down with Dennis and had a "business meeting" about how much he'd need and so on, ending by writing him a check for \$1000 for lumber. He was delighted! "Isn't it fun to be able to write these checks?" I said (hoping I'd get back home in time to do the juggling it would take.)

Everybody was so excited then! We decided to have a celebration dinner. "I'll buy steaks!" I said. So Abbie and I went to market. When we got back there was a call from Floyd and he came and joined our party contributing his own steak.

We had our dinner and then they put up with me as I tried to relearn how to play "Hearts". So we played cards and then Dennis and Floyd went out to buy more wine...and were gone a long time. We had quite a party! Floyd's parting words, as he left, were "Let's go hammer!"

The next day, August 24, Friday.. Dennis and Noah set out in my car with my gas credit card to go to Monroe and order the lumber. I begged out of going birthday present shopping with Abbie and Sarah and stayed and spent some more time hassling my finances. I wrote Dennis another \$20 check for gas he'd be using. I had planned to leave to go home that day, but I figured if Dennis got back by 4:30 I could still make it.

I was alone when Dennis and Noah came back sooner than I'd expected them...about 3. . . .

"Well? Well?" I asked excitedly.

"Oh...those lumber yards..." Dennis began.

"What's the matter?"

"Oh, it's going to cost more than I thought..."

"Didn't you haggle with them?" (Remember: I had made an agreement for discount for cash with Dunbar's)

"No, no..." He hadn't shopped there.

"Well...Why don't I just write you a check for another \$100?" I said. And did so, implying that I'd "found some extra", (not just ways to juggle.) "There. Now," I said, handing him the checks, "**Let's get it done!**"

Everybody was happy.

Dennis liked my idea about "styrene"—do they call it?—(that plastic, not glass) for the A-window. He insisted he was going to come down to Vancouver and get the stove. And he hopes to have the shell done by the end of September, so we'll have shelter and be able to close the place up till spring. His ultimate deadline now is June 1980.

As I left he gave me a big hug; "The next time you come up you'll be able to be in your own house! I promise!"

VANCOUVER

August 26, Sunday. Money! I wrote a long letter to Mike bringing him up to date and asked him if, since (because of my age) I could no longer take out a bank loan, he could lend me \$1000; I'd pay it back to him after I was in cabin and no longer had to pay rent.

August 28, Tuesday. Money! I worked long and hard on my financial situation. I had to find a way to reimburse the cabin fund for that "advance" I gave Dennis. And—**Eureka!**—I found a loophole!—a way to raise that \$1000 without borrowing from Mike, dunning Dennis to pay me back, or selling stock: The Credit Union!...Well, I'd try anyway.

August 29, Wednesday. 3 p.m. Call from Dennis. "Look," he said, "I've got some questions. You got your plans there? Something to take notes with? I said I'd call him back, which I did. This put the call on my bill and gave me more freedom to talk longer. He went on.

"Say, you've got 17 feet of stove pipe... how come? Why so high a chimney?"

I laughed. "Yeah. About 17 feet!"
"But..why!?"

It was too complex a thing to explain on the phone. "Oh..a matter of 'triangulation'...ten feet out...2 feet up..."

"Hunh?"

"Never mind," I said, wishing he'd read and struggled through all those rules and regulations in the code that I'd had to make comply in a triangular dwelling.

Then he was full of complaints about his lumber shopping problems. "Well, I hate shopping, too," I said. "Are you **building** or not?"

"Well...next week..." he said. This puzzled and alarmed me, for this was the time they'd said he and Floyd were going to go up and work

He went on and on about "green lumber" and shopping chores. I didn't know what he was talking about, lumber being something I knew very little about. He wanted some measurement details, which I couldn't give him. Since I'd given

him all my plans, I had nothing to refer to.

"And the lumber's being delivered **today!**" he said. On Wednesday? That meant he was late with his schedule and had missed two days of Floyd's help? "We'll get started this week end" he said.

"Is Godfrey going to help you?" I asked.

"No." No explanation.

I told him about some sales I'd come across on building items we were going to need. "Well, why don't you go ahead and buy them?" he asked. I skipped that, since the sale was now over.

There was mention of his getting the stove. "Are you going to come with a truck, or..." I asked.

"I dunno." he said. "Maybe just my car." I doubted that car, pretty well worn since spring, would make it, but I didn't say anything.

He said he hadn't gotten the plastiglas ("styrene") for the window yet; that he had only \$130 left. Maybe I could find a bargain in stovepipe? He went on about other needs and purchases as I tried to make notes.

"The roof's going to be **red**," he said, "Ok?" Well, red was about the **last** color I'd wanted, but, if he'd already bought it—I said "Yeah. Ok."

He ended up saying he'd be going up there that week end, alone. After we hung up, I looked at the scribbled gibberish of my notes. It was all very confusing and a difficult, unsatisfactory phone call.

August 30, Thursday. About noon. I call Dennis and Abbie again. Abbie answers. She says she is alone there; that the kids have gone on a camping vacation and that they took Dennis up to the land and left him there. He will stay there and work until Tuesday. The lumber is supposed to be delivered. No, he didn't get the skylights, but he did get the "styrene".

I hung up feeling much better; progress was being made.

"business meeting", con't.

Business, of course, is a form of battle; **our** business meeting was no more free of strife than any other. There were some bad moments in our discussions on that trip.

That first night: my arrival in Seattle: "Now we're **not** going to talk about that cabin **tonight!**" Abbie greeted me, as I came in. But Dennis had already dug his stuff out and kept me going through things...

The plans I'd done and Dennis' and my files: I had sent all the plans I'd done on to Dennis.

"Where's all that stuff I sent you?" I asked Abbie, for I wanted to put some more stuff in with them. She didn't know. "I'm sure I sent them to you!" "Oh, Dennis doesn't have **time** to look at all those **envelopes** you send," she said.

"Well, if I give you these," I said, and gave her the very, very last of my xeroxed copies of my plans, "are you **sure** they won't get lost?" She went off to put them in the bedroom. I'd taken one look in there to look for my stuff before and had given up. What a mess!

When Dennis got back from buying the lumber, he was in a hurry and I was in a hurry to get going. "Where's my cabin file box?" he cried. "Something I wanted to show you."

"Oh, Abbie put it in the bedroom," I said. He seemed to find it without any trouble; and I will say, when we got to working from them, that Dennis keeps his files up to date and to hand, even if he not have time to keep them orderly.

Conference of builders: There were some bad moments then, too. The three of them, Dennis, Abbie and Floyd, began doing the cabin building themselves to the point where I felt "de trop" and left out.

Floyd: "Well, Dennis can't do it all alone, Lorna! He can't build, buy, handle all the **business**, too! You gotta **help!** There are some things you can do to help Dennis—make some phone calls and things." I almost hit him.

"Dennis? I did some measuring and thinking about the steps when I was up there..." I began at one point.

"Oh, that's all right," he said. "I've got them all figured out. I know how I want them to go..."

Again. He blasted me: "You don't get anything **built** by drawing all those silly **pictures** on **paper!**"

"Well, you don't get...highways (for instance) built without **some** planning!" I blasted back.

Later—before I left. I showed Abbie my favorite traveling mirror, mysteriously broken **after** I got back from camp (kids, probably).

"Well, seven years bad luck!" she laughed—merrily.

TRIP HOME

4:10 p.m. before I left Seattle—just in time to hit the peak traffic. It took me two hours to make it the few miles out of the Seattle area, and then I got maddeningly lost trying to find short cuts to my off-freeway back routes...

At Centralia—where it necessary to return to the freeway, my gas tank was half empty and all my credit card stations closed. I found one place where I was able to get coffee, pee and get gas, but I had to pay cash which left me with exactly **two cents** in my purse.

The freeway trip the rest of the way down was a nightmare of driving; it was as if driving through an endless tunnel in the dark, and not even the entertainment of the radio, which wasn't working.

Vancouver—my stomach roiled as I drove—not back to my nice apartment this time—but into the slum area to my "Dump" home.

Got there 9:48 p.m. 614 miles on odometer. Gone 8 days.

I sent off a letter to Dennis showing what chimney measurements we'd need, and asked him to take the measurements and send them down.

August 31, Friday. I contact Bruce Auld at the Highway Department office. He moonlights selling chimneys and stoves. He says he can get me a 15% discount, and that he will take me to the wholesalers in Portland as soon as we get the measurements from Dennis.

I call **Mike**. He says he thinks I should go ahead and try to get the \$1000 loan from the Credit Union, and to tell Dennis that he could contribute \$500 if needed.

The Credit Union

That afternoon I got all dressed up and hied myself to the credit union. It was jam-packed; people all getting money for the big Holiday week end. I cashed my check and then asked if I could talk to someone, briefly, about a loan.

I was ushered right in to a very nice gal, but had to wait long in there, she so busy. Then she told me some surprising things: One: since I'd retired, they'd have to take me off their **insured** loans, which meant that, if I should die, my loan would **not** be paid off, cancelled, as it would under the insured loan. That was a blow: it meant my kids might have to pay off my loan? Two: I'd have to fill out a health questionnaire and it would have to go before the Board.

"Fill it out now?" I asked.

"Oh no. You can take it home with you, but the Board meeting is Wednesday; if you can get it back in time. Yes, you can **apply** for a loan, but it, too, will have to go before the board on Wednesday." She handed me applications forms.

"No no. First tell me about my payments and so on." She ran my record on the computer screen and put in some figures. I was delighted! For only two dollars more a month than I was paying I could get \$1000. There was a 40 month limit to pay off, but...

I took the forms and walked out on air! It's possible! Possible! Dennis we can go ahead with...plenty...of money!

I then stopped at a discount outlet and asked about chimneys. Dumb girl. \$119, but would have to be ordered. I left.

...And went to my friend, Pam's, with whom I had a date. And blurted out that I was out looking at chimneys, forgetting that her husband, a ne'er-do-well-Jack-of-all was in that racket, too. Sure enough. "Oh, Steve can get you one! Discount!" "Err-umm..." I was "on the spot"; I'd already made arrangements with **Bruce**. I was glad Pam "understood"...

I dropped in at the office and showed my pictures I'd taken of the cabin progress and had some fine talks. But Bruce wasn't there.

I rushed on home, hardly able to wait till evening when I could phone Mike and tell him the good news!

About 8:10 pm. I called. Got Mike. As he told me to go ahead with the loan..." Thing to do! Do it right! Don't stint!...Yes, Yes, he'd have had to get a loan, too—from his credit union."

I tried to call Dennis and Abbie. No answer—and I bursting with news. They were probably already up at camp where they were going for the Holiday.

I began **my** feel-sorry-for-myself Labor Day week end, alone, broke, thinking of them all up there picnicing, swimming, having a wonderful time on "**my**"land.

SUMMER, 1979 WAS OVER

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SEPTEMBER 1979

Labor Day week end I spent in my dingy abode, envying the kids up there in the woods and with the swimming pool to use. Then, when sudden, record-breaking rain began in Vancouver, I worried and wondered if it the same up there: if their so-long awaited full time building time ruined? But I was unable to get a weather report on the Seattle area...

Sept. 2, Sunday, about noon.. Dennis calls. He sounded quite pleasant. He began again by firing technical questions at me that I was totally unprepared for: could I get the chimney to him? He was ready for it.

I broke in, "Where are you?"

"Home." My heart fell. "Rain?"

"Yes, but just home to dry out—going up again tomorrow." He rattled on like he does about all the things he'd done and changes in his plans—too fast for me to make notes. He'd done some work on the floor, but would have to give up, for he couldn't do the end walls until the floor done and that waited on the plumbing, so he'd have to do that first. Then, again he started rattling on about the chimney and technicalities about it.

I kept interrupting. "Wait a minute, I have some questions.."

He said he's gotten all the stuff lugged in. "You know I've carried every bit of that stuff for that cabin in on my own back!" he cried.

"I know you have," I said.

"Well, Abbie helped me...a little." Then he got insistent again about the chimney."

"Let me get some stuff here and I'll call you back."

"Ok. Now, about the skylights..." But...

I went and looked, but I found I had nothing. Everything I'd either given him or sent on and he hadn't gotten yet—the Holiday. I called back. "I don't have anything here."

"Well, I haven't got it. I went through all my stuff. All I have is what you left here."

It dawned on me, then, that I'd never gotten a chance to xerox my stove and chimney plans! the chaos of my retirement activities intervening. I gave him what figures I could remember from the stuff I'd sent him. They were hasty and we weren't together at all, but best I could do under the circumstances.

"Ok. Ok," he said. "Now, about the skylights..."

"Before we get on the skylights, " I said, "I heard from Mike.. And I told him about Mike offering the \$500.

"Yeah!?" he cried. "Hey! "...Now I'm not sure what Mike meant," I hastened to add, but Dennis was going on..

"Hey! I can get the skylights! You want three, don't you?"

"Well, no...I just figured on two" (expense)...

Silence. Then..."Well, I decided to give up on the skylights. Abbie and I decided we'd come back to that later...just put the roof on. Then we decided we didn't want to come back and do it later..."

Silence on my part. "But it's dark as a cave! Ya gotta have skylights! It would really be neat! You want double ones, don't you?"

"Errr.." (I didn't know what he was talking about, not having looked into skylights myself yet. He meant insulated, but I didn't know that at the time.) "Well, that's the kind I think we'll put in. Yeah! Be about \$300 for the skylights." He was elated.

"Look, you'd better check with Mike, " I said. "I'm not sure what he meant, but he always says to do it right! I'll leave it up to you guys."

"Well, ok," Dennis said. "I'll call him Tuesday."

"Well, he'll be at work," I said. "He's out of vacation time."

Then he began about the chimney again, complaining about how high it was.

"I'll have to guy it." "Well, you'll have to anyway—code."

"Yeah, but I'll have to put two guy wires on it"...mumble, mumble..."the distance from the center line (of cabin) for (position of) chimney doesn't jibe with what you sent me. It's important...oh well..."

I told him about the credit union. He got a bit snappish. "Well, we don't have to do **that**! We're ok."

I explained to him my thinking about it: how I didn't **want** to and what it would mean to me ("paying rent" for a long time to come.) He listened and didn't say much. "Well, I'll hold that for an emergency measure," I said.

"Are you going to buy the chimney, then?" he asked. "Yes." "Well, that was supposed to come out of this thousand you gave me," he said.
"Oh, I've **got** it," I said. I've got some left in the credit union."
"Well, I meant to shake you up for **that** for the plumbing."
After a moment. "Well, it's ok," I said. "No problems. Oh! the pictures came out!" "Oh, did they!?" "I'll send you some later. Raining?"
"Oh yes." "Here, too. Rained all day yesterday." "Here,,too."
"If I think of anything, I'll let you know," I said. "Ok." "Ok."
We hung up.

I went, then, and dug out all my rough notes on the chimney again and set to work, thinking better get it straightened out and together on it before we get all fouled up. It took me till about mid-afternoon. Then I called him back.

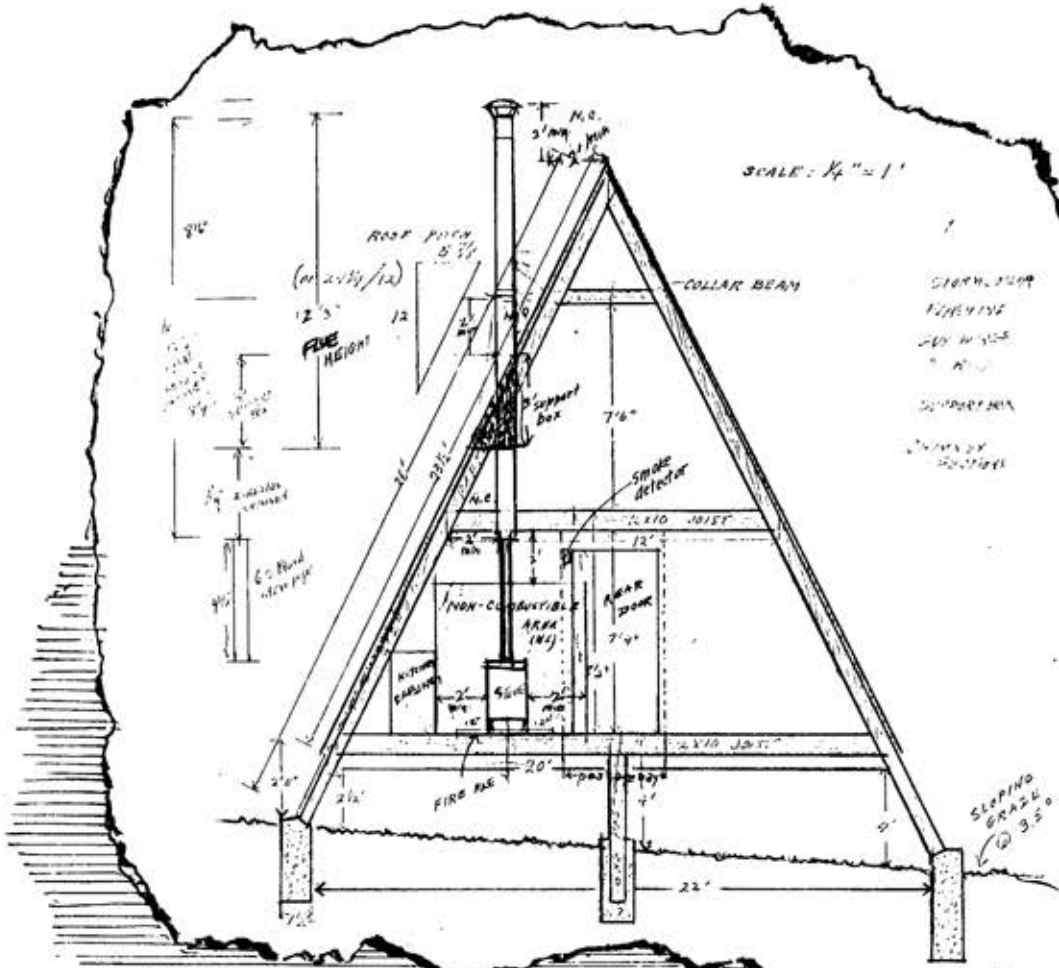
"Just thought I'd check on what you told me," I said. "Let's see...those measurements...." "Yeah," he said. "Well, I'm getting...(I read off figures). Now I realize this is **only on paper...**" I snotted. But he was very nice about it.
"Hey!" he cried, without quibbling when I corrected his distance from centerline, "That's great! That's much better!"
"Well, that's what Bruce and I were trying to do," I explained, "keep as much as possible of the chimney **inside** (to utilize the heat given off)."

By now he was quite blithe. I read off the rest of my estimates to him and not a quibble. "...And," I said, "I'll get to Bruce as soon as I can and we'll either ship the chimney up or..."
"I can come down and get it!" he cried. "And the stove! And maybe get all your stored stuff!"
"...Uh...no no," I said. "It's ok."
"Well," he said, "we do have to have a roof on first."
"Yeah. And all that stuff would just get in your way..."

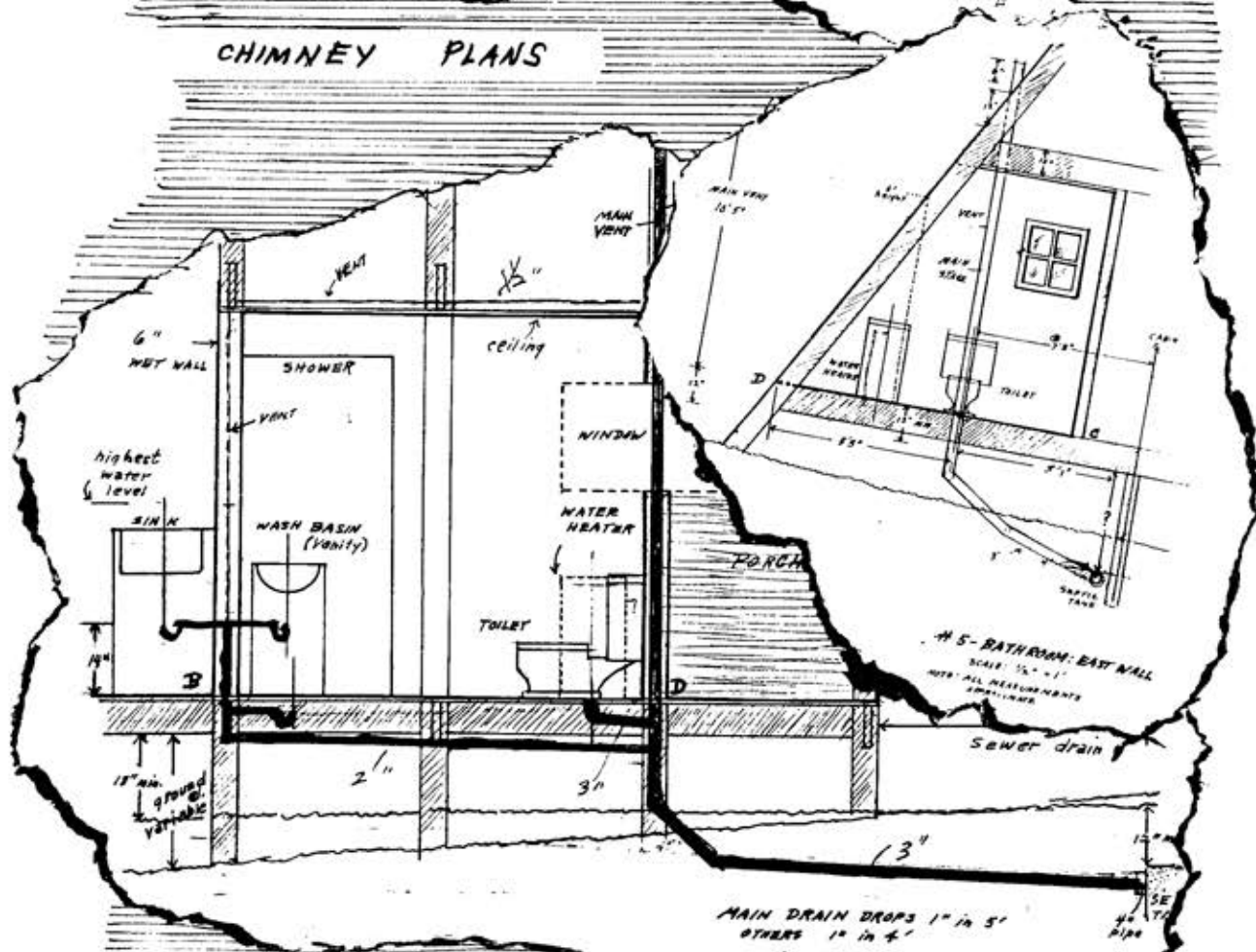
I checked my list and asked a few more questions. "The roofing is—what weight?"
"90 pounds," he said. "It looks good!" he cried.
"And those 2x4's? (the new idea for roof bracing) go which way?"
"Flat," he said. "Oh, you mean...?" "Yeah." "Oh. Well, that kind of spoils my rafter effect...oh well, it'll look all right when we finish off the inside. Thinking of money...mmm. Well, that's ok."
He began about the mistake in the plywood weight cost, "Well it was **my** fault."
"No no, it was Snohomish county's fault." "No no! Mine!" I let it go.

He was off and away again. I couldn't quite follow what he meant. "T&G, I should have done it that way..would have been really neat..and I **could** have done it the other way..." "Hunh?" I asked. "Oh, never mind. I just didn't **know**!"
"Well...err...you'll have to get a plumbing permit, " I ventured.
"I know! I know!"
"Well, they only allow **one** to a person a year, " I reminded him. Silence.
I hastened on. "I think it's going to be all right, don't you?" "Oh yes!" "I'll get the chimney—Bruce is going to go with me and see that I don't get stung."
"And I've got the plexiglas!" he cried. "Two pieces! Going to be fun!" (This was for the big A window—what Abbie and I had been calling "styrene"? I gulped: **plexiglas** is very expensive .) He was sounding very excited.
"Kinda fun—exciting! Isn't it?" I said.
"Yeah! Yeah!"
We sighed—happy. "Now if it would just stop raining!" I said.
We hung up.

I went and sat and looked out at the pouring rain and happily dreamed about how nice it would be with those three skylights. On days like this (and God knows there will be many of them up there), I'd be able to see **out..up**!



CHIMNEY PLANS



PLUMBING PLANS

PARTS OF PLANS

2 BATHROOM: NORTH WALL
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'

And there'd be a nice glow in the cabin from the skylights...maybe I'd even be able to see...the stars!

I thought about the reaction at the office when I had showed them the pictures I had taken. Everybody had cried, "It's like a church!" I looked at that one picture where a freak of light had caught one of the temporary brace pieces the guys had put on; it looked like...a cross there!

Outside the rain had stopped. Brilliant sun!

Sept. 4, Tuesday. I had spent the interim hassling ways to raise more money. I'd decided to cash in that life insurance policy I'd "inherited" from my dad; been paying on it since his death. It was all the life insurance I had, but, I'd broached the subject to my kids and they had, more or less, approved...

Today I had **business** to do. I called Bruce, forgetting I didn't have the measurements from Dennis yet.

No problem, he said, about shipping the chimney. To my delight he said it could even go UPS (parcel service) as it only weighed 20 pounds. And he quoted a price for shipping about \$55 less than I had figured on! He'd go ahead as soon as he had the measurements from Dennis.

I called them up then, despite the expense of a daytime phone call. Abbie answered. No, he wasn't there. He was up at the cabin. Would be down that night. "I hope he remembers to take the measurements!" I say. "Be sure and give him the message. We need them in a hurry! Rain there?"

"Yes."

"Same here. Does Dennis have any help?"

"No. But Godfrey will help next week end. Yes, she'd be sure to give Dennis the message. Kids would start school the next day.." This, to me, was good news; it meant they'd have less domestic pressures on them. We hung up.

Then, loathe to, I set out to cash in that insurance.

I had a hard time finding the office, but at last I did. And here was the same old guy who'd tried to talk me out of cashing it in before.

"Now don't bawl me out," I began. "I've had years to think about this and the kids agree."

He didn't quibble. He simply filled out a form, silently, and passed it over to me to sign. I did so, hoping my hand wouldn't shake. Then he tossed my premium book in the wastebasket and that was that.

Was he mad? He seemed more...sad. I turned on all the charm I could muster and explained **why** I was doing it. We talked long. I rather got the impression that a lot of old people were doing this same thing? I left.

Outside it hit me—like a kick in the guts—**ZIT! (This is it!)** I had lived with the struggle to pay those insurance premiums all my adult life; dad's gift to us kids. Now, it was **all gone**, my safety margin.

Oddly, I had an intense, inexplicable gut pain the rest of the afternoon.

I went on to the storage rental place. There I found—disaster. A leaky roof had flooded my unit and gotten all my stuff wet! Advised that I was entitled to compensation, I went to the office and hassled with that indifferent old fat woman, who just sat there and knitted; yes, they'd had trouble with that roof leaking before, but...Furious, I gave her my check for another month's rental anyway—pending better solution. (Later, they did fix the roof, but I never got any compensation for damage.)

Then I went back to my dingy dump, where I hassled my pain and waited for Dennis to call. He didn't. So, after 10 that night, I called him.

Dennis call: "No, no," he said. It would be two more days before he could figure the measurements; and then he'd send them off.

I asked him if he talked to Mike about the skylights. "Oh I didn't talk to him about the **merits** of the skylights," he said. "He just said that you and he had made some money arrangements."

"He's nuts!" I put in.

Dennis went on, saying he'd gotten **one** side of the 2x4's on. "It's beginning to look...small!" he said. We hung up.

There was supposed to be an unusual moon eclipse that night. I'd planned to have me a little party all by myself and stay up and watch it.

Dennis: I called him about 9; mood I was in I just couldn't wait for 10 and the cut rates.

"Ya gotta have **wheels!**" I began. "Did you get the car fixed? How much did it cost? Will they have it for you tomorrow?"

"I don't know!" he snarled. "This bit about the skylights...(bitch! bitch! bitch!)..."

"Hey, Dennis, you sound uptight. Bad day?"

"Oh shut up!"

"Hey," I went on, "**you** said something once about 'the farther we fall, the greater the victory'" and I quoted another little epigram I'd just read. But he was **mad!** "Look!" I said, "you **asked** me where I wanted the skylights. Ok..." I started to laugh, perhaps a little hysterically? "Want me to call you **another time?**"

"NO!"

While I waited for the moon show, perhaps my little party got away from me? I called Dennis again later. He said, angrily, "Oh, knock that off, willya?" I think I slammed up the phone.

I spent a terrible night wearing earplugs against the crashing of the train switchyard and the noises in the slum around me, and did manage to watch the moon eclipse through the grimy, cracked window. It didn't happen until about 3 a.m.

Later that morning I woke by business hours, and, fed up with this skylight business, I searched the telephone book to see if there was anyplace I could get information on them. There was no place in Vancouver. I called long distance to Portland and got some dumb women who know nothing, but "would send me one of their brochures".

"When will I get it?" I asked.

"Oh...should...tomorrow."

I put in my ear plugs and went back to sleep.

9:55 a.m. Phone. Dennis. "I'm sorry I got **mad,**" he said. "It was just...the skylights...I had it all figured for curb mount and then you came up with this flush mount bit. I'll have to do it **all over.** And go **shopping** some **more.**"

"Well, I got it out of a Sears catalog," I said, a little scared.

"Well," he said, "I'll go look some more. Maybe they will be **cheaper.** But I can't get up there this week end—**no car.**"

"When are you going to get the car?"

"Oh...today...maybe...**hopefully.** Mike will pay you for the skylights?"

"Yeah," I lied.

"Well, the chimney measurements—I was gonna **phone** you from Monroe, but can't get up there **this** week end. **Hoped** to **this** week end, but **next.** Will call **Monday.** I gotta get that roof on! Sick of this rain bit!"

"Yeah, that's what Mike said—get that roof on!"

Later angry at the expense and trouble of my two or three calls to Portland hassling those women about skylights, I got a bright idea.

I called Dennis again. "Hey—new idea. Why don't you call me from now on and tell me your problem and then I'll look into it and call you back and let's start keeping track of the phone call expenses and add them to 'cabin billing'."

"Ok. Ok," he said, his old lazy voiced self again.

That night the paper came out with a big front page spread on the eclipse.



I wondered.

Ensued then a wild, wild day. Things happening around me in the slum; it seemed like all hell broke loose. To shorten the story, I went out and battled city, hall, Burlington Northern—**anybody**—to see if I couldn't crack some of these impasses.

I called Mike. Though it was late, he sounded quite pleasant. Yes, he'd talked to Dennis. "He said something about skylights," he said. "I don't know what the problem is."

I tried to explain. Then he began one of his lectures about doing everything right; "Do a good job! and don't stint!" He ended up by saying he thought it better that all financial transactions should go through me, so that I'd know what was going on, and so on and so on. My attempts to explain our pressures and rushes just got too complicated for the circumstances, so I finally just asked, "Well, shall I tell him to go ahead with them? (the skylights.)"

"Oh yes, if needed. You go ahead and give him the money and if, sometime, you need a couple of hundred or so, Maybe I can help out."

We discussed the credit union loan and he urged me to go ahead and get it. "Umm umm," from me and a silence. "You tell Dennis to do a good job on that roof! Don't stint!"

"Why, Dennis does good work..." I began...

Don't let him do any short cuts! Now, if you need anything or need to call, just call collect!" He was still giving me orders when I hung up, seething.

Somehow things weren't going right.

Troubles

I sighed, picked up the paper, turned on TV. My mysterious pain was still bothering me. And outside Burlington Northern trains began to **hump!** screech and clang in the switchyard till the din drove me to phone them and complain (and get told off.)

In the paper: Article telling how many "house starts" (sic) had gone bankrupt this year. (Well, I guess they're talking about **contractors**, not **ours**?)

Our terrible **hurricane**—"a record breaker—more to come"...

On TV: **Condominiums**—so popular with owners—getting more of them all the time. It's a high risk to owners, but the profits are fantastic! You may be ousted out of your apartment" it warned.

Sept. 5, Wednesday. About 10 a.m. the phone rings.

"This is General Telephone calling from Snohomish county. We would like to put three telephone jacks into your new home." I just started laughing. (And he got told off!)

September 6, Thursday. I'd been fretting about the seeming lack of rapport between Mike and Dennis and about yet another delay in getting the chimney. A week had gone by waiting for those measurements—and then Dennis told me he had climbed up and taken them—and then had forgotten them by the time he climbed down!

The door delivery. I called Bob Barnes to see when he was going to be able to take it up. "I can't this week end; my dad died." He sounded so sad. "But I'll do it next week end," he said.

Afternoon. 1 p.m. Phone. Dennis. His car broke down. "Can I please have \$200 out of the fund? I'm getting \$300: I'll pay you **back**, but I can't get up there to work if I don't have the **car**! You want me to do that, dontcha?"

"What's the problem? That 'won't reverse' bit?"

"No no! Wiring! Smoke! Fire! I took it in someplace. He wants \$200 to fix. Hope it's not a gyp joint."

"I do too," I sighed.

"What!?" He got mad.

"We **all** get gypped," I said.

"You want me to get that roof on, dontcha? I **gotta** get that **roof** on! I gotta **quit** that and find me a **job**!"

"Uh...could you make it \$175? You got the skylights yet?"

"No. They're \$100 apiece. You want three?"

"Well, call me tonight," I said.

I hung up in despair. If I gave him that money, there went the trip up I'd planned; I wouldn't have enough. Also, he couldn't find those plans I'd sent and/or left there: I'd have to do them all over.

All my talking and interviewing only showed me how hopeless it was to "try to fight city hall". I spent a sleepless and miserable night trying to figure how I could get myself out of that mess and that dump. I wanted very much to call Mike and Marylyn and discuss it with them, but I held out until daylight.

Then I called. Marylyn answered, her voice sleepy. "Mike?"
"Mike's asleep," she said. "I don't want to wake him. What time is it?"
"Six!" I snapped. "Well, I've been awake all night just trying to think how I could buy you kids out. \$4042."
"Well, what advantage to that?" she asked.
"Well, as a senior citizen if I **owned** the place I could get discounts. I was **going** to—" I laughed—"kid Mike about buying \$300 worth of skylights, but..."
"Yeah. Don't wake him up."
"You kids don't seem much **interested**," I said. "Want out?"
"Oh, we'll try to get up this summer," she said.
Wow! I crowed. "That would be nice! I'm just fed up," I went on, "I didn't intend to spend my old age in a **slum**!"
"Is it that bad?"
The whole idea was to get me out of **rental**..."
"I'll have Mike call you when you aren't **drunk**!" she said.

I hung up, of course, wondering why I had called so early. For two reasons: I didn't want to be put off talking to the grandkids, as usual and I was glad to catch Marylyn with whom I never seemed to get a chance to discuss anything.

I was hurtin' bad. And the nice, quiet Sunday I'd hoped for was not: raucous slum neighbors; huge, noisy planes going low overhead; a power mower going close by; a big, buzzing blowfly circling my rooms...

...the radio starting playing that haunting "September Song"..
...and then some church music...

September 9, Sunday. I call Dennis. They got their car back! It was \$205. \$50 for parts, the rest labor. He will go up tomorrow and finish roof and skylights.

Afternoon: I call Mike to apologize.

"Oh, that's ok," he says. Then he goes on and on giving me advice on what to do; I should move up there to the Seattle area; store my stuff there. "And take out that loan!" he insists. "You can't build on **cash**! Nobody does!"
Well, my loan won't be insured," I say.
"That's ok, but move up to Seattle! Get out of Vancouver! Get closer to Seattle! Move in with Bud and Paula or the Doolittles!"
"But Mike, the loan—I hate to take out a loan! I'm all paid up; don't owe anyone. It's hard for me to change," I pleaded.

While we are talking I can hardly hear him for the trains crashing outside and planes flying over low; and the stench from the sewage plant wafts in the window. "Must be dark up there if you need skylights," he says.

"Oh yes!"

He argues with me that a loan wouldn't be something foolish, but that I would be investing in something with good resale value. He mentions some kind of Christmas present help.

I hung up feeling so frustrated that I couldn't make anyone see my viewpoint—that I was so sick of moving! had been doing it all my adult life. And moving—the exorbitant trucking charges they were asking now...I didn't own enough stuff to warrant them...even if I had it...

Meantime, money—time running out. I renewed the septic tank permit.

Sept. 10, Monday. I wait in vain all day for that call from Dennis about the measurements. Early evening I call. And get Abbie. "Yes, nice weather up there, too. Dennis went to Monroe today. He plans to stay up there till about Wednesday and planned to call me about seven..if he remembers," she said. "He was going to stop on the way to see about the skylights."

Just before 7 p.m. Dennis calls. Collect. He sounded exhausted. He said he had all but three of the roof braces done and that he needed some money for the skylights. We arrange so that I will transfer money to his account in Seattle. So he says he'll go to Seattle and get the money and then pick up the skylights Wednesday. He said he doesn't like the nights up there. That surprises me as I think that the best time. But maybe he misses his family?

Sept. 11, Tuesday. I get ready to go transfer some funds to Dennis. I call Bruce about the chimney. He says to meet him at noon and we'll go over to Portland and buy it. Rita, our manager at the Dump, upsets me by saying we could get arrested for buying the chimney in Oregon and evading the (Washington state) sales tax.

THE CHIMNEY

The trip to Portland to get the chimney with Bruce was wild! We went in his pick-up and he being on his noon hour, hurrying, he drove like a demon. We picked out the chimney, which seemed to me to be a very elaborate affair—for a chimney.

The place where we got it was a very prosperous looking wholesale house where Bruce got stoves and chimneys from buddies of his to sell on his own. They said they'd order one and have it shipped to Dennis. Bruce had said I was to pay him and he preferred it in cash. I was too naive at the time to realize why, but understood...later.

I had found the credit union closed, but had gone to the bank and deposited the money for the skylights in Dennis' Seattle account and gotten out money to pay Bruce. \$100 we had agreed upon as down payment.

When we got out of that place, I accosted Bruce, shocked at the price they'd charged, "\$318!?" "Oh you have to have that kind to pass code!" he said. But I was excited and pleased when we got back: we had the chimney! "Here," I said and pressed two \$50 bills into his hand, surreptitiously, at the office. "Thanks!" (I'd never even seen fifty dollar bills before!)

That evening I called Dennis, a little worried about the news I had to tell him about the delivery of the chimney, but he was too excited about his skylights to react. Yes, he'd gotten the money and the skylights. He was very excited about them! But he said he got lonesome up at the cabin, his family all gone to Hood River and he wished he could have gone, too. "Me, Too!" I cried, thinking of my gruesome summer there in that slum dump. He said his arm was sore from hammering.

Then I told him about the chimney. "Some trouble with delivery," I said. Seems there's a truckers' strike and they can't deliver in town. You will have to pick it up at the dock terminal—Reddaway, the name is. Should be there in a week" Message delivered.

Two big things accomplished
It felt good.

Credit Union

Sept. 12, Wednesday was the day my credit union loan up for approval. I spent the day fretting about it so much that, unable to stand the anxiety I finally got in touch with Peggy, the gal who was handling it for me. I had applied for \$1000. She'd said she thought I could get \$2500 for what I was already paying; \$50 a month.

Now she said, No. I could only get \$1600.

Two years before I'd gotten \$2500 for \$50 on a loan to fix my teeth. Now they wanted \$75 for that amount. My financial situation was now too uncertain to chance more than I was currently paying.

Besides I was fretting that I still hadn't gotten the check for that insurance I'd cashed in. It had been a week.

I settled for the lesser amount.

Sept. 13, Thursday. I stood in line at the credit union quaking with anxiety and wondering if it being the 13th was a bad omen?

But it was approved! \$1600! Whee!

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Chimney

But then, I contacted **Bruce** and heard new problems about the chimney. Seems they'd sent it by a different freight line than the one he'd told me; all very confusing. I spent the afternoon drawing up the chimney support wires as the guys told me it would have to be done, and trying to figure the financing of it. Ok; \$318 for chimney, off 30% Bruce's discount and he said \$30 freight? But now if they were sending it by Reddaway, the only company he told me could strike break—all very confusing.

I began to compose a letter to Dennis and Abbie to bring them up to date on all this. And **the next day** worked on one to Mike and Marylyn trying to explain it all. And then, worn out with wrestling with it, just grabbed them and got the car out and went and just slammed them off at the post office.

Sept. 15, Saturday. 1 p.m. Phone. Collect call from Dennis. "I'm ready for the chimney!"

"I just sent you a letter," I say.

"I got the sheathing on—or am ready to. Skylights framed in. Can you come up and shop for lumber?" he went on.

"Why...uh...sure...but when?"

"Well, wait till the roof is on. I'll check with you next week"...and then he said something about "Abbie wants to next week..Wednesday, Thursday.." that I didn't catch. "Oh the **nails** I have bought!" he cried.

Sept. 17, Monday. I am delighted! A check for \$800 on the insurance I cashed in. It was more than I'd expected.

Sept. 18, Tuesday. Dennis calls. He needs another \$50...**fast!** The other money hadn't come yet and they needed nails. He and Godfrey had been working on the sheathing; got it about done. "Sure looks neat!" he said. "...those skylights. But they had run out of plywood. Needed about 3 or 4 sheets more. Then the roof (expense) will be all over," he said. "Those piles of plywood; all gone! They're all on the house now!"

I phoned the bank and made a transfer and called him back. He sounded elated. "Gee **that** was quick!" he said and explained that he and Godfrey were going up again and the mail hadn't come yet.

Sept. 19, Wednesday. I went to the office to see if I could get Bob and/or Dave to help me rearrange stuff in that flooded storage unit. Circumstances were such that it had to be done by Thursday.

Meantime I was waiting to hear from Paula about whether I could stay there so I could decide when to go.

I was also keeping the cabin fund up to date. I was pleased when Jerry Perry at the office told me his son had tried to buy land in Monroe and that now they were asking \$35,000 for one acre of flat land with no timber on it!

Bob and Dave were not able to get away to help me on the storage work so I went over Thursday and did it myself, surprised at how many heavy boxes I could move when I wanted to. I found the man there, formerly very snotty and uncooperative, very nice and helpful this time. My threats about exposing them must have worked. He brought out more pallets than I even needed and offered to help me put the stuff onto them. But I managed. When I got them done it hardly seemed enough to be paying \$20 a month on: just three big boxes of household goods, the rest just papers, drawings and such.

That Thursday was a good day! After the above done there was a letter in the mail from Mike saying "Make reservations on the plane for Xmas! I'll buy the tickets!" So I began to work on that, noting that it'd been **four years** since I'd been on a plane. I found it very complex getting a plane out of Vancouver...but a California trip does not pertain to the cabin story...

That night when, calling Paula, I was told there was to be a big surprise birthday party for my brother the next Saturday and I was expected to be there. "Sounds fun!" I said, "I'll be there!"

Sept. 21, Friday. I called Dennis to tell him. He had bad news. He told me how he'd called that company about the delivery of the chimney and they'd said they had **no record** of any shipping!

Then he went on; Abbie was going to Yakima and taking the car.

"Oh, we'll have mine," I said.

Dennis said he'd slept in the cabin. "Was neat!" he said. And that he'd gotten the roof edging on..."And there's a squirrel there! He was working harder than I was!" He didn't mention Godfrey.

Chimney

In paper that night:

"They are doing a check on badly maintained independent trucks. Have pulled 90% of them off highways for being faulty."

Sept. 22, Saturday. I got on the phone and tried to straighten out the chimney mess. I finally got ahold of Bruce. "Call them over there!" he said. "I just talked to Woody yesterday."

I called. Woody was not available. The guy who answered was all upset. He'd call me back. "Who's it billed to?" he asked.

"Err...uh...(I didn't know.)" I gave him Bruce's name and Dennis' and my numbers.

I called Bruce again. He yawned! "That...turkey!" he said.

"Hey," I said, this is all on the up and up, isn't it?"

"Oh yeah. Never had any trouble with them **before!**"

"Well, I feel **strange** not paying anyone except **you!**"

"Well, you'll get your money back if it falls through," he said.

Later: The man called me back. "Bruce called," he said. "And I tried to call him back, but I can't get him." I gave him Bruce's home number. I can't find a **thing** on that order!" he said. "I will call Bruce and either he or I will call you back. Then he said something about maybe I could take part of the chimney up. I was **furious**—with all the stuff I had to take in my little car!

A little later: phone again. Bruce, mentioning something about "a merry mix-up". "Tell you what I'll do," he said, "I'll ship the (most needed) piece on Greyhound...or I'll give it to you to take up Monday." I agreed. What else was there to do?

I had made plans to leave Monday. I began to get a nervous breakdown thinking about it; it promised to be one **hell** of a day. I'd have to pack; find gas in all this gas shortage; make arrangements about being gone with our rather difficult landlady/manager; do something last minute about that chimney and then drive 200 miles with, as yet, no place to sleep or stay when I got there.

I called Dennis. "Can I camp up there?"

"We-e-ll...it isn't exactly civilized yet...but...it's...different. I'm going up today and put on that asbestos (roofing)."

"Have you got help?"

"Oh no! And then I'm going to bolt the skylights down...they're so **bulky**...and then I'm going to take a day off Monday..."

"If I arrive Monday night? Ok?"

"Uh..yeah..."

"Ok with everybody?"

"Yeah...oh...yeah..."

Pack à la Slum

Sept. 23, Sunday. I began to pack up the car. It was the first time I'd packed for a trip north since I'd moved from my convenient just-off-kitchen garage. I was very grim as I went out and tried to do my usual car clean-up—clean windows the better to see through and all.

The car now had to stand exposed in that filthy, air-polluted, vandalized lot out there. There was no hose, no water. I had to lug that. Any cleaning I did would be nigh useless; by morning the car would be covered with the usual dust, soot, grit from carborundum plant, bird droppings. And always the worry about vandalism from those kids around.

But I cleaned the car and then began to lug stuff out. It was a grim chore, for, here, I had to do it piecemeal, one load at a time, each time locking my apartment door behind me, for there was so much stealing around there. And then lug things down that long, dark hall, past nosy and interfering slum character neighbors, through a broken door that would not prop open, down a broken step, put it in car. Lock the car..and then to do it all over again. It was not fun.

Sept. 24, Monday. I usually planned to get going by 10 a.m. It's a long drive and I liked to take my time at it. But this day at 10 a.m. I was still battling things. It took me a long time to contact Bruce to find out he **was** shipping the chimney part on the bus that day. Whew!

Then a long time no answer trying to call my friend, Jeff, at the service station. When I finally got him, he said, "Better hurry! Gas is about gone!" I dropped everything and raced about **8 miles** to get gas.

Home, I finish packing, get dressed for trip, call the office to see if the rest areas are still open for it is the end of the season. Yes! Whew! It is a nice, warm day, for which I am very thankful.

I get going before noon.

TRIP NORTH

I went the back route without incident, except the car overheated, which worried me. I stopped in **Auburn** and loaded up with fresh, cheap vegetables from a Japanese truck garden roadside stand as a "house guest gift" for Abbie, produce so expensive in markets then.

About 5:30 p.m. when I got to Seattle. Everybody was cross. Abbie was baby-sitting four kids, a job she'd taken on to make extra money. Dennis had **not** gotten the skylights in or the roof finished or even been up there. They'd gotten the check for the chimney freight I'd sent but the reprints of the pictures I'd taken at camp were missing. Abbie scorned my vegetables gift, puzzling me. (I still forgetting about **her** trip intentions.)

They left me to baby-sit while they went shopping. I used the chance to inspect their small-size refrigerator, for we had agreed to make a swap; I'd take that small one and buy them a new one as part of payment for work they were doing for me. It was an **old** one, and I was dismayed at its condition. I spent a miserable night, having to sleep in the same tiny room with Noah—who was a noisy sleeper.

And the next morning, Tuesday, was also very trying. Everybody was cross. Abbie was planning to go to Yakima with the kids. Dennis and I were to go to the cabin. The kids claimed colds and Abbie let them stay home from school. The house was full of kids. It was chaos. And I was confused about everybody's diverse plans:

Dennis and I were each to take our own cars to Monroe. This is the first time we had each gone up with both cars and no family. I intended to stay but Dennis would have to come back to let Abbie have the car after he got that work done he wanted to do; he would have to come back Thursday. And I had that party in Seattle to go to Saturday.

I also had a lot of phone calls I wanted to make. Did I in all that confusion? for sometime Bishop gave me names of plumbers and electricians in Everett he'd used when working on remodeling his rental unit there. Whatever, we were delayed leaving, for Abbie had to use their car to go do a **huge** washing.

Dennis was restless and cross. He decided that the skylights were too bulky to take in his car, disappointing me: one of all the many exciting things I was hoping to see.

The chimney dilemma, meantime, got crowded into the background by all these other pressures. As far as I knew, the **support** piece, the piece Dennis would need first, was on its way on a Greyhound bus, Bruce having sent it at his own expense. He'd told me it should arrive Tuesday (the next day.) The rest was to follow on a truck; should arrive in about a week.

Finally, Dennis and I were ready to leave. We were just about to when the phone rang and it was Paula. **Bud had just totalled his new car on the freeway!** Not his fault; an old guy had "paused" and seven cars accorioned behind him. "Be careful on the freeway!" she said, facetiously. And, "No, luckily, he wasn't hurt and...oh!...also their basement was flooded!"

(Happy birthday, Bud.)

Dennis and I left and hit the freeways north. That news didn't help my condition; I was in a real tizzy, hating and fearing driving freeways anyway. I was praying all the way, but even so some wild driver nearly clobbered my car.

Return to cabin

On the way up, Dennis and I met and stopped and bought more roofing. And then I went on alone. It seemed such a **long** way, I being so anxious to see all that had been done in that long interim when it had seemed as if I'd never return again.

I got there. I drove in. It looked all dry and dusty...but

...it was **exciting!** The roof sheathing on, and Dennis had set up a pup tent **inside** the cabin.

Dennis comes and we both set to work, Dennis on the roof and I straightening up the mess inside. We work till dusk. And then **Floyd** shows up, unexpectedly. He and Dennis work on the roof until dark. I fix some food for us all from the stock I'd brought for myself and then, tired, we gather inside under the new roof and begin to celebrate.

A little **too** much I fear? They were drinking beer and when I produced a bottle of whiskey we all drank whiskey and had a fine, wild crazy time until late. Then the guys decided they needed more beer. I tried to squelch this delightful idea, especially since they'd have to use my car, by insisting the store was closed, but they kept insisting they knew of someplace so...I gave in.

They were gone a long, long time and I sat and **worried**. They came back pretty boozed up and hilarious, but the car was ok...whew! "Gotta pee!" Floyd cried a little later, and, like a gentleman, ran outside to do so, a lady present. Only thing was...



There was a Crash! in the woods as Floyd sailed off the unfinished porch.

I don't remember much of the rest of that night.

The next day. We were all hung over. Dennis was cross and bitchy and mad at himself. Floyd decided that he'd go phone his boss and lie and take the day off and stay and help Dennis.

They take my car and drive the four miles to Sultan to the nearest phone and come back. "It's all settled," they say. They want a ladder. So I went to Monroe to get more food and check out about a ladder. It took phoning to find the nearest place to rent one would be in Snohomish, eight miles away. Rushed and frantic and the day fast going, I race back.

I give them money and my gas credit card and they go to get a ladder. And then they work all day on the roofing while I cook and tend them—which hadn't been at all my idea of what I was going to do at camp.

But, they got the lower sides all done. We celebrated again that evening. This time not fun. Floyd and I found we didn't get along too well. And I was tired; it had been an intense day. At some time I unwittingly said something Floyd took umbrage at causing them to leave and go to a tavern again, late. I fell asleep. During the night Floyd left.

Sept. 27, Thursday. Dennis routed me out at 7 a.m. He worked on the peak of the roof, evidently expecting Floyd to come back. He was quite short with me, seemed to be "not speaking"? "Oh Floyd's just mad. He'll show up," he said. Seems something I'd said had made him mad.

"He's afraid of heights?" I asked Dennis.

"Yes! but you didn't have to tell him so!"

I was utterly baffled...and a little sore. I'd gotten all that good breakfast food and cooked it and Floyd never showed up. He never did come back. And I didn't feel a bit well. I went around and cleaned up all the mess, beer and pop cans, cig butts all over the place.

"Do you **have** to **litter**?" I snapped at Dennis.

"Humph!" he snots. "Gives you something to **do**!" "What!?"

"Never mind! Besides...you **insulted** Floyd!"

I worked on domestic chores, cleaning, sweeping, cooking, ill and scared. For Dennis working up on that roof peak drove me nearly insane with fear he'd fall. And the framework seemed so unsteady; whole place shook when one just walked across the floor. And when Dennis moved up on the roof, it felt like an earthquake!

Dennis was going to leave at noon. He had to take the car back to Abbie. And then I was to go down and pick him up and bring him back. Abbie would pick him up at the cabin on her way back from Yakima after I had to leave to go to the party.

But Dennis did not quit by noon. He worked till 4 p.m. He got the ridge done and started down the other side, too intent to even stop and eat the sandwiches I fixed for him. I got so nervous about his being up there on that roof that I absented myself as far as I could go by going out to the shelter where I began to "winterize" things. Dennis was working frantically. At one point he yelled, "Hey, mom! Where does the chimney go? This place?"

"No no." I had to check my plans before I could tell him. Then..

"Hey!" A crow of delight from up on the roof. "Hey! This works out just perfect!" At last he came down, so proud of himself; he had all but one fourth of the roof done.

Then. He wanted me to go to Everett the next day and buy some plumbing pipe. I tried to beg off. "Dennis! I'm sick! I'm filthy! I haven't got time! That plumbing plan of mine hasn't been approved!" (He'd already made a hole for the soil stack in the wrong place.)

"Bitch! Bitch! Bitch!" he chewed me out. "So I gotta? I gotta do **everything**!"

I was too tired and ill to fight.

He finally got packed up and ready to leave about 4:30. It had begun to sprinkle just a little bit. I'd worked on down there, cleaning out and sealing up the shelter. It was kind of sad; we'd have no more need for it!

I took in wood and picked up as much as I could. I burned paper trash. There was no water in the creek to put it out with. I got everything rainproofed as much as I could. I went back up to the cabin to make Dennis eat the sandwiches I'd fixed so long before.

"Betcha," I said. "The minute you leave, the rain's gonna pour down on **me**!"

"But you'll have a nice, dry roof over your head!"

I walked down the trail with him so I could move my car and let him get his out. The deluge started. "See!" I said. "The woods gods hate **me**! They've been nice to you!" Now it seemed roles reversed; I used to get the good weather and he the rain.

"Ya gotta **fight** 'em and show 'em who's boss!" he said. He kissed and hugged me and left.

After he drove off, I just sat in the car and listened to the rain. And then I went in and got my purse and went to the store. Suddenly everything was all right again. Since it was raining, I couldn't do all the "winterizing" I'd meant to do after Dennis left, but I'd just cozy up in my nice new house! How cozy and pretty it looked when I came back from the store!

Oh heck! I had roof goop all over my hands. I had to go down and open up the shelter again and get some turpentine to clean my hands. Ok. Now I'll just hole up in my nice cozy new house! I'll clean up the lunch mess, get all in order and then...sigh...crawl into my sleeping bag and just...die.

I went back into my new "wooden tent". It was cold in there, but I decided not to use the new electric heater I'd brought; the guys had run up the electrical meter—I'd be frugal. I fought my way through the big black plastic Dennis had put up as a temporary end wall—Floyd's non-wall... and gasped.

The rain was coming in all over! Plop! Plop! Plop! Dennis' new roof was like a sieve!—even the finished part. The little tent, put up inside, was wet; my papers were wet; my lamp—my sleeping bag—all soaked. I ran all over tending puddles. There wasn't one spot that was big enough or dry enough or that wasn't leaking for me to even put my cot in! I sat down. A big drip! fell on me.

"...cozy new roof." Ha!

I had been safer and drier and warmer in the shelter. How can I tell Dennis? Poor guy! He worked his very soul out today so I'd have my new house...deadline.

Finally, I did risk turning on the heater. It worked fine. I curled up as best I could in the soggy sleeping bag and spent a rather miserable night...(and I've got to drive drive drive...bring Dennis back up Saturday..we're to stop at Dunn lumber and buy some more roofing...) I guess I slept...

Sept. 28, Friday. Almost 9 a.m.—late—when I woke. But, thank God! the sun was shining! I indulged myself just lying, thinking...

Today I've got to go hassle traffic in Everett and find plumbing pipe...Dennis should have cut the bathroom floor and just left it—to be laid—later? and just forget the plumbing for the time being—finish up the walls, the woodwork first—can't put plumbing in and test it until we get water in, etc. etc....I gotta go Everett! and find a man to back me up on this!...

Up, I found things beginning to dry out pretty well. The drips were not so scary. In fact they seemed to be coming only from an area without roofing. Odd.

My last day at Chamterre.

Took me awhile to get ready, but, a nice day. I was glad to get out of that cold, wet place.

Plumbing try

I went into Everett. I called Bish's plumber from a noisy pay booth. "Sure! we can help you!"

I drove all over Everett looking for second hand plumbing and pipes and talking to people without much success. The only way to go was to hire someone professional I decided.

About 5 p.m. when I got back to cabin. I would have to drive to Seattle in the dark; I'd have to drive right back up with Dennis the next day. It was 7 p.m. before I was packed and ready to go.

Seattle

Night driving, but the drive down was pretty—a half moon—and no traffic problems. I got there about 8:20 p.m.

Dennis was there by himself. (How I hated to tell him about the leaks!) "The chimney part came!" he said. "Oh! Let me show you!" And he got it out. "Look at that shoddy work!" And it was.

Had I gotten the plumbing? "No-o..." He was furious! because I'd gotten nothing and had "consulted" with Bish's plumber.

15.5

Then I had to tell him about the leaks. "All my hard work! It leaks!" I tiptoed out, leaving him with his head bowed on his arms.

I went into the bedroom, closed the door and sat and tried to read Time magazine in that very dim light. Later I heard the phone ring. I'd asked him if he'd heard from Abbie and the kids? "No." he'd said. Now I heard him moving around. I ventured out. "Get your call?" "Yes." Then we talked.

I sat in the kitchen and watched him as he did all those dishes piled up. "I s'pose I have to go up there tomorrow," he sighed. I tried to talk to him...point out the long term investment business angle. "You build it and at my death...you and Mike sell it and split the profit; half of it yours for your work investment..." "I want none of it!" he snotted passionately. "Ed's house..none of it...! Throw it all away!" (I'll make it on my own!)...but by...

Sept. 29, Saturday, 2 p.m. I was back at Alki, having taken Dennis back up to the cabin. Or rather he took me, he driving my car, loaded with the skylights—and other goodies. I was glad not to be driving, able to enjoy the beautiful day it had turned out to be.

Dennis was so tired, distraught and bitching, but he wasn't so bad when I left him up there with all his new "toys". I had insisted on buying him a "nail apron" and felt better, leaving him, when, after we got up there, he had started getting almost hysterical, "I can't find my tape!"

"Well, I didn't find it," I said. "and you know me; I go through everything!" They're all always kidding me about my neatness compulsions. Then... "Gee! here's my favorite pliers! (I'd found them when cleaning out the shelter.) Been wondering where they were!...Oh...here's my tape.." All was in order in camp.

It was starting to sprinkle as I was leaving, but I left him happily absorbed hammering on the roof. "I'm going to take my time this time!" he said. I felt kind of bad, leaving and not getting to see the skylights in place and I had wanted to take some more measurements on the cabin, but I felt Dennis wanted me out of there.

I left taking the three day old garbage with me. I stopped and had a long, cliché-laden chat with Lu and then went to the dump in Sultan with the garbage where the nice man just winked at me and let me throw it in for free. (Usually a fee.)

I drove back to Monroe. I was so tired and sleepy. I went to the 76 gas station. The crippled man said, "Well, so you made it?" I started to leave. Young fellow runs out, "Ma'm? Your credit card! Think you'll need it."

It started to sprinkle as I left Monroe. Motorcycle gangs and campers were moving in like crazy as I took the ramp out of Monroe (Let me out of here!) and traffic was bumper to bumper on the bridge into Seattle.

Seattle

2 p.m. Alki. Seems so odd to be here all by myself. Tired! But I have to be cleaned up and over to Bud and Paula's by five.

Later: back from the party. It was a good one. Since, though, I've been haunted by a remark my sister, a good friend of Abbie's mother made, about "Dennis wasting his time building my cabin when he should be providing for his family". As I said, it was a good party—a good, typical, family party!

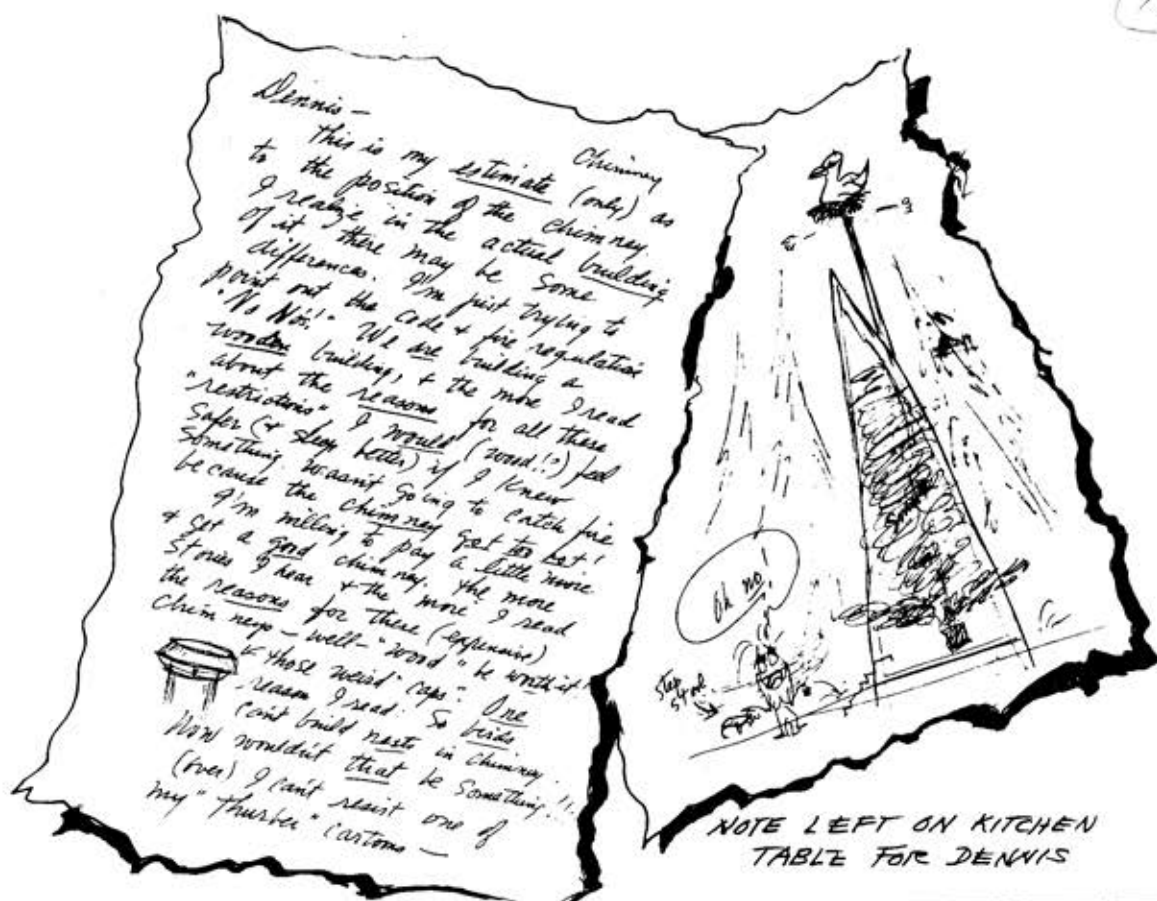
Sept. 30, Sunday. The next day found me packing for a quick getaway. I made a little pile of candy for the kids on the kitchen table with Sarah's teddy bear and a note and a message—"Many miles to go before I sleep"—and the key—and then—

I got the hell out of there!

And wended my way home, spending three days at Doolittles on the way. Then...

I went on home. BACK TO THE DUMP.
So ended SEPTEMBER 1979





Post hoc and leftovers on trip North

When I left Seattle, Dennis had said he'd be going back up to the cabin just on week ends again. And that, later, he'd come down to Vancouver and get the stove and the plumbing fixtures; that he would rent a truck to do so. This had alarmed me because of the expense but I said nothing.

The cabin: He had said he was going to creosote all under the house, but had changed his mind as creosote too much of a fire hazard; had decided to use wood preservative instead.

The plumbing: I had told him I wanted copper pipe. The guys had said that was the best and the easiest to work with. "No!" he had said. "I planned for the toilet to be here," I said. "No!" he had said. "Why don't you finish up the wood work and I'll find someone else to do the plumbing?" I'd said intending to, (and did) contact the plumber Bish had told me about. "No!" he had said.

Call to Dennis from Doolittles' before I left there. It was a short and unhappy talk. We were both cross and tired, depressed and pressured.

"I'll take care of the plumbing and the cabin," he rather snapped at me. "Now you get the fixtures!" He said that the chimney hadn't come yet, but he would start on the plumbing instead; and that he needed \$25 more for roofing materials and that they were running out of money to live on.

I told him what had been said at Bud's party: that he shouldn't be building a cabin when he had a family to take care of. "It hurt!" I said. "People like to knock things down," he said.

"The skylights?" I asked. "I was so disappointed I didn't get to see them."

"Well, they're...jiggly," he said..

"You mean..you can't see clearly through them?"

"Yeah".

I didn't tell him I'd "shopped" for plumbing items all the way home; plumbing was getting to be—a rather—**shitty** subject.

After I got home that whole trip seemed so strange and so fraught with family and fracas I pondered if I couldn't just by pass them all and go up there by myself the next time and then I began to realize all the little reasons why that wouldn't work...



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Oct. 5, Friday. I called Bruce and chewed him out about the chimney. He was nice, but suggested that I call the guy and chew him out instead of his doing it. I told him I wanted nothing more to do with the guy. He said he'd check.

That evening: Dennis called, all excited. He'd gotten the plumbing permit! It was \$15 and \$10 more to pay after final inspection. When he'd told the guy he already had some flooring in, the guy had said, "Well, I ain't that old! I can crawl under and inspect it."

He would need \$200 by Monday so he could get the pipe.

"Copper?" I asked.

"Oh yeah!" as if that had been our agreement all along. I assumed that he'd talked to guys and they'd said that the best.

I had been fretting at Dennis all year about getting the plumbing permit, for the directions they had given me made it sound very difficult to get. Grovers had helped me with information and ideas that I needed to draw up those plans and I'd really sweated them. But they had never been checked and I didn't know if they'd pass.

Dennis had objected at my worrying and nit picking, but I did feel that they should be approved before he went ahead. So I was surprised at how quickly and easily he got the permit. "Oh, I just showed them your plans and they said 'Fine!'" he said.

Next day I go shopping for plumbing fixtures, but have no luck.

Oct. 8, Monday. Dennis calls and asks about the money. I tell him I have to wait for the bank to open. He said the chimney hadn't come. I asked him if he were still coming down. "Oh maybe just for the stove," he said. "Maybe I'll get the plumbing fixtures up here." I then made some rash commitment that possibly I could send them some money every month—or at least not let them starve.

I send \$25 to Abbie for her birthday and for them to eat on. I transfer funds for Dennis to buy the pipe.

I go shopping again and find a sink and a washbasin for \$32 at Grover's.

I buy. "Hey!" I said to them, "I guess we passed code!" (their help).

"Be sure she gets the clips!" a man said and threw in some extra hardware for the sink.

I stopped at the office. All the guys gathered round. "Did Dennis go copper pipe?" Bob asked me. "Oh, I think so."

"Oh, copper's so much easier," they cried.

I told them about the struggle to put the roof on. "But wasn't the ridge a problem?" Dave asked.

"I dunno," I said, "I was too scared to watch. I went off into the woods and cried." I rapped Bruce on his bald head. "Where's our chimney?"

They all raved about our progress when I showed them my pictures.

Oct. 9, Tuesday. Next day. I got around to cleaning out the car. And found the missing books in the trunk of my car! All those "How-to" books I'd spent so much money on to help Dennis; plumbing; roofing, etc. I'd taken them up there to give to him and now here he was up there doing it and the books were here!

And other things bad: ● ● ●

● I hadn't heard from Mike about my trip. ● Dennis hadn't called.

News: ● Snohomish county PUD rates going up. ● My stock. Stock market about to crash.

● A puzzling new computer statement from the Credit Union.

I went in to see them.

● It seems I had less money to work with than I thought.

Oct. 11, Thursday. A letter from Mike, confirming my Xmas flight. Joy!

I call Bruce about the chimney again. "Well," he says, "Dennis should have it by now."

"What happened?" I ask. He tells me this wild story:

"Well, Woody (his friend) we have...err...uh...little differences". Seems Woody has a brother, seems the brother was sick, seems the hospital called Woody's wife for permission to give the poor guy a \$2 flu shot. "Why, yes! By all means," says his wife, "if it will help the poor guy." Well, seems the guy had been dead for two weeks!"

I laughed (though not feeling enlightened about the chimney.) "I'll pay you when Dennis gets the chimney!" I said.

That evening: Dennis calls. "Can you send me \$200 more?"

"Why?"

"For end walls!"

"I thought you were going to do the plumbing."

"Oh no, I gave up on that."

"You what!?"

"I decided to do the end walls."

"Thought you got the pipe?"

"Oh yeah...I broke my car window..." "Hunh?" "Loading that pipe. How much money have we got left?"

"Well, I went to the credit union today—\$1700."

"The chimney came today. How do I do it?"

We scrambled around some more about that and the plumbing fixtures and he still insisting he was going to come down and get the stove. It was a confusing and unsatisfactory call.

Oct. 12, Friday. Try to call Dennis to get some of that straightened out. Get Abbie. Dennis had just left for Monroe. "It was the windshield on the car he broke," she said, and sounded as mad as I felt about it.

"Expensive!" I said. "I know," she said. "Well, get an estimate on it. You can't drive all winter with a broken windshield."

"Oh, Dennis says we can.."

"Uh...er...what **is** Dennis **doing**?" I asked.

"I don't know!" she cries. "I don't know what he's doing! One minute one thing and then..." We both expressed anger and confusion.

Is he coming down here? Are you **all** coming?" "Dunno."

"What's he doing at Monroe?"

"Dunno. Something about end walls. But I thought..."

"Yeah. Me, too. Well, tell him—warn him—I'll call him tonight at 10 p.m. and I want him to have a **list** and a schedule! How in hell can I **buy** when I don't know **what** he's doing?"

"I agree," she said. "He switches so." "Yep," I agreed.

She said she'd signed the delivery form for the chimney. And said it had been sent the 9th. I assumed she'd paid the freight with the money I'd sent for it but didn't check with her.

Call to Dennis that night confused about whether I am to buy the fixtures here and he's coming to get them or what. He sounded mad. He said **he** was going to buy all the fixtures.. I tell him I am fussy about the faucets, having put up with so many awful ones in all the places I'd rented. He told me to buy my own then.

I asked him where he was going to shop, He wouldn't tell me. In my shopping I'd found out that if we bought everything at the same place, we could get a discount. He said he'd found a toilet for \$50. And when I objected that I'd found them cheaper he said, "Yep, but I want one of those water saver kinds."

When he mentioned he need about \$500, I cried, "Whoa! that about wipes me out!"

"Oh we're ok. Got lots!" he said.

I asked him if he'd gotten my letter about the bathroom window—that it was going to be a problem—can only be half the size of the others.

"Oh, I think I can get the whole thing in," he says.

"But the electricity panel box has to go in that wall!" I cried.

Silence.

He says he thinks the chimney is wrong and that he is going to sell part of it and do it—another way, but he has lost the drawing of the chimney I'd given him. (And it was my last copy)

I changed the subject. "Uh...how bad's the windshield?"

"Oh, it's just cracked..just a star," he said. He gave me the measurements he'd taken on the chimney. Then said he'll need \$200 for building felt for the end walls and later \$300 for the bathroom fixtures and he insisted again he'd buy them up there. This rather upset me, for, after all these years my own place at last, I rather wanted to pick out what I wanted.

I felt him out about coming down, for I began to realize that I did not have accommodations for them in my temporary abode. No beds. And the rules very strict: no guests or children allowed. And the "apartments" consisted of just rooms off hallways; there was absolutely no place for the kids to play. "Uh...maybe the kids would be bored here..." I began.

Before I could explain he shot out, "We'll remember that!" as if I'd told them they weren't welcome.

He had already advised me the visit would be **short**. He had said he'd have Abbie drive him down and then he'd rent a truck, I to pay, of course. This was different from my understanding and what Abbie and I had mentioned about his coming down on the bus or Amtrak (train.)

We simmered down. "I got the end walls framed in today! Have to go through a **door** now! And the big "A" window framed in...two squares and triangles!"

"Oh whee! Great!" I said. "I wanta see! Don't know if I can wait till spring! I'm debating about coming up again."

He ignored this and said, "I'm gonna do the back wall tomorrow. How do you want the windows to open?"

"Why..." not knowing what he was doing it was a question I couldn't answer.

"Aren't you proud? Excited?"

"No," he said, flatly. "But it sure was nice up there today! When Seattle all socked in."

"Nice here, too," I said.

"Well..." He said he'd be down soon to get the stove...maybe the next week...

We finally hung up.

In the next few days...

I called Bruce and told him the chimney had come and that I'd drop in and pay him.

I struggled with a letter to Dennis and Abbie, trying to explain the preposterous situation I was in. It was like being in a prison: none of us allowed guests, etc. It was something I couldn't get anyone to believe unless they'd actually seen it. It was not that I didn't want them: I simply couldn't offer them anything. Also, the expense of a truck would deplete me of money I would need for my trip to California.

Then, too—I began to laugh wryly—Dennis was putting in doors to which only they had the keys. Wouldn't it be funny, if, after all this struggle, I couldn't get into my own house? I began to feel like a beggar—locked out of my own dream house.

My dream house. Chamterre. Chamterre; that name didn't catch on, did it? I wanted so to have a part in the building of it—but—(No no no! We can do it!) A dream for 62 years: someday! someday! I may have that "greeny place" I've yearned for all my life. Two years now I'd spent carefully drawing plans for that dream house. Just a place I can call my own! No more landlords, managers! A place I can start to do all the things I've been putting off; not been able to do.

A loft! where I can **finally** store all my life's collection of art tools; my typewriter; all my notes and diaries. Where I can fix up my **own** kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, living room; have windows the way I've always envisioned I wanted them. No more rented places. But **my** place! **My** windows! **My** kitchen! If I want to drive a nail I can! It'll be **my** place!

I won't have to move anymore, or listen to and give in to tyrant landlords. Chamterre! Chamterre! It's almost come true!

Two years I've waited. I'll make it beautiful! I'll be able to walk about in my half acre; sleep, work, **enjoy** as I please! Someday I'll have the creek to reclaim and "play with"—I'll get the creek to gurgling—the salmonberry patch to work at clearing...I'll wake up in the morning, whenever it's **light**, and build a fire in my wood stove...

Sure! I'll have to brave slugs and bugs and scares. Sure; sometimes my car won't start and I'll be marooned, but I'll have the plants, and trees...and **autonomy**!

Sure, maybe sometime I'll be **sick** and **old** and crippled. Sure, I'll be cold and shivering and lonesome and unhappy...sometimes, but I'll have the **earth** around me! I'll have "crying places"—nursing logs to remind me and restore my faith in living things—a **greeny** dying place.

There'll be days when the rains won't cease to come down and I'll be cold and wet and stir crazy, but there will be nature close around me and the stars and the moon above, and, if I'm cold, I can build a fire... I'll be hungry? No, I won't! Camping, I've learned how to make do and stock up on keepable foods. I've cooked with Sterno. I don't need to spend \$50 for a toilet; I've learned to use the woods! I've slept wet and soggy, but I've been safe and cozy in just a plastic lean-to...

I've been scorned and scoffed and laughed at for my ideas and tries...

I've waited! It's been two years now. I'm getting old, tired, crazed and crazy living in a slum in a place I **hate**!

Please! Chamterre?

(Written and dated on a day when I very discouraged and wondering if my dream was ever to come true? Vancouver, WA Oct. 13, 1979)

Ensuing days: "Mrs. Manager" (Rita) more or less agrees I can have the kids stay with me. I begin to wash sheets and otherwise prepare for them. I go to storage place and measure the sink and washbasin I bought. I wrassle finances and cabin fund.

I do not hear from them. Finally...

Oct. 17, Wednesday. Evening. I phone Dennis, determined to be all cheery and helpful. "Dennis! How ya doing? So **wonderful** what you've done! I'll send you some money to eat on? \$50?" (as if I had it.)

Ignoring my winey cheer, he asks, "Hey, mom? could I have maybe \$20 more for...(odds and ends)...and I didn't get a door," he says.

I told him I'd send some money and talk to him later.

I didn't find out anything about their plans to come down.

Oct. 18, Thursday. I call Bruce. He said he got the bill for the chimney. I told him I'd come and pay him, also that Dennis had thought the chimney wrong. He laughed.

I call the kids to find out once and for all what they plan to do. Get Abbie. Dennis had just left for Monroe. "Are you coming down?" I ask.

"Dunno." then... not **this** week end."

"What's Dennis doing?"

"Dunno."

"You got enough money?"

"No. Just \$25 left."

"Ooch!" I say. "Well..maybe..."

"Our phone bill!" she puts out.

"Well, I hope I didn't do that!?"

"A lot of calls to Vancouver!" comes back at me.

"Raining up there?"

"Yep."

Short call.

I hung up, debated and then called the bank and had them transfer \$50 to Dennis' and Abbie's account. For the phone bill...or my conscience...or whatever. It was the first time the bank quibbled with me about a transfer of funds. I wondered if my account was getting below the "eager to serve!" limit.

I called Abbie back to tell her, hoping, since our phone bills were running up so, it would be a short call.

Not so. She talked "forever". She said Dennis had applied for a government job open: Carson Nurseries on the Columbia River; applications open until the 22nd.

I said I'd check with the landscape guys at the office and see what I could find out about it.

Abbie was going on about the hard times she and Dennis had been through—"The earthquake (in Sylmar, CA) and Noah's tonsils—the worst things I've been through!" she said.

Though the paradox of her chatting so long running up my phone bill when I was calling to tell her I was sending money to help them pay theirs, I couldn't resist adding to it. The conversation about earthquakes had come up because Carson brought back memories to me.

"Carson?" I'd said. "Oh, that's pretty country! Woods. Forest preserve—on the edge of it—but uneasy ground there," I hinted. I'd been sent there, once, alone, on a field trip assignment by the highway department to take pictures. For they'd just had another one of their persistent huge mud slides that had moved the riverside highway there out of alignment. "The land of the crooked trees" was the Indians' name for it.



I told Abbie I'd call Dennis when he got back.

I went to the office to settle with Bruce about the chimney bill and check out what job there might be in Carson anent forestry.

Bruce. I went in. I had the check all made out for what he'd told me: "\$85 more it will be—or whatever you want to pay me," he'd said. "Where's the bill?" I asked and held my hand out for the receipts. This was in the office where his co-workers weren't supposed to know he was "moonlighting".

"Oh. Don't want you to know all my secrets!" he...joked? And he flew off as I cried after him, "I don't want to know all your secrets!"

After along wait he came back with some xeroxed copies. "I forgot about that," he said (sending the support box up on the bus) "That's \$54 more. That makes \$128 more you owe me."

Gritting my teeth in anger and trying to keep my hand from shaking I wrote out a new check. "Well..." I got up to go.

"I think you owe me a bottle," he said. I could feel my mouth fall open. "I meant to give you a 30% discount, but..."

I flew out and down the hall to my friends, the guys in Landscaping. "Boy! A bargain!?" There was silence. I paced about a bit. "Well, guys," I said, "I'm going to the liquor store and get it over with."

I got soaking wet going out into the pouring rainstorm and over to the liquor store. On the way I thought about all that Bob and Dave had done for me and never asked me for anything versus Bruce demanding a bottle of the best brandy. Bruce had told me to leave it in Landscaping and he'd pick it up there as...might cause him trouble if I brought it into office where he worked, intimating that there were spies there that there weren't in the other office.

The liquor store was crowded and in a great furor. There had been a bad wreck outside; cops were all over. I finally managed to get the bottle for Bruce and had them add two little canned cocktails for Dave and Bob—not only to thank them for what they'd done for me, but to keep them from cracking into the bottle for Bruce, which I knew those pranksters were very apt to do. "Oh, will you put these into a sack, too?" I asked. "I'm taking them back onto state property." (At that time liquor store sacks were unmarked.) "Oh, yes, yes," she said. "Have a nice day!"

I went out into the storm and back across Main Street/Highway to the Highway Department again. This time I parked, not even caring, in an official Reserved-for-VIPS parking space and, loaded with my big bag full of liquor, and dodging Marty, the new martinet "Ms. Personnel Director", who—of all times—"happened" to be out there, ducked into Landscape and deposited my big sack.

"There!" I said.

"Whatcha got?" they asked and peeked. "Hey! Dave! Look here!"

"How are you going to do this?" I asked, pacing. They had to alert Bruce his bottle was there to pick up.

"I'll call Bruce," Bob said. He did.

Suddenly the place was **alive!** Bruce came. "Hey!" he cries, peeking. Guys came from all over the building with paper cups in their hands, though Marty was prowling and seemed to have a lot of "business" to do just down the hall. They didn't open the liquor then and there, but, as I got ("illegally") on (state) phone to call Bishop, all those men drifted off through the door. I waved to them...I knew where they were going...there was a little janitor's room under the stairway...

Then out into the storm and back to the Dump. There I stood and chatted with Manager Rita and begged my mail off her (only certain hours she dispensed it.) There was a nice note from Abbie, thanking me for the money and enclosing a freight bill of \$21 for the chimney...I had thought I'd sent them the money for that. She also said that they **did** send it via that Reddaway Co. after all that talk about a strike and having to use another company and all! "If you could bring the stove up then you'd get to see the house!" the note added.

I **called Bruce** and told him the above. "That damned turkey, Woody!" he cried.

"I'll **never** buy another chimney!" I cried.

"Well, I've got another one to buy," he said. "Sure hope I don't have as much trouble with it!...Oh, I didn't charge you for that freight..."he began to mutter. I hung up fast, confused.

Evening: Call Dennis. He thanks me for the money. The chimney; when I insisted that the whole chimney stack had to go in (code) he blew **his** stack! Even when I mentioned going ahead and renting a ladder, he still objected: something about it all too heavy for the roof.

The subject got changed. Windows—"Got them in that one end. Nothing to it! Looks nice!" he said. "They work real good!"

"Hey, great!" I said. "But what about those broken panes?" (From my sleeping on top of the pile of them in the shelter?)

"Oh, not too bad—just cracked."

"Well, maybe you could use that extra little one to repair with.."

"Hey! Yeah!"

"About that job in Carson. I checked. 'Place of crazy trees'—mud slide. Guys said Mt. Adams is leaking mud down into the Columbia River (a thermal spot). Nobody will work there. Moving out. The earth moving. I **saw** it, Dennis!"
Silence.

I bumbled on. "Well, anyway, we've got a house! whatever happens—earthquakes—whatever; we've got a place we can all go to—if it just doesn't **burn down!**" I was arguing for the need for a really good chimney, you realize. "Dennis—one **spark** and all your work..."

Silence. Then, "I'm going up again Friday," he said.

"You got help?"

"No." Then he began talking about the stove, insisting I could get it in my car. Then he said they couldn't afford to come down. Broke. Has to find some work next week. "How much cash money do we have left?"

"Oh, there's...enough. Don't worry about it..."

(16.3)

He said the rains had started again. And our local papers were full of dire warnings about storms coming. "Well, I'll let you go," I said.

After I hung up I realized I'd forgotten to tell him that I'd gotten the sink and basin, so...

Oct. 19, Friday I wrote a post card: "Got sink and washbasin. Don't duplicate. Am working on the stove problem. Will try and see if I can get it in car," and went to a great deal of trouble to take it to the post office to mail to keep Rita from reading it in the outgoing mail at the Dump.

The chimney: All that controversy about the freight bill; I get a duplicate copy of goods-received-form from Abbie showing her signature and the date Oct. 21. I assume this means that she paid it.

I call my friend, Pam, where the stove is stored, and make arrangements to go over there the next day and measure it. Her husband had also gotten into this wood stove bonanza the energy crunch had brought on, so I figured she she knew when she was very discouraging about my being able to get the stove in my car.

I worked long and hard on the cabin finances. The chimney has cost us \$256.63 already—and it isn't up yet!

Oct. 20, Saturday. I go over to Pam's, where, over tea, I squirm in the tricky situation of knowing they expected me to get my stove from her husband. I end up by telling her the Bruce experiences, making a good story of it. "Maybe I should have bought from Steve?" I dissemble. "What a fiasco!" she says. "Looks like you got took!"

As I am taking the measurements, Steve and a friend, come and go, working on delivery of probably foraged alder wood, for which there is a hot market too, with all these new wood stoves. They utterly ignore me, except when I worry about getting that heavy stove into my car. "Don't ask me!" Steve says, "I hurt my back!" although they seem to be moving alder logs quite easily.

Stove: Everyone had assured me that the weight of the stove in my car wouldn't matter. "After all, I ride in your car with you and I weigh 190 pounds!" Dennis had said...I found directions in the stove that it should have two inches of sand in the bottom for fire base. "Where am I going to get that?" I'd asked Bruce. "Why, go down to the river!" he said....

Pam: "You plan to cook with your stove?" "Oh, yes!" She has a wood stove hitched up in her kitchen. "Well, takes some **doing**," she says dubiously.

All this "energy crisis" bringing on a big boom in wood stoves, and the news full of alder wood selling for \$85 a cord and guys like Steve sneaking into woods and ripping it off to sell, I think how too bad it is, Dennis needing money so badly, that he hasn't a pick up with all that alder we have up there.

I get so upset about it I call Abbie that night and mention it.

"Dennis says our wood pile of alder is smaller!" she says, "and Dennis can't find his axe!"

Oct. 21, Sunday. Forenoon. I call again. Get Abbie. I report that the measurements seem ok, and we chat all upset about the wood stealing, as she says Dennis and kids are still asleep.

Later: Dennis calls me. He said he not going to cabin the next week; has to find work. He also needs \$20 more for styrene? for big A-windows. "I'd like to **finish**, plumbing and all, **by Christmas!**" he says. and that there are two inch puddles by the living room sky light.

"Great!" I say.

"Oh, I'll fix it," he says. And then goes on to say his "troubles are not up **there** but **here**." "Hunh?" "My **family!** feeding them and so on!" he cries.

I spend the day writing letters: to Lu McNabb, asking her is she'd keep an eye on the place and see that no one is stealing from our woodpile; to both Mike and Dennis about the latest on the cabin. I tell Dennis that I will try to make it up there with the stove.

Oct. 22, Monday. I work hard and long on cabin records, files, finances, and so on, cleaning everything out: year's end summation.


Oct. 23, Tuesday. I battle the stove trip promise trying to figure where I can stay. Abbie, baby sitting, has a house full of kids; I have no money for a motel; the cabin would be too cold...a very difficult quandary and I get very depressed.

That night. 10 p.m. On the dot, start of cheaper calling time, Phone rings: It's Dennis. "Good news! It's like a miracle!" he says. "All fell into place—perfect! I'm going back to work for Sears—\$8 an hour! More than I can make anyplace else! I needed a job—just decided I'd go back and try them first. They welcomed me with open arms!... It's just temporary—will be laid off before Christmas—mid-December—six or seven weeks.. I can work on your house on week ends!" "Hey! You can get the plumbing fixtures at Sears! Discount!" "Yeah!" "And delivery?" "Sure! Monroe!" "Even to Sultan Estates?" "Sure! And we're going to get food stamps—\$200 worth!" "When?" "Tomorrow!" "Carson?" "Oh, it's not a degree (in forestry) job anyway." "Did Sears ask to see your degree?" I quip. "Well, that's just great! Just great! You need any money?" "No no! Everything's fine! Just can't believe how everything worked out—perfectly!" "Uh...should I bring the stove up?" "Well...I really don't need it now...yet..." "But...I wanta...see..." "Well...uh...I guess..." "Uh...uh...is the electric wire in?...Is Abbie still baby sitting?" "Hunh? Whadda ya mean?" "Well, if you're going to get the fixtures, I wouldn't have to stay, would I?" "Hey, no! And you could get to see it!" "You want me to send you money for the fixtures?" "No. I'll buy them and you can pay me back...I'm still trying for the plexiglas..." "I went through all the cabin files," I said. "It's amazing! (What we've done.) Gee! I'm glad you kids are going to be able to eat!" "Yeah! We're going to have steaks tomorrow!" "I'm sorry," I said, "about my...inhospitality...here, but..." I told him about Rita and all her injunctions. "Well, you won't be there for long!" he cries.

Oct. 14, Wednesday. I go to office. Bob and Dave assure me that the weight of the stove won't hurt my car. "Those little cars are made to carry four passengers, or 800 pounds," they tell me. And they get my hint that I'll need help to load up the stove. They say they will help.

So. I start planning my trip up. I will get to see the cabin before I got to California! Also...I find something about chimneys: seems little stoves need insulated pipe because they won't draw with a long, cold chimney. I feel justified.

Oct. 25, Thursday. To river. I go down to the (Columbia) River to get sand for my stove. It is a cold, blustery day and that crude park there by the river deserted. The sand is all wet, and I find it very heavy to lug up the flotsam cluttered beach and steep embankment to the car, but I manage a bucketful or two.

 This is more a romantic thing to do than a practical one. I'm sure there is a source of sand nearer the cabin, but the Columbia River has many memories for me. I want a souvenir. I do not linger there; it is too cold and blustery...and I wonder what that sailboat is doing out there in such weather...

After I get home, the janitor/handyman (Rita's strange son) finds me a box, which turns out to be an old wooden drawer. I put the sand in it by one of the old, clanky steam radiators, and I spend days stirring and drying it and—later—straining it. I decide I'll take it up when I take the stove up, though I risk Dennis' scoffing at me.

Oct. 26, Friday. Evening. Call to Dennis to let him know I'm coming up. He answers, "Tired." (back at work now.) "Same old grind," "Well, thought I'd tell you—ask—you. I'll bring the stove up next Friday..ok? Guys said that car would stand 400/800 pounds...that they'd help me load it. I found I **can** get it in." "Oh, really!?" "But I can't drive straight through (to cabin) though I do want to see!" "Well," he says, "I'm not going up **this** week end...but I thought I'd go up **next** Saturday." "Oh. Ok. That's what I wanted to know. I can't **unload** and...I can't drive quite **that** far in one night...though, as long as it's in **my** car...keep going..." "Well, you can stay **here!**" "No no, I can call Bud and Paula...one night..." "Oh no, **here.**" "But Abbi...kids, baby sitting...school..." "No no. Ok." "Ok. Is it ok then? Will take me awhile to get ready..have to pay bills on first..." "Ok." "Ok, I'll be there! Unless..." I began to laugh..."Sure strikes me funny—Lo.L.(little old lady) driving up with a **stove** in her car..and oh! I got some sand from the river..." Silence. "Ya know? stove needs **sand**..." Silence. "Raining like hell here," he said. "Oh? Well, maybe...next week end..." "You can stay **Sunday**, too," he had said. I hung up. Committed.

Oct. 31, Wednesday. Letter from Lu McNabb saying everything ok about the wood, and that Irene Brown's place sold; new people coming in; that Dennis had covered the water pipe (as requested) and been rain all week up there.



END OF OCTOBER 1979

NOVEMBER 1979



Nov. 1, Thursday. The stove had been my first major purchase for the cabin. It had been sitting in a cardboard crate in the garage long before my move to the Dump. Now it was in a junk-filled shed over at Pam's. She at work; she had left me an access key at her neighbor's..

I went over and started moving all the mill-ends firewood thrown in there out of the way. I managed to pull out the stove and began slitting off the carton, getting it ready for Bob and Dave...and superstitiously chasing off a hovering black cat.

They came about 1:30—on their lunch hour. The stove went in the back seat—just barely. No problem. We stood and chatted, they full of big news (of a nature that not pertain here.) I starved, and regretted very much that their offer to take me to lunch at a very nice restaurant fell through. Nice guys. But they found they didn't have enough time left.

And I wanted to get over to our mutual friend, Jeff, at the service station and get gas and show him what we three had wrought: putting a **stove** in my car! But he wasn't there.

So I went back to the Dump.

Nov. 2, Friday

TRIP NORTH WITH STOVE



This time a fast, hurried trip to take up the stove, sand and sink and washbasin.

It dawned windy and rainy and there was an unsettling weather forecast. But, at least, it wasn't raining by the time I got packed and set off **just before noon.**

I chose to go my freeway-by-pass back route and enjoyed the beauty of the fall foliage on the non-urban southern half of the route—around the foothills of Mt. St. Helens. Pretty country! Almost pristine; unspoiled.

I went straight on through without incident, this time bypassing old aunties and arrived at Alki 4:15 p.m. 179 miles.

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Memories gripped and stabbed at me, as I, the only one still alive—(my husband, Ed, and all his family and our only daughter, dead)—drove through old haunts, specifically; as I drove along the beach at Alki I was thinking about Ed and how he used to walk on that beach. Just then it really began to rain and the car radio began a song I'd never heard before: "I hear the rain calling out your name." It was spooky—as if Ed had read my mind and was talking to me.

Because Dennis wouldn't be home from work yet, I stopped at the Alki store and was just about to call Abbie and see if anything she needed when she walked in, picked up some item and went, saying Dennis was home and she had to get back.

I followed soon after and was much cheered at the difference from last time I there. Though the baby-sitted kids still there—and the house, therefore, a mess—everything was now happiness and excitement. What a difference a job and income make!

Abbie, who loves to bake, was delighted with the big sack of walnuts Brian (a friend in Vancouver) had given me from his trees. But the big block of cheese I'd brought to these cheese lovers was not needed; they'd just bought two! While we waited for the mother to come pick up her kids, Dennis filled me in:

He now had daytime working hours, versus his former night shift and said it was so much better. And he said he was making plenty of money and Sears just loved him because he does his work and doesn't goof off; that they were getting \$200 worth of food stamps and all was well. Their larder showed it; they were very well stocked!

Everyone was all excited: we'd all go up to the cabin the next day. Dennis explained that he planned to stop on the way and get some things for the chimney and I was to go on. Later, I went with Abbie and Noah to get fish and chips for a quickie dinner. They insisted on paying for mine saying they owed me some money!

That evening was very pleasant. Dennis and I got out the Sears catalog and "shopped" for bathroom fixtures. And Abbie dug out Dennis' University diploma to show me. How I exulted! At last! I wanted to buy a leather carrying case for it, but they just scoffed and Abbie threw it back into the cluttered drawer from which she'd unearthed it.

Nov. 3, Saturday. Everyone was late getting up. Abbie fixed us a marvelous big breakfast, complete with homemade cinnamon rolls. I, as usual, was confused as to who was doing what, where and when as they all flew around preparing to go.

The weather was wet and rainy. Dennis had said he was going to stop and get chimney braces; he wanted to get the chimney up that day. I kept crying out, hopefully, that it seemed to be clearing up, but then Dennis said, "I've changed my mind; it's too wet and slippery to work on the roof—I'll work inside today." "What's he doing?" I asked Abbie as Dennis lugged big crates out of the shed. "Oh he'd taking the chimney out to the car," she said.

I felt them out about my maybe staying up at the cabin overnight.

"It's—er—not that closed in yet." Dennis said. Abbie wanted to come with me and drive my car up. I demurred; not only had she not driven it since that shift needle gone, but I begged the car was too overloaded already without the weight of an extra person.

"Well, meet you up there," Dennis said.

"Ok."

Cabin Return

Since Dennis hadn't stopped to shop, we all arrived with the two heavily loaded cars about the same time. All that rain all the way up—when we got to Monroe, it was the only place it **wasn't** raining! "I should have..but..." Dennis said.

Abbie and the kids were as excited as I. They hadn't seen what Dennis had done, either. Dennis picked up the stove and carried it in in his arms! He had warned us, "The place is a mess; all the construction mess; I didn't have time to clean it up."

So it was. But we were all so excited! So pleased and thrilled! Even the kids, who had never shown much love for the place.

I just kept gasping as I saw my funny little "witch's hut" coming true. "I can't believe it! I can't believe it! It's like magic, Dennis! I didn't know you did all that!" The windows were all in, even the little bathroom one; the porch floors all laid. "It's magic!" I ran around opening windows. They worked just right! "I didn't know you had the back (wall) in!" I cried. "Even the skylights!"

"Even the loft. Come and see the loft, mom," Dennis said. The loft they weren't going to let me have. Even the loft! The stairs not done; he had put a ladder there to go up. Dennis held the ladder and put his hand out to help me up. "No no!" I disdained any help; I wanted the first look on my own. I climbed up—though scared—all by myself.

"Oh, my gosh!" I cried. "It's just exactly as I'd envisioned it! A nice room! And the view! I can see clear down to the cul-de-sac! And north light on the left (skylight) for my desk!...and a place for a cot...over here!" We were all happy and busy and flying around in the loft.

We went back down. Exultantly I grabbed a broom and began to sweep. "Don't mind me!" I cried. "Just having fun! Been waiting two years for this!" Sarah grabbed the little broom and began to sweep, too.

It was a wild and busy time. Everybody was doing something until Dennis began to bitch that everybody was getting in his way. We all flew outside. Then I saw the kids lugging alder logs into the shelter like busy little gnomes. "Isn't it amazing what kids can do?" I yelled at Abbie. "We get \$6! ten cents a log!" Noah cried.

Later, Abbie was helping Dennis who was about to put the chimney support up. To get the kids, who were getting tired and cross, out of the way, I suggested we go down to the creek. To my surprise they came. Before they'd claimed the creek was **boring!** We were having fun splashing around when Abbie yelled, "Lorna! Dennis needs you!"

I scrambled up the muddy hill—and was very touched; "Hey! you've got the stove all set up!" "Surprise!" Of course we couldn't build a fire in it, the rest of the chimney not up, but there was a glow—from **us** as we all stood around and **beamed**.

Then more wild busyness, everybody doing their own thing—and getting in each other's way! It wasn't all high spirits; some little building mistakes/accidents I was discovering and Dennis "explaining". Understandable. I was reminded of Brian laughing when I'd told him about mistakes we were making: "Takes time to learn!" he had laughed.

I made a **very** busy Dennis stop and pose for some pictures. All busy, busy, busy. Abbie went to the store and got us some take-out chicken.

The first accident

Then it was getting late and everyone was getting tired and cross. Dennis had moved all the beds and stuff up to the loft, and the kids had gone up there to play. This worried me, for they were getting silly and wild and there were no railings on the loft yet. Then they wanted to come down.

"Sarah first!" someone said. "Here, grandma!" Sarah called from the top of the ladder, "Catch Lion!" (her stuffed animal.) "Ok," I said and she threw it and took a step to start down the ladder...

I stood frozen as the ladder began to fall and she with it—that little body hurtling through the air—7½ feet—but somehow miraculously free of the ladder, which could have broken her leg, had her foot caught. I stood transfixed; but I saw she was falling free as...

Abbie came running and scooped her up and started lamentations, while Dennis roared at Abbie, "Don't **move** her!" Sarah began to spit blood. "You got water?" Abbie cried as both Dennis and I refrained now from interfering.

"Yes." I went and got the water (that they'd scoffed at me for bringing).

Well—finally—she was ok; she'd just bitten her tongue. I heard myself say, "And that's why grandma says **no kids in the loft!**" Silence.

Subdued, we all went back to the tasks of getting ready to go.

Earlier, at one point, I had gone to join Abbie, where she was sitting on the balcony-like (west) porch that overlooked the woods. "Oh, it's so nice here! she said, chin in hand.

"Yes, and it will be even nicer when I cook up a big pot of spaghetti and you guys all come and..."

"Humph! When we get rid of this (indicating the cabin) you won't see us again! (They had been talking about going to Canada or something) Well...maybe...Christmas Christmas...or something..."

Leaving (cabin)

I began cleaning off the food shelf. There were mouse turds all over, even in the sawdust the kids were gathering to take home for some reason. See?" I said, "those little black things? Mouse turds. May I throw this sawdust out?" "Oh, yukky!" Noah's eyes got wide.

"You may throw it out," said Abbie. Then..."Lorna! I think I will take all this picnic stuff home." "Why?" "Oh...it's messy..."

"But the whole point," I said, "is that I want some stuff here; no more of this hauling stuff back and forth...I'm beginning...to move in."

"Humph. Well, maybe we can put it down in the shelter." But she and the kids had filled it up with wood.

Now Dennis intervened with "I want the hot plate left here." "Why?" "Because...when I come up to work...maybe I might want to stay all night."

Abbie got furious! "Well...I thought you'd come, too," he said. Whatever...she left the stuff there.

I hated to have to leave. Dennis had said something about coming back on Sunday and finishing up. "I might just stay here..." I ventured.

"Well, there aren't any windows up there...and..."

"Ok ok. Then I'll drive back. Oh no! It's **dark!**—that Evergreen bridge turn-off—I always miss it!"

Dennis was impatient with me. "All you have to do is **watch** for it. It's that dip in the road."

"But there are **two** dips..." Dennis just went on with what he was doing.

As we were leaving, "But the chimney hole—it's all open—rain..." I said. "On all your nice new flooring and the stove..."

"Well, I can't get up there **now!**" he snapped.

Can't you...uh...No, I'm serious! put the sink under it?"

"It'll splash," he said, "...Well...ok ok..." He got some plastic and covered the drip area.

Leaving. The kids left first, Dennis driving. Abbie said she didn't like to drive at night. And I went back in to close up, finish up, get my stuff, prepare to stop and talk to McNabbs and drive back to Seattle **in the dark**. (I didn't like driving at night, either!)

Return to Seattle

My trip back was—strange. After a brief talk with Lu McNabb, I set off. On that long overpass out of Monroe a light to the left caught my eye. I kept wrenching my neck around to see what it was before I hit the freeway just ahead. It was a gorgeous sight!—the full moon rising over the North Cascades.

But what a strange phenomena! the clouds and moon made a formation like two big eyes peeking over the mountains. This, oddly enough, in the same place and seen from the same viewpoint as my last trip out of Monroe, when it had looked like **one** big eye staring at me. What is this? I marveled; every time I leave Monroe like "the eye of God" watching me.

I went on. I was terribly tired and disconcerted. I knew I shouldn't be driving—too tired. Speeding on the freeway I kept anxiously looking for that "dip" and the sign leading to the off ramp and bridge. (Oh help me, friendly moon!) Too late—I realized I'd taken the wrong "dip" (again!) and was lost and locked in by freeway admonitions.

I drove for miles in the dark for about an hour—utterly lost, only realizing that I was in Kirkland vicinity, miles north of where I should be and no way to escape but to retrace way I'd come. I was only going in circles, weeping with rage and frustration.



I finally drew up at a drive-in. "Hey, gal, where in hell am I?" I called out as a young gal stuck her head out the service window. "They all do it," she said, and drew me a map. "Look for a big sign that says 'Seattle,'" she said.

Again I went around and around in a maze in the dark. I could find no "Seattle" sign. The only thing that oriented me was the full moon. I knew I had to keep it on my left, so, depending on that, I defied the "Everett North" wording on a sign and chanced taking it, anyway. Again I stopped; an ice cream parlor this time. "Oh, you have to go back," this gal told me. "Can I make a U turn out here (in front)?" "Oh sure." At last I had the moon in the right place and was on 405 headed the right way.

I drove blindly, a million lights in my eyes, sobbing with weariness and agonizing about how the kids would be so worried about me. I revenged myself by mentally composing furious letters to the Highway Department for misleading signing. At last there it was, the "Spokane St. Freeway" sign and, to the right, a huge neon sign that said "Clyde" (my dead father's name) while the car radio broke into a song "We can make it, gal!" (Thanks, dad!)

I stopped a block from the kids' house to pull myself together and to clean out the mess in the front seat a bit. I had a small bottle of wine in the trunk of the car; a drink would sure taste good when I got there. The condition I was in the kids would think I was drunk, but I wasn't; hadn't had a nip—just tired. I'd take the wine in and share it.

I opened the trunk of the car. **What a mess!** The bottle of whiskey that I usually carry on trips for visiting, emergencies, no-store-open, et cetera was spilled all over! The stench, of course, for someone claiming sobriety, was...not helpful. I mopped it up the best I could with paper towels and just threw them in the gutter, feeling like a fool, as people strolled by in that proper-appearing residential neighborhood. Then I drove on and pulled up at the kids' house, where they could see my car from their window.

Nobody came out. Nobody showed any interest. I went in. Dennis was watching TV. Abbie was in the kitchen. I began to tell my wild tale.. Nobody raised a head or listened to me. Only Noah looked at me, bug-eyed, as I tried to tell about the moon phenomena.

Nobody answered me or spoke to me, even when I began to dispute the directions they'd given me. Dennis went on stonily watching TV. Nobody seemed to have worried in the least about me; the only reaction I felt was that I sure was **dumb**. I went out in the kitchen to watch Abbie making tacos, which she was lavishly covering with the "unwanted" cheese (I'd intended to take home with me) though nobody seemed interested in eating. "May I?" I asked and sat and sipped at wine nobody would share with me and wondered what all that thudding silence was about.

That night bedded in room with Noah, I couldn't sleep (he told his mother the next morning he couldn't sleep, either) but, while he was asleep, I crept out into the kitchen and stood at the kitchen window and sipped at the wine and cried and cried, feeling the haunts and ghosts that house always gave me, until I realized Abbie was pussyfooting around in the house. I snuck back to bed.

What brought that cry-sis on was the kids broaching a very difficult proposition to me. (We **did** talk, finally, that evening.) They were anxious to get out of that house and move elsewhere; get on with Dennis' hope for a career in forestry. He was feeling more and more pressured to find a job more consistent with his plans for the future, but someone had to mind that house until it was sold.

Would I be willing to "house sit" if Dennis found a job elsewhere and they had to move? They knew I hated that place and all its memories and I hated and feared that Alki area fast deteriorating into slum and noise and crime. It was a very hard proposal for me to even consider. It certainly blew all **my** plans. I guess we'd ended that night deciding "to sleep on it"; that's why none of us could sleep?

We did get a few who's-going-to-do-what in cabin authority misunderstandings aired a bit, too.

Dennis had been expounding on his work schedule plans—"...and then I will start on the electricity," he said.

"Oh, that will come later," I said.

He and Abbie eyed each other. "Oh? Am I being dismissed?" Dennis asked.

"I am not **putting you down**; no, not dismissed. It's just that electricians are electricians..."

"You think he can't **do it**?" Abbie cried.

"No no. But nobody but **you** can do that drain field...and **you** know about the **trees**! The guys at the office said 'What a good idea! To save the trees!' I'd rather **you** did **that**," I said.

Later..."I guess I'll do the drain field," Dennis said.

He wanted to take me shopping the next day—to see if we could find some second hand plumbing fixtures and maybe a door for the west end wall: the idea being that with two doors, the place could be closed for the winter. "Let's buy some locks!" I said. "You can keep one key and I'll take the other and get a copy made for Mike."

"Hey, yeah!" Dennis said.

Nov. 4, Sunday. The next morning, before Dennis and I set out, he said to Abbie, "Well, I was wrong...again! I made the hole for the soil stack in the wrong place." "You **did**?" she cried. "And the front door hole too big..and the T&G upside down..and the stove over too far..and the chimney's not right."

"You said..." I began...

"Oh...well...as long as we've got it..."

"But I thought you said...you didn't go along with the guys..."

"Oh well...the guy wires..."

Before we left, he asked me, "Ya got the **books**?" eyeing my parcel.

"Yeah, the books are **there**," I said, and pointed to where I'd put them down in the living room.

Dennis and I set out to shop—in his car, he driving, because, he said, he knew of several second hand outlets and they were quite far away in obscure places in the industrail area—around Lake Union, as it turned out.

We drove all over, but everything was closed. "Maybe they're all in church," I quipped, it being about church time. "But I'm **sure** Noah and I came down on a Sunday," he said. "Uh...the sign on the door said 'only on week days' I ventured, gingerly. But Dennis didn't bristle; he seemed calm and sure and...well..." more like his old self. "Well, guess I've made some mistakes," he said good naturedly.

"You sure know your way around in all this maze of streets!"

"I **live** here!" he said with an edge of bitterness.

"Well, it's sure nice to just sit and be driven. I can see the scenery and..."

It was a very nice tour in the sunshine, even if we didn't find anything.

Back at Alki I got short shrift at try to use the phone—Abbie busy on it—but managed to make a last call to Bud and Paula. "Well, guess I'd better go," I said. "Wonder if I can get gas?" (The gas shortage.) Dennis didn't know of anyplace open. Nor had Bud and Paula when I'd asked them. I dug out my Automobile Club card, guaranteeing "24 hour information service" and called them. No answer. "Well..." I went and put on my traveling clothes and started to bring my stuff out.

"When are you coming back?" Dennis asked.

"Oh...spring." Nothing was said about Thanksgiving; they'd already mentioned they were going to friends' in Spokane for that holiday.

"Well...guess I'd better get going..."

"Need any help?" Dennis asked.

"No, no, I can manage." The kids were barefoot doing coloring books on the floor...by the time they put their shoes on...

"Bye, grandma," they said, hardly looking up.

Dennis went out with me. I picked up a shard of broken beer bottle where there once used to be Ed's neat white picket gate and handed it to Dennis, grimly, thinking of the kids' bare feet. It was that kind of a neighborhood, now.

"Well, thanks, Dennis," and I gave him a big hug, and left.

It was about 11 a.m.

Trip back to Vancouver

I did my usual delayed, nostalgia-fraught, take-a-deep-breath-and-go leaving of Alki/West Seattle area. And then I hit the road. No gas; I'd just have to go as far as I could get. No food. I was starving! only a few little things to nibble on in the car. Again I'd just have to...whatever.

It was Puyallup before I found a gas station open—just as I was running out. I went on...

In Tacoma vicinity I pulled off and went in that chain hardware store and looked at faucets. Dennis had told me to find what I wanted and send them to him. I wrote down the model number of the faucets I wanted and went on.

All the time I was battling that proposition the kids had made to me, which we still hadn't settled when I left—about their wanting me to leave Vancouver and move into Ed's house and free them to go ahead with their own plans, now that Dennis had gotten his degree from the University, their reason for being in Seattle. I fought the pros and cons as I drove.

The cabin, so nearly finished now—not like before. It would be possible to escape to it every week end or so from Alki; I would have rent free dwelling until such time as Snohomish county would allow me to move into the cabin; it would get me out of Vancouver and out of that Dump, where things were getting more and more impossible, the latest being the imminent sale of the place. I'd be "halfway" moved to the cabin—not have those long drives all the time. And so on and so on. Perhaps...it would be...the best solution?

I had decided.

I pulled off the road and scribbled a hasty note to Dennis while I could still write; I knew I'd be too tired when I got home. "I have decided." I wrote. And then I told him where he could get those faucets in Seattle. I went on. It was one hell of a trip.

About twenty miles out of Vancouver, I pulled into that luxury "Oak Tree" restaurant, intending to treat myself with my last few dollars. The food was lousy and it cost me eleven bucks (including one madcap martini.)

I got lost again trying to find my way back to the freeway and from then on it was sheer hell. I was so sleepy I thought I'd die...and a terrible rainstorm began...grease on the windshield and mesmerizing windshield swipes...headlights in my eyes. I was weeping with fatigue as one mile marker after another crept by. One of the longest twenty miles I ever drove in my life.

I drove into that horrid slum about 6 p.m. and had to drag all that stuff in and down that long hall, afraid of vandalism if left in car. I waited till...

After 10 p.m. And then I phoned. Abbie answered. Dennis was asleep. "Tell Dennis I've reconsidered," I said. "I'll 'house sit'".

Nov. 7, Wednesday. I worked on a summary of where I stood:

—Dennis is paying back what he borrowed for the car—

—Abbie says I have the pool key; I can't find it—

—Credit union statement comes; I have \$1034 left on cabin loan.

I get my plane tickets from Mike!

Afternoon: Abbie calls. She said she got the bill for the chimney delivery. This really puzzles me: I thought that was all over. "Dennis is going shopping this week end and wants the money sent up." She sounded very blithe and happy...about the cabin and all.

—I get the pictures I took at the cabin. I am quite pleased with them.

Nov. 9, Friday. I take my pictures and scrapbook into the office. Everyone just raves about what we've accomplished. I have a wonderful time gloating to everyone.

Nov. 13, Tuesday. I have been working on cabin finances. I sent Dennis money. The last of my \$5000 savings—I drew it out today, but I have a home! I am waiting for that chimney freight bill so I can close all this up.

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Evening: I call Dennis. He reports that the chimney's in, the stove all hooked up, the plexiglas and skylight all done! He bought a dead bolt lock, stovepipe and guy wires and gives me the amount of money spent. No, Bishop, (who'd said he was going up and see the cabin) had never come up. "I'm off the roof! Next week I'll light up the stove!" he cries.

Hallelujah!

Nov. 15, Thursday. Phone rings. GTE calling from Snohomish County. "How far along is your house?" And pry, pry, pry. I get quite snappish with her.

In news: Big forest fire near site of cabin! Oh no! Just when we get it finished!

Year end work summary on cabin

I get all in order: all the financial papers. All the papers lying on the desk represent \$5000/\$6000 converted into a cabin!

Surprises:

What seemed like major calamities a year ago now more like very lucky smooth sailing! We were very lucky—"got down off that roof" and all that other dangerous work without anybody getting hurt!

—And Dennis did a excellent job of "husbandry" on cabin funds.

—Time surprises: what seemed like eons was actually only a year. And —Dennis and Abbie got those foundations in "in their spare time", the actual working time on which amounted to only two weeks, though it seemed so long.

I found myself laughing at how stingy and tight I was. That first \$100 I sent Dennis I thought my world would end! But, in review, I was soon sending him "hundreds" and "thousands" without a qualm. We **did** hit rather a smooth stride on the money dispersal eventually.

Nov. 17, Saturday. Evening. I call curious to know if Dennis got the fire going in the cabin and about the forest fire **outside** the cabin. No, they hadn't gone to the cabin yet (so no report on the stove) They are not going to Spokane for Thanksgiving; they decided it was too risky, not having snow tires. Dennis said he could hardly wait till he gets off at Christmas.

He said they paid the freight bill. I tell him some of the financial summaries I'd found out. The fire? Oh, just a slash burn. (Logging cleanup practice)

I work some more on the cabin financial summary, make up a report on it and mail with a short letter to Dennis.

More cabin summary: I discover I've made about 15 or 16 trips north at about an average of \$70 a trip. Adding in the costs of what it cost me to not be on the spot (travel, phone calls, motels, etc.) the cabin will come to about what Mike predicted—\$10,000?

I looked at the roomful of papers I'd been working on dwindled down to one neat little pile and gave a sigh of relief.

Thanksgiving day

I was invited to Rita (the manager's) family dinner and the next day to my friend, Pam's.

Call to Dennis: They'd stayed home for the day; were glad they hadn't gone as there was snow in the pass. No, they hadn't been back to the cabin.

I read off some of my figures to him and lauded him again for a good job! He mentioned something about getting me into Ed's house, but we didn't go into it. It was a good talk.

Then I called him back with a correction. "That figure—\$9000—includes the price of the land," I said. "Yeah, Abbie was wondering about that." (i.e. he didn't spend that much.)

In news: Bottom fallen out of building boom.

I gloated at having predicted that—but—what wry timing!

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Cabin. That June phone call talk with Dennis was the crisis, the peak, the turning point in the cabin building? That week end was the closest we ever came to calling it all off. I served Dennis an ultimatum and let them stew in it all week end. It seems as if from that moment—all that family comment we'd had, both my family and Abbie's—that their attitude changed and they decided to make their own decision—perhaps a rash one, but, at least a decision. And one was needed at that point. And they carried it out—at least to the promise/offer to get the cabin to a certain "closing stage".

Going through my notes, I was struck by how utterly alone I was in that crisis, no **personal** champion, so to speak. And the stigma that Jack Hall made me bear by evicting me on top of everything else. The family all **assumed** I must have done something **terrible**, none of them renting at the time and not caught in that new landlords fun and games. (Condominiums.)

All in all my notes gave me a rather different slant on things.

"Oh, wonderful!" Marilyn cries.

"What's he doing?" Mike asked. (Work he meant, I assumed.)

"Oh, he's back at Sears, making good money. Says he **could** go into management but doesn't want to."

"But what's he **doing**?" Mike pressed.

"Shipping department," I said. Silence. "He prefers it." Silence.

No more said about that. I hung up baffled.

\$1 \$2 \$3 \$4 \$5 \$6 \$7 \$8 \$9 \$10 \$11 \$12 \$13 \$14 \$15

Dec. 8, Saturday. I send off money for renewal of building permit and for Sultan Estates dues.

I write out drafts on the last of the Credit Union funds. The savings are gone. The Credit Union shares are gone. All possible cash ins are gone. I have only \$100 left in checking fund and property taxes, due in March, will take half of that.

~~\$~~ I'm wiped out in cabin funds and I'm still not there! ~~\$~~

"No no, not now."

He went on and on about how cozy and nice it was and how well the stove drew and the wood burned. Pouring rain up there, but no problem **now!**" he crowed.

"Oh, Dennis! You made my day!"

"A small leak in roof, but easily fixed. Will not go up next week end-Christmas shop, but later I will spend a month up there and do the other work. Easy stuff" he said.

Hallelujah!

"Chamterre"
Year's end: sum up and changes

Dec. 14, Friday. I had planned, after I moved up there, on earning extra money by using my expertise gained on doing our cabin by working out of my new "studio"; all that building—I could do house plans like I'd done for cabin for neighbors.

But that's no more. One: my eyes and hands are so bad I can't draw anymore.

Two: Nobody's building up there anymore, or they have gotten contractors or just moving in mobile homes.—i.e. no need for anyone to have house plans drawn up. Three: the influx of corporate developers just too competitive for an old amateur like me.

The community club I'd counted on had disintegrated during the delay we'd been put to. I thought I'd have nice friends of my age and social class up there. But no more the retirement contemporaries. Irene sold and left; the McNabbs can't last much longer—he ill; Mr. Doochie dying. Dwayne Chase turned out to be a fly-by-night contractor on his own...suddenly gone.

The rest—the new people moving in— were young people. Strangers. Indifferent, antagonistic, noisy and selfish. Dogs all over the place now. And the swimming pool usurped by kids and intruding teenagers.

Things were not the same; changes in the time it took us to build.

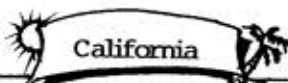
Dec. 15, Saturday. I sent Dennis \$100 more for plumbing fixtures and called and told him. He said he'd gotten them but had run a bit short.

He said they had their Christmas tree up and it was snowing. "One more day at Sears and then I'm going up and work on the cabin!"

"The cabin fund is run out," I told him. "From now on we'll have to borrow."

December 18th

Dave and Bob took me to the airport and I went to California for eleven days.



During my visit to Mike and Marylyn we didn't talk too much about the cabin. Too busy.

"Seems the most practical thing would be for Dennis and Abbie to go live in the cabin while they're finishing it," one of them remarked. My short answer implied "not feasible" and nothing more was said about it nor was it brought up again. It was an idea that had never come up before, but there were too many complexities, factors, diverse opinions and—well just too long a story. I let it go.

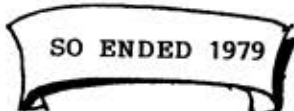


Dec. 30, Sunday. I back from trip and try to call Dennis and Abbie, but unable to get.

Dec. 31, Monday. I call and get Dennis. They went to Yakima for Christmas (Abbie's family). They are doing ok; getting \$118 a week unemployment. No, he didn't get the water heater; sent in the wrong order number. We didn't talk long, it "prime time" on telephone and that night New Year's and I very involved in new crises in my immediate perimeter that didn't pertain to cabin, except in the sense that things were getting "thicker and thicker" in Vancouver and I felt my time there drawing to a close.

The cabin gave me hope. (Thank God for it! I thought) as all hell broke loose in Vancouver; I was caught in new unbelievable real estate chicaneries.

This time I wasn't as naive or meek. I went to battle—another story!



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JANUARY 1980

New Year's Day...in Vancouver—alone. Dennis and Abbie have gone to Yakima.

- I ponder on...need for cabin money. Mike and Marylyn rather hinted I'd better go back to work? But how could I—now? I tried to find another job in Vancouver—none...escape route out of Vancouver via move to Ed's house? • Be ages before that house sold and Dennis finds a job...

Jan. 3, Thursday. Call Dennis. New year's; he says he's had about enough of that last year. "Me, too," I say.

"I'll need more money," Dennis says.

"Well, I've got a thousand left," I lie.

"That won't even be enough to finish the septic field," he says.

We chat about other things—Ed's house, etc.—and hang up.

Jan. 6, Sunday. Early evening. Dennis calls. He wants more money; needs more wood for bathroom wall, and kitchen and back steps. "Sarah and I went up there...creek...go up tomorrow..." (follows a long illegible scribbling of telephone notes)...

"I'm really being ripped off here," I tell him. "Sorry I had to be such a saddy."

"We'll get you out...by March first!" he cries. "Sarah helped me. We got the back steps in."

Jan. 7, Monday. I went to the credit union and cashed a draft for \$50 and then waited to see gal about loan procedure. Finally decided on \$200. Sob. Brings me down to \$900.

On my way to the bank to deposit it so I could transfer to Dennis, it began to snow, making me worry about Dennis. (Snowing up there?) It seemed as if every time he planned to work at cabin something happened so he couldn't.

Home and phone. I tell him about the money and ask about the snow.

"Nope. the snow wouldn't change his plans; but the car wouldn't start. Seems that always happens when we are broke. I'd like to be up there and see it in the snow," he said, and added that the firewood there was getting low... I warned him that the money was fast going, which seemed to irritate him

Jan. 8, Tuesday.

I find myself making a list of frustrations suffered in trying to find me a retirement home:

- I wanted a place by salt water. No.
 - I want to be settled before I'd 65 and too old. No.
 - I wanted to stay in my nice triplex until I moved to cabin. No.
 - I agreed to limit of two months temporary in this Dump. No.
 - Cabin can't cost more than \$5000—all I have. No.
 - I'll build just a quickie, primitive little cabin and "rough it." No.
 - The cabin will be isolated from encroaching development. No.
 - I will be among new friends up there. No.
 - We can build according to my so-long-sweated plans. No.
 - While I'm waiting I'll be able to go up there and camp and swim whenever I please. No.
 - The attorney-general's office will help me fight this rip-off I'm getting here in the Dump. No.
 - Mike will do the electricity for me. No.
 - Mike will help me with money if I get stuck. No.
 - Family and friends will rally round to see and help with cabin. No.
 - I will be able to go up there and watch and enjoy the construction of the cabin. No.
 - It'll be finished and I'll be in there a year from 1977. No.
 - I'll be out of Vancouver soon. No.
 - Time spent waiting will be used on deferred projects. No.
 - People will admire me for what I'm doing. No.
- Sigh.

Dennis: —if he gets his car started, he has no snow tires—Then—

TV: noon news: Pictures of Seattle and wrecked cars all over and "4 inches of snow"....Later..."Storms—Seattle hit worst of all—6 inches of snow"...pictures of empty streets.

Evening. I call Abbie. "Oh, they're fine." "The car?" "Oh the carburetor gone; a piece missing." "Expensive?" "Oh...\$40." "Well, use part of that money if you have to." We chatter about the unusual weather. "The kids are out of school! They say it will last through Friday! So pretty! Olympia had ten inches!" It took the mother of the kids she's baby-sitting three hours to get there from Boeing's!

Dennis came on. He sounded blithe, happy, mellow. "All fine! Kids love the snow! Car? Oh...went and looked at it; just frozen gas line, I think. Nice to be unemployed and not have to go out in this! Wish I could be up at the cabin and see the snow up there!"

"Maybe you could call the McNabbs and see if everything all right?"

"Oh, I'm sure they'd call us if...trouble...It's just...winter," he said cheerfully, "when this melts..."

"Paper said this storm started on same date as the one last year," I tell him. "Odd, isn't it?"

"I'm sitting here planning your kitchen counter," he said.

"Ummm...Well, I want space by the refrigerator...and...room to stand at the sink..."

Before we hung up, "Cars are pretty smart," Dennis said. "My car practically told me 'No way am I going to go out in that mess!'" I laughed.

It was a long, nice talk.

Jan. 10. Thursday. Working on files, I discover: I have lived in 15 apartments and every one of them has ended with a hassle with the landlord, even though I always paid my rent and all. (How I yearn for my cabin!) That eviction, delays in cabin, money I've had to put out here and storage costs has amounted to \$1326! all of which was meant to go into the cabin.

Jan. 12, Saturday. I call again. Sarah answers. "That was nice of you to help daddy," I said.

"Well, he asked me if I could," she said, "and I did!"

"You helped build the stairs?" "Yep! You wanta talk to my daddy?"...

Dennis: "All's ok. Unemployment. Food stamps...can't believe!" (weather.)

"Neither can I," I said. "Weather up there?"

"Snow all gone," he said. "Here, too!" I cried. "Kinda miss it," he said. "Me, too.

Official report here—20 inches!" I told him. "Really? Not that bad here." "But wasn't it fantastic? A real phenomena!" "Yeah," he said.

Jan. 15, Tuesday. I get a notice from Snohomish County that I am delinquent on my building permit renewal. I call Dennis. He looks it up. "Looks ok by what's here, he says. "Been up there...the creek...madness!" (I'm jealous; I want to see it.) He says something about it'll be a year before the place liveable. We hang up.

I think about that. I get upset. I call him back. "A year!?"

"Well, if you don't have the money!...Look! I've worked hard up there!"

"I know..." I keep saying.

"It's nice up there" he says.

"Oh...I...got the January blues," I say, trying to laugh.

"Well, if you don't have the money, I can't finish it! **Borrow!** On this house, he says"

"Dennis, they just took off the usury law..."

"I know," he says, "if it **was** a law."

"Well...maybe the sun will shine tomorrow," I say.

"It's so nice up there!" he says. "Oh, shut up!"

"But I don't have a chance to enjoy it," he says. "I gotta work!"

"And I," I say, "have to **grow old**. A year? I haven't time...or stamina!"

"Oh cripes!" he cries. "Look...if...March...me...job...I'll move you out."

"Thanks," I say, remembering my manners.

"You can move into **this** house," he says. "I'm sorry," he says, "but I have to live, too!"

"I understand." I said.

Jan. 28, Monday. I call to tell Dennis about the insurance. Abbie. "Hiya!" she cries. "I gotta job! Working at the school part time... and stil babysitting." Puts Dennis on phone.

I told him about the insurance. He seemed delighted. "Yeah! Everything's fine! Got food stamps and Abbie got a job!" And then he started telling about the cabin;

"You want a (bathroom) counter?"

"Huh? Where? Oh. Oh yes. But where'd you put the toilet?"

"Across the room...Pipe goes together **easy!** Later, I'll get to the digging.

The (fire) wood's all gone," he went on.
 (Ooch. I'd counted on that wood to keep me warm.) "Well..I can always get...squaw wood..."
 "There's an alder down in the salmonberry patch." "What!?" "Lotta wood down...storm."
 "Yeah. Heh, heh, heh," I said. "Well, you've been **working** then?" "Oh yes."
 "Well, good! good! I'll have to get up there and see."
 "Well...er...uh...when are you coming?"
 "When the weather breaks." Only "uh,uh" noises from him.
 I told him about the insurance I'd taken out; personal accident insurance: if I got hurt at cabin I'd get \$1000 and if killed, Dennis would get \$2500.
 "You should take out some fire insurance," he said.
 "I know, I know, but there's no water up there."
 "Yeah. That's right."
 I inserted a little thing I'd thought of before we hung up: "Hey, ya know? Buildings (cities) are **boring** because they are so static; the woods grow—are alive."
 "Yeah, yeah," he said. "Well, I'll talk to you again...when I need some more money!"



Feb. 1, Friday. 11 a.m. Phone. Dennis. He wants \$108 to finish the plumbing. He's gotten the cold water pipes in. He says the copper pipe is **easy** to work with. He wants to get the electricity in. This presents a problem (I defer.)

That night. I call him. "Did you get the money?" I ask. "Oh yes. Thanks." "Isn't it amazing that I can always manage to send you another hundred when you ask?" "Oh, yeah." A bit more on our funds status and comments on news ends call.

Feb. 8, Friday. I call Dennis late evening. He says he's going to stop work on the cabin for a week—"if that's ok?"—and go to work for Godfrey for a week; that he thought he might be able to pick up \$200 that way and also get some second hand lumber.

"How's it going?" I ask.

"Oh...I **think** I can get the **stairs** in...am working on it. The kitchen counter...got **that** in...the pipe...Hey, that copper pipe is **neat** to work with!"

"Well, this is not supposed to be a **business** call...just to cheer you on! I was going through Sears catalog of one—two years ago; a **million** things we needed then; now we've **gotten** them!"

"Yeah. All we gotta go is the electricity and the septic tank. I figure I can do that for \$200. After Godfrey, I'm going back and put in the water line and test my plumbing."

"Whee!" I said. You mean the cold water connection?" "Yep." "About the electricity," I said. "I checked. Those guys want **\$15 an hour!** And...PUD...first thing we have to do...**they** put a line in up to the house, and then **we** have to buy that box." We discuss the voltage need. I continue, "We've come a long way, baby!"—I wanta come up there..." I began.

"Err...umm..."

"Oh well..I've got things to do here—hassling a lot of problems..."
 We exchanged cheery goodbyes.

Feb. 24, Sunday. Call to Dennis. He tells me he has been working for Godfrey for the past two weeks. Has a few days to go. Hard work, but will get \$300. And they are still getting unemployment. They salvaged some wood from an old barn; and some electrical switch boxes and stuff...He is job hunting...a test with Dept. of Natural Resources...a couple of interviews...going on...

"I'll be up in April...on my birthday," I said.

"Good! I should have the water in by then and you'll have a place to **stay**...without all that...junk." He said Mike called him.

"What about?"

"Oh..uh..what to do about this house and so on."

I told him Mike had told me they'd be up "early summer" whereas Marylyn had said "August". "August would be better," I said. "We can get things **going**."

Dennis sounded quite cheerful. He said he was going up and work again and that their car was ok. I told about a couple of problems I was having but ended up telling my pictures had shown "You've done a lot! A lot of progress!" I reassured him. I hung up feeling encouraged.

The next day: I got a property tax notice from Snohomish County.

Feb. 27, Wednesday. Cabin fund check. I find it has built up again; a cheering fact. [Item: I had a monthly retirement income coming in; state retirement and social security. Not mentioned? the source of the "extra" money I was sending Dennis.]

Also I was cheered by an article in the paper:

"The building and lumber industry has gone pfft. Boom's over. They are in trouble." (I gloat.) "Highest prices in history for lumber during the last year."

But we got the cabin up and came out solvent despite the inflated boom market!

Feb. 29, Friday. I get a notice of a meeting of Sultan Estates in May, with a report that there are "19 permanent residents...and more to come". The letter sounded pleased about this, but I, personally, felt there was already about as much "community" as I wanted to have. I wonder if I can manage to go up in April—again in May—and again in June?

March 1980

March 1, Saturday. Property taxes have been re-evaluated; from \$3000 to \$6000. That means the tax I have to pay goes up. Money. Money. And, letter from Mike: more delay on sale of Ed's house. Setbacks. Delays. Money.

March 2, Sunday. Reach Dennis, evening. He's going up to the cabin again the next day, (Monday.) He is through working for Godfrey. Got \$400. When he goes up he will get the water line in and test it and then start on the drain field. And then he'll be about through, he says. I ask him how his job and his "career" are going. "Oh, not one of my sweats," he says.

March 8, Saturday. Electric bill from PUD. \$5.71!? Why so much when Dennis hasn't even gone up there? Oh. Rates gone up. Money.

March 9, Sunday. I call. Abbie answers, asks me, "Can I come up April 4th-(Friday) for Noah's birthday?" (his the 6th; mine, my plans made around, the 12th). "We-ell." "A party for him." "Uh..be frantic.." She puts Dennis on. "Well, maybe I'll stop and see Alice and come up on Saturday?" That's more or less agreed.

Dennis tells me he got the water line in, "And it works!" he says. "A lot of digging." He wants to get the septic tank in before the plants start growing in there again. He would like a styrofoam tank, since he'd have to carry it in—would be easier.

"Will it pass code?" I ask. "Oh, yeah" And then he continues...

"Up there at the cabin the kids (I didn't know who he meant) lost their job... are selling; Doochie's are gone; and Chase has his house up for sale..."

"Oh, h's in the business," I say. "He builds 'em and sells 'em,"

"Oh no!" Dennis cries.

"Well...McNabbs..."

"Well, it's vacant up there on "our" street."

"Oh, I gotta get up there," I cry. "...am being...uh...crowded here."

"How much money have we got left?" he asks.

"Oh...\$1000."

"Really!?" he cries.

"Uh...well..'available'," I say.

"Can I have \$100?" he asks. "I paid back what I borrowed."

I agree. Then, "Can I start bringing stuff up?" I ask.

"Well, there's no storage room, y'know."

"The loft?"

"Hey!" he says, "That's my bedroom!"

"How do you get up there?"

"Ladder."

March 10, Monday. I call the bank and transfer \$100 to Dennis.

I find I am beginning to get qualms about moving up to the cabin. I wonder if living so far out of town will work when gas so unavailable? And, if like Dennis said, nobody there anymore...?



Then there's my disappointment about the position of the cabin, it getting turned around "backwards" to what was designed and planned. Due to the pressure of our haste, there wasn't time to reconsider and change when we came up against building placement code regulations we didn't know about in the design period.

The front that I'd designed to be the pretty side to face the public had now become the "back", facing into the woods, where probably nobody will ever see it or use it as the entrance it was meant to be. The "front" is now the ugly, utility side. That was a major disappointment after two years of perfectionist designing.

And Dennis still needing to use the cabin as a "workshop" meant yet more thwarting and delay in starting to get my stuff moved up there.

March 13, Thursday. My enthusiasm about going to the cabin again returned when I stopped at the storage place and began loading the car with cabin trip stuff. I also checked how much I had there to move. All of it was rusty and damp from that flooding. And then I found myself buying little things for the cabin and starting to plan pre-moving chores with returned interest.

News: "Gas may be going up to \$1.50 a gallon...and later to \$2." Sigh.

I made a date for car tune up with Jeff, puzzling at some change going on there he seemed loathe to discuss. And then puzzled, too, about what Mike had said about the property taxes, I tried to find out by asking the guys at the office. "Oh, he can take it off his income tax," they said. That didn't enlighten me much so

...

That night, I risked a call to Mike and Marylyn. (Never call working people after 10 p.m.) Marylyn answered, Mike asleep. She seemed puzzled why I'd called and I was puzzled at how little she knew about cabin business. She assured me they still meant to come up. "I thought it was all settled," she said.

March 14, Friday. Late afternoon. I called Mike, because the electricity our next big project was still dependent on whether Mike was going to participate. I apologized for my call and for not understanding about the property tax.

"Oh, ok," he said. "Don't worry about it this year." He wanted to know what Dennis was doing at the cabin. I told him.

"I'll be going up and I'll check on things about the electricity," I said.

"Well, mark this down," he said. "I have a lot of business trips back east through May. We'll be up the week of June 14-22."

"Ok," I said, And added that we were having a blizzard at the moment.

Then I called Dennis. I asked him if he needed any more money now?

"Oh no. Let me figure," he said. "I'll need \$650 for a plastic septic tank. They weigh 200 pounds—can carry in—versus \$450 for a cement one. But they'd knock over trees bringing it in. I'd rather have the other one I can carry in myself."

"How big a tank?" I asked.

"1000 square feet. I know you only need 900 but they come in standard sizes; none in between."

"Yeah," I said. "Fine." (Everybody had told me a septic tank would cost me \$1000.)

"Let me think..." he said, "... figure some stuff I'll need...wanta rent a truck...that'll be \$50..take your refrigerator up there at the same time (this puzzled me) I haven't gotten the stairs in yet...gotta figure them...I haven't tried to flush the toilet yet..."

(A flush—shall we say—of pleasure ran through me: my own brand new toilet! After all those years and years of dirty, stained rental ones!)

"...I got the water line covered. I'll get the plumbing inspector up there next week..."

"Oh wow!" I crowed. "No more lugging in water!" I told him I'd be going to the credit union the next week but would call him Sunday.

He said the kids would still be in school when Mike and Marylyn came and that they still had a little snow left.

I set about hassling finances.

Sunday, March 16, I call Seattle. They are all sick! Dennis all snuffed up; can't work. Kids already had it. Flu. Dennis fills me in more on the septic tank details: would be only \$450 undelivered. But he'd need \$40 for pipe and gravel to fill and the truck about \$100, so, the \$650 included all that, I guess. He mentions the refrigerator again and it was not until after we hung up that I realize what he meant; I was to take their old, small one. That was the one he wanted to take up while he had the truck.

I call back. Abbie answers. "Say, about the refrigerator...I'll pay you \$90-\$100 for that one of yours." Oh yeah," she says, "well we got some income tax money back...thought of buying a new one, but..."
 "But you need a bigger one!" I cry. "right? Wouldn't it be nice to have a new frig? Tellyou what...I'll pay you for that old one and I'll buy you a new one! After all you've done for me...! Ok?"
 Suddenly everybody's happy!

I hang up wondering if I'd been too rash? But I would have to get a refrigerator anyway—had always had one furnished when renting. And they had certainly earned something. It was a way to pay them back a little. I could take out a bank loan and "pay later."

March 17, Monday. I check with credit union and breathe a sigh of relief; my figures were right—I have \$1018 available for cabin. As if a reward for thrift, paper that night tells that retiree' Social Security will be going up!

I begin, mentally, moving into the cabin—where will I put the mailbox?—I'll have to have a phone...I begin to realize, as so much time slips by, I will have a tenant I hadn't counted on: old age.

In the news: There are NO more apartments available; all are going into condominiums. Prices are exhorbitant on what remains in housing.
 The dismal place I'm in now being declared available **only** to misplaced oldsters. These housing conditions prevalent all over Oregon, too.
 I give thanks for my cabin!

March 20, Thursday. Welcome signs of spring! I to take machete and axe into a tool sharpening place and leave them to be sharpened.

I begin to think about this next trip up. What in the world am I going to do up there for a week? Things are different now;

- ✓ One can't chase around like before because of the gas problem and expense. And there is nobody up there to visit with like there was before—Dooxies and Irene and people gone.
- ✓ And Dennis working there—I'll be in his way.
- ✓ April weather not too reliable to be able to count on working outside.
- ✓ Money tight: I don't dare invest in the things I'd meant to: more wood preservative; tools to strip and paint windows with; blackberry vine killer.
- ✓ The asparagus and rhubarb roots I'd bought and was so excited about putting in up there; I left them with Pam—she let them die.

Things different up there now—the hassles about electricity to go through—I found myself missing the old "roughing it" camping days!

March 21, Friday. Call to Dennis. He's been sick in bed all week. He wants me to get some wood preservative—a certain kind, for he says the rain water puddles on the porches. (I wonder why: weren't there supposed to be cracks for drainage and the decks slanted for run off?) He doesn't like that poisonous green stuff I worked so hard to put on; says there's a clear kind. "I worked hard on all that!" he says, "I want it to look nice!...And get some window latches. They cost \$5 apiece. When are you coming up?"

"Oh, that Friday...uh...4th...5th...Will stop at Alice's and would like to spend a week up there...till my birthday...That ok with you?"

"Oh...uh...yeah. I'm going up there Monday. Would like to have the \$600...and get the truck and so on..."

"Ok.Ok. Why did Sarah sound so cross?"

"Oh, we're all cross! We're all still sick!"

"Well, take care of yourselves."

I go shopping and get all those things.

March 23, Sunday. 8 a.m. Phone rings. It's Dennis. But there is a horrendous din going on in hall by my room—people, machines (remodeling).

"Can you hear me?" he asks.

"Hunh?"

"All those voices!"

I explain. "Hey, you sound better!" (not so sick.)

"Oh yeah. Going up tomorrow. Say...you have...you said...\$1000...(I gulp). We'd better save \$200 for the electricity."

"Yep," I say.

"Ok. Now..."

"Let me get pen and paper...Ok."

"I will get the shower and the toilet done and ready for the inspector (Whee!) Truck—\$100..."

"Good grief! Haven't you a friend that will rent you one for less?"

"Nope; not right now. Will need it in two-three days..."

"Hey, wait! Will you need more lumber?"

"Oh, not really...Stairs...I'd like to get them in, but...got 'em figured out...won't pass code...but..."

Yeah," I say. "Everyone says it's cheaper to pay their fines than try and keep up with their codes."

"Well, if they don't like it, I'll just tear 'em out!"

"Hey!" I cry. "Idea! Removable stairs!"

"No no...Insulation..." I let out a wail. "Well, just on end walls."

"Oh. I thought you meant all over."

"No. That would cost about \$500—sweat that later. Gotta finish that front (A) window—maybe \$60. Well, we'd better just go for broke and get it all **done!**"

"I agree. If you have the... health?" "Oh yeah. I'm ok." "Ok, then. You want \$700 Monday? Tuesday?..."

"Oh, won't really need it till **Wednesday**. Gotta get the shower and toilet first (I thrill at the thought of a shower and toilet in my woods!) but let you know." More building details chit chat, then...

"Ya know," I say. "I so **glad** we started it when we did! There are **NO** apartments any more!"

"Yeah. Ya gotta **nice house** up there!"

March 24, Monday. I call the credit union about the \$700. She calls back and says they'll have it ready for me at two. There was some wait and hassle when I got there, but, finally, Sue. "Now sign here," she said. "Your indebtedness is now \$1298." She was very nice and told me what to do when I got to the bank...

Where I dashed and got the money sent off to Dennis and then called and told Abbie. Everybody happy! They even had two days of good weather. I'd bought a steak for dinner. I celebrated.

New Delays?

March 26, Wednesday. Rita, the manager/landlady tells me distressing news: seems the snow is melting fast and there may be floods and the highways will be impassable. Also that Mt. St. Helens is smoking and they are evacuating everyone around there. Just when I'm getting ready to go! Now they're going to blow up a mountain and block my way out of Vancouver even longer!?? I hope it's just one of her wild tales she is prone to.

But...news...later. It's true. But...no worry...yet. They say.

APRIL 1980

April 1, Tuesday

Well, here we are. Two years later.

Two years today since I took an "early retirement".

And here I am living in place that is the antithesis of where I thought I'd be by now—in my cabin. "**All fools' day**", 1980.

News: Mt. St. Helen's ash fall out. They are warning us to be sure and wash our cars off; the ash is corrosive. That makes me laugh as I sit sharpening my tools with carborundum dust all over. And woe! I have no way to wash my car off here; there is no outside faucet or hose.

I am spending the day happily getting things ready for my Easter trip north. I baked a ham loaf to take to Alice. I am making the kids Easter cards and fixing little Easter presents—like onion sets to plant because Easter is

spring and growing time. I check out my camp lamps and camping gear and gather up my stock of emergency food to take. Fun! As I find my tin candlestick I used in the shelter, I realize I shall miss those primitive nights under the stars; now I shall have a roof over my head...

I run through my "critical path" list—things done and yet to do in cabin—bringing it up to date as much as I can. But I can't finish it until I see what actually has been done. I note that it has been **three** years since we bought that land (July 1977) [May I have a medal for patience?] but it's nice to see that the **biggest** jobs are all **behind** us. Bless you, Dennis!

April 2, Wednesday. I am still packing and speculating about possible problems at cabin: sleeping. Dennis has the cots in the loft; I won't be able to get them down the ladder. Windows. Meant to work on. Can't. Dennis has them nailed shut. Working on papers outside on the picnic table, as I did before. Can't. Dennis has moved the table inside. Oh well. It may be a rather uncomfortable week, but maybe just consider it as a reconnaissance trip?

I consider other problems I'll have besides packing, which I should be able to do by now after three years of scooting up there! Eleven days up there? I wonder if I'll be able to get all done that I'd like to.

April 3, Thursday. I call Seattle, evening, to feel them out about my plans, having to apologize to Dennis for all the ruckus and noise the tenants are making out in the hall. "Forget about those people!" he says. "It's all ready for you up there. Only—buy a toilet seat!"

TRIP NORTH

April 4, Monday. By mid-morning I am ready to leave. For the first time all the gang of tenants are out to wish me a good trip and a happy Easter! I stopped at the storage unit and picked up some stuff, then headed north, happy about the nice day and Easter and all.

Mt. St. Helens. The morning news had said it had blown out smoke and steam that morning. Since I was unable to see the mountain from where I'd been living, I craned my neck as I drove trying to get a glimpse from the only part of the highway where it showed. But the top was all obscured by a cap of clouds. I was very disappointed. Here I'd been living right beside this phenomena and I hadn't seen it yet.

En route: Rest area. The trilliums are in bloom. I wonder if the ones the Bishops planted in our woods up there are?

Rainier (town of) I stop at a hardware store to look at toilet seats. Too expensive. But they have high rubber boots I've been looking for. I buy some. Bake sale. I buy an Easter cake for Alice. I drive to a field in back of the building and eat my packed lunch there with a beautiful view of Mt. Rainier looming. It's all so quiet—and a meadowlark sings—so nice after being in the Dump...

Parkland. Where I usually gas up. Dismay! Long, long lines waiting for gas! But I get some—finally. The I stop at a discount hardware there and find a toilet seat for half the price of the other one. \$4. I buy.

On to Puyallup and Alice's, where a rather distressful night's visit.

Saturday, on into

Seattle

Tears blinded me as I went in "the back way"—through Burien, Lincoln Park, Beach Drive—all the old haunts full of past agonies and memories—Julie and Ed both dead now—"Comin' through the...wry..." I thought...

Alki. Dennis came out with a beard! (red, of course.) I'd never seen him with one before! As he pulled the hood of a green jacket over his head, "Hey! Robin Hood!" I cried.

During the week end. Mike called. And said they couldn't make it until July 4th. I was bitterly disappointed. "You're not going to drive on the Holiday?" I asked Mike. "Oh sure! Sure! We'll come to Vancouver..."

"Well, I might not be there..." I said.

Also, **Dennis** was in a panic because he'd lost the key to the cabin. But he found it. And Abbie had also found the key to the swimming pool.

Bishop. I tried to call him to get more information about an electrician, but was unable to get him.

Also, that week-end, my nights were restless...

! Decision !

I found myself getting up Monday morning and announcing, "I've made a decision! I can't stand living in that place any longer! I have to give them at least a twenty day notice. I'm going back and tell them I'm moving out June first! I've had it! About to blow up!" (Little did I know what lay ahead!)
Abbie whooped. "Dennis can't go on forever building your cabin!"
"Yep!" I said, "I've decided!"

April 7, Monday. I made that announcement and, mid-morning, set off for the cabin, terribly excited about seeing what Dennis had done up there.

5:45 p.m. I'm in my cabin! A dream come true! Exhausted, but blissfully so. And ten thousand exciting things to do. The fire is crackling in the stove, a teakettle of hot water bubbling on it. Peace. Quiet. Dennis did a fantastic job! It's "just like our pictures"! The plumbing, the stairs—are fabulous! Just think: I'll be able to sleep in the loft! He has a bed frame and "night table" built up there. And my beautiful, virgin, new toilet is in and working—on a temporary cesspool he made.

(I have a new broom here—and a new house!)

It didn't rain all day. There was no sunset, but, I was pleased as I walked down to the creek to find it open and flowing instead of that entrapping bog. The kids did a great job! Gurgle gurgles the creek... The skunk cabbage (do they call them jack(s)-in-pulpits?) in the creek glow with such a brilliant green they look almost like florescent candles...

Dennis had gone up ahead of me, but he had left to go back after our first meal in the new house, a lunch of tuna fish sandwiches and beer. The latter we didn't need because we were already so happy. "Have fun, Mom," he said as he left.

After he left, I started working my way in from the cul-de-sac, clearing brush. One reason I wanted the path cleared is that I had brought my grocery cart and I thought Sarah and I could use it to bring my stuff in. But, the clearing wasn't necessary, for Dennis carried all my stuff in for me. But, though it was hard work, I enjoyed clearing the brush.
And I kept shouting angrily at the neighbor's guard dogs left there, barking furiously at me from below, "Shut up! We were here first!"

The cabin is incredible! I just can't believe it! I didn't know Dennis had done so much! Some things are just roughed in, and perhaps all is not according to code, but it's infinitely liveable. A dream come true!

I go out on my "front" porch, being careful, as there are no railings up yet, and just stand and enjoy the birds, the silence—and no trains! (The Dump is beside the train switch yard.) The septic tank. I knew it would be ugly. It is. And much smaller than I thought it would be...

What was my first impression of cabin when I walked in? It so small! like looking into the wrong end of a telescope...(but so beautiful!)

10 p.m. I can't believe it! After imagining it for three years—

\\ I'm in my loft! //

April 8, Tuesday. I awake in a place I've never been before and this time it's mine! The loft. My loft!... It's fantastic! Unreal! The geometric shapes of the "A" rafters—it's like a church!

The bed Dennis built, plus the foam pad I brought with me, is great: very solid, very comfortable. (The loft bed. Actually what Dennis built was a frame for rather battered single springs and mattress from Ed's house.)
The quiet is so profound that I find my ears feel muffled and wonder if I've been deafened by listening to those trains outside my windows in Vancouver?

I'd let the fire I'd built go out, too tired to tend it. I find the wood stove is like a baby—needs tending all the time. Lots of ashes in it. Needs cleaning? And the wood is low...Dennis has been extravagant with it...I should sort it out and see what there...

Dawn. And a bird! Oh! I've been waiting for this!

First day in new house

How I wish I didn't have to struggle with that electricity problem; I'd just like to stay here and "play house". All **these** dirty windows—I can clean if I want!—and don't have to ask permission; they're mine!...Oh, this is such a far cry from the Dump! My shiny new white toilet—first one I've ever had of my very own in 64 Years!

It's not raining. No wind. No sun. But that's ok...I go downstairs. These stairs Dennis built—I love 'em! He made them with a landing..and they are so comfortable! If you think they won't pass code, just try 'em!

I turn on the little electric heater I'd brought the last time I came up. Dennis scorns it; says it's too noisy. But it's just off balance...I fix it...That fool septic tank lying out there..reminds me of "The Yellow Submarine" in that Beatles movie...only it's dark green. It sits out there like some piece of outer space garbage! Hurry and bury it, Dennis!

Later: I did build a fire in the stove; the heater didn't warm it up enough. How voracious that stove is!...The weather...there's no rain, but it's cloudy...

8:35 p.m. Oh I am so tired! I spent all day cleaning house. About 4:30 I moved a cot out on the "front" porch where there was some sun, so I could lie there and hear the birds, but the sun went and it wasn't very restful. I spent much time studying the stove book...I didn't even get dressed all day...how nice...such privacy...

I went and gathered some "squaw wood" kindling in case rain might be coming and, sure enough, radio said "a spring storm coming". The ground was so strewn with fallen branches...there must be some bad storms here in the winter?...I washed the windows, but was unable to find the extra little window for a pane to replace a broken one. Then I did find it, but Dennis had piled the cedar shakes he'd salvaged from that old barn—the ones he's going to use on the outside of the end walls—on it.

The teakettle is hot on the stove. I will eat, do dishes and then go to loft to bed. How do I like it? Great! Great! I just wish I didn't have to go back...or bother with that damned electricity.

9:30 p.m. I am in the loft. It is so cosy. There is a gentle rain on the roof. It sounds so soft and soothing. The clock is ticking. I am a very tired and happy grandma. Home, at last!

3:30 a.m. It's just pouring! And there have been some noises downstairs. That mouse Dennis told me about? I **hope** it's only a mouse!...I go down to the toilet. (So **nice** to have it!) No signs of a mouse, except there are mouse turds in the sack I'm using to collect toilet paper, since Dennis said not to flush it down into his temporary cess pool...

4 a.m. I'm lying awake, and beginning to fret about finding an electrician. I can't find the number of the guy Bishop gave me, and wonder if he'd be available on a week-end anyway?...worry, worry...Heat. wood. There's very little dry wood left and no covered place to stockpile it now, for Dennis wants the "shelter" down and he's got the underneath of the house just **full** of junk—stuff too heavy for me to move...oh dear..all that great woodpile of alder from the trees they cut down and Abbie and the kids piled...almost gone...guess Dennis is right: I'll have to have myself some electric heaters. That stove book is right: "A wood stove? You've gotten yourself a pet to tend!"

April 9, Wednesday. 7:45 a.m. Wakened by a bird call—to find myself stiff and sore. But blue sky! and the sun is shining! And the rain has stopped!

I gather all my stuff in a big basket and go downstairs. That landing is handy! It gives me a place to put stuff to carry up and down....

I plug in the heater and put water on to boil on the electric plate. The cabin is flooded with sunshine! It is so pretty!

I run outside and take some pictures while the sun is on the front of the house. So pretty out there! And that fresh, fresh air!

I do my little chores, build a fire, make coffee. It's all so great..just like I dreamed of...even if I am stiff and sore and seem to have symptoms of a cold-sore throat, stuffy nose.

News!

Burlington Northern Railroad (my bête noire) being sued for illegal practices. (Huray!)...Mt. St. Helens still rumbling...weather: more rain, but "lessening to showers"...

Later: At risk of Dennis' ire, I moved his big florescent working light to over the sink. Heavy. Hard work—but proud of myself that I could do it. Breakfast: canned juice and oatmeal.

I have to go to Monroe, but I'm not going to rush it. Radio says the showers will be over by 3 p.m. So, am having fun. Have to take a bath of some kind while fire still going...also have to do some planning and studying...

News: Power out in Seattle.

But I'm ok!

1:45 p.m. I am freezing! It's gotten gloomy out. I've finished moving everything into the cabin, and have done a run-through on all the electrical stuff. Have eaten. Have dressed. Will be glad to get out of here for awhile.

I'm all ready to leave.

⚡ THUNDER! ⚡

I go into Monroe to tackle the electricity problems in what turns out to be an electrical storm!

I went to PUD and asked about service. The gal makes out an application for permanent service. She says guys will go up and check the distance; the first 150 feet are free; it is \$2 a foot after that. They only hitch up the electricity and put in the meter; the service head and panel have to be already in. We will have to let PUD know what wattage, number of electric heaters, etc. It would be \$200 more to go underground. No thanks. I sign up for permanent service.

Then, since there is no telephone office in Monroe, I had to use a noisy street pay phone to make a long distance call to Everett to Bishop's electrician, James Bond, [sic!] I tried the office number first. No answer. I tried his home number and got, first a kid, and then a wife. I had no choice but to leave a message and say I'd try again later, though how I'd manage that I didn't know. I rather gave up on the idea of James Bond in my life! [James Bond was a popular movie detective hero.]

I drove back up to the cabin, the storm abated, enjoying the ease of rural road driving after all those years of city and freeway driving—no seat belt needed, one hand, slow and easy.

My frustrations about electrician contacts—I decided I'd stop at McNabb's and phone again from there, but before I went there, I took a tour all around Sultan Estates, curious. And I was dismayed at what I saw. What I thought was going to be my idyllic, woodsy retirement community was mostly just dingy "tin can" trailer homes parked haphazardly in mud where they'd bulldozed the trees out.

Then I drove into the community park where McNabbs, as caretakers, are allowed to keep their quite comfortable mobile home and where, Lu, a devoted gardener, has made it quite attractive. But it looked different. Again I was dismayed. Something was missing. Some charm it had had before was gone, making it look more like a garbage dump than a park. Then I realized—they'd cut down all those huge, beautiful cedars! It was all barren, gravel—chain link fence—Later, when I asked Lu, "Why!?" she said, "Oh, afraid they'd fall on the house."

I asked them if I could use their phone. Sure, but—I'd left the numbers in the car and had to go out and get them in a deluge of rain that had started again. I made my call and had no luck. We sat and talked awhile.

I told them about how I was just about fed up with all this waiting. Three years I've been waiting to get in that cabin!"

"Yes," they said, "We feel so sorry for you."

"I'm going to move in! No matter what!" I said.

They backed me up. "Yes! Why don't you?—My! Dennis builds so solid!" Lu said.

They said that after the May meeting they were going to California, just for a trip—Marvin's health so bad—thought they'd better go while they could. "So many have tried to retire here, and have, since, died.."They said.

I sighed.

I left and went back to the cabin, down my newly cleaned path. And then I got **excited** unlocking **my** door, using **my** toilet!

I ran in and turned on the electric heater until I could get a fire started. And then I discovered something; Dennis had been putting wood in the front of the stove. I found it went in easily through the top hinged door. Much easier. The hot fire crackling, I turned on soft FM music. All the hard work was over—the cleaning, the clearing, what business I was able to transact about the electricity. I began to enjoy my first night **home!**

I had bought myself a drink to celebrate with and some **real** food: chops and veggies. The beauty of the forest showed through my sparkling clean windows; a bird sang so gloriously that I turned the radio down in order to hear it. My dinner was cooking on the little stove. Rain, but falling softly, and I was safe and warm...and **home!**

Ceremoniously, I lit a little votive candle (I'd bought some in case of no electricity) and put it up in the kitchen skylight, where the "bubble" pane made it throw out interesting patterns of light, including a glimpse of myself reflected with what seemed to be a halo around my head! (Wow!)

I mixed a drink and then tried to make a ceremonial toast to the four points of the compass, as the Indians do. But, though I found I was still confused as to which direction was which in my woods, I bowed..to north? south? etc. and made a "toast" to my new home, just as, of **all** times, the radio burst into the song:

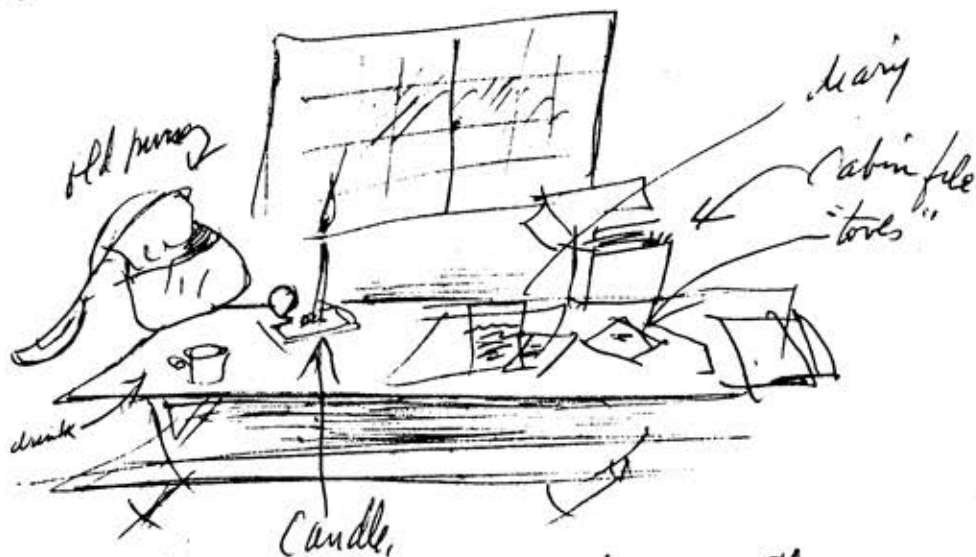
Tears leaped to my eyes. I was so happy! I began to dance...all over the room. It had been a long time since I'd done that!

♪ I have been a ~~Fever~~ ♪

Later, After I'd eaten and the fire began to go out, some doubts began to assail me: I wasn't getting very far on this electricity try...Maybe I'll have to drive 40 miles to Marysville and back to seek out this James Bond guy... And I'm using up wood fast here (but Dennis will be up tomorrow and he'll get some more...?)

I was, by then, sitting at the table. It was all very quiet. No sound of that mouse? Only the clock ticking...I sighed. As if on cue, the radio began to play

♪ "It's going to take some time---THIS time---!" ♪



Wed. April 9, 1980

I sighed and climbed up to the loft, thinking, (there's something nice and "old-fashioned" about climbing stairs to go to bed.)

I woke about dawn. Light beginning in the east? Or some bird woke me? For a tiny bird landed on the (east?) porch, its little tail up, a leaf in its mouth...nesting?...My hands were very cold, but I managed to make some notes: "I've hammered and nailed and lifted weights and climbed up on things and..." Suddenly I realized that all my dire ailments that I'd had in that Dump were **gone!** And I was even...**writing without my glasses!**

I slept.

April 10, Thursday. 6:30 a.m. wake up—cold—but to birdsong that goes on and on, not just a few cheeps and then gone, like in Vancouver.

About 10:30 Dennis came up. We two got busy. He built the front steps and I raked. The weather was very nice. We both worked hard. **He left about 3:45 p.m.**

Creek. I was very tired, but I went down and cleaned out the creek anyway. I wore my new rubber boots I'd bought all day. They worked fine until they became mired in that muck down there! And I thought I'd lost my legs before I got them and the boots loose again! I avoided being caught like that again by using the long dowels I'd bought for clothes rods as mud probes, crutches, and cleaning poles. Fooling around in the creek was fun!

Steps: The steps Dennis built on what I was still referring to as the "front" of the cabin (although it was now the "back"—all very confusing) were **steep**. He lamented that the wood in the stringers was too good for outside, but seems he had already cut the stringers for the inside stairs and then abandoned them when he got the landing idea. The latter I was very thankful for, for steps that steep inside would have been very hard for an old lady to negotiate.

Evening: It was nice to have a fire going when I came in at sunset, exhausted. Dennis had cut some more wood and had put in a "green" log, which had caught fire by itself when I was down working on the creek. Though so tired, I couldn't resist—my new house! I set to to clean house and set up a kitchen.

Later, I took all my papers and went and snuggled up in my sleeping bag in the loft, where it soon got very cold. I had let the fire go out. When I began to see my breath up there in the loft I wondered if the cabin was going to be very hard to heat in the winter.

Speaking of cold, I had one: cough, sore throat, snuffles. And I'd lost my voice. And I was stiff and sore and exhausted from all my unaccustomed hard work. But it was fun up in the loft! I found I could see a star—many stars—through the window, And—quite handy!—through the gap left where the loft floor boards didn't quite reach, I found I could look down and see the lighted dial of the clock in the kitchen! And it was so quiet! nothing but the sound of some wind in the trees. How I hated to have to go back to Vancouver and all that noise down there!

I snuggled in loft and began to work on sum up of what done and plans for things yet to be done. I still had the electrician problem. Being unable to contact that Bond guy or anyone was causing further delay in our building. Much as I hated to I feared I'd have to get dressed up and go into Monroe the next day and try again to get hold of him.

I had checked out the "shelter" during the evening and decided, yes, it was time to dismantle it, tear it down. The thought gave me kind of a wrench: the camping phase of the building schedule over. It had been kind of fun. But I cheered myself with the thought that not needing it anymore meant progress in our building?

I figured I had three more nights to stay. Dennis had seemed a bit—upset?—when I said I wanted to stay on until Monday—through the week end. And he rather upset **me** when he said he was getting tired of working on the cabin. Three more nights this time and then I'd have to come back up May 4th for that Sultan Estates meeting. "Maybe you can stay longer that time," Dennis said. The radio had said the weather would be nice all week-end. I snuggled down to sleep.

April 11, Friday. I woke early to find the sun blazing on my bed. But I delayed getting up because it was so cold—45°—and I was stiff and sore and miserable with my cold symptoms. I was also loathe to get up and spend another day trying to ferret out James Bond. I wondered if I was so loathe to drive 40 miles to Marysville where his office is, would he be as loathe to drive that far to work on our job?

When I did get up and build a fire, I felt better. Warmth helps a lot. And it got nice and warm up in the loft, the heat going up, I suppose. I also felt better when I'd killed a big bee that had gotten in somehow. The weather looked fine and I wondered if I could lure Bishop here from his rental remodeling he's doing in Everett on week-ends? It had been **three years** since he'd promised to come and see what we were doing to "his" land.

"Business trip"; I got ready and set out, despite how terrible I felt and only a croak for a voice. The weather was perfect; it was one of those April days one dreams about. It was even hot when I got down off the hill, and the air was so clear I gasped at the beauty of the Cascade mountain range.

Neighbor: But, first, I'd stopped at Duane Case's. He was working on the house he was building at the beginning of our cul-d-sac. He was very cordial. We were standing talking...I was croaking, rather...when a PUD truck pulled up. I waited while they talked, getting a little alarmed when he told Duane some changes he's have to make in his electricity service preparations. What would he make us do?

Then I asked the rig driver if he was on his way to see me? "Yes." So I went on back and he drove up immediately. We walked in together, I croaking on about "saving the trees". I took him in and showed him my plans and drawings, explaining. When he wanted to know the distance in, I handed him an engineer's scale so he could measure the distance on the plan. I noted he didn't even know how to use it! "Uh...about 90'", he figured. And it seemed everything was ok as I had drawn them: the service head, box and all.

But, "You'd better check with the state." "I don't know if you can have your fuse panel in the bathroom," he said.

"No, it'll be outside," I said.

"Ok." He sighted to the pole they had (finally!) put up further down the street. "Just take out those two little fir trees between those alders, and let us know about your baseboard heaters," he said. And he left.

I was delighted! He'd let us have our trees! And I wanted to let Dennis know the good news right away, but, of course, I had no way to tell him.

I went back to Case's. While we were talking, there was the sound of a bulldozer up on the next cul-de-sac. Curious, we went to see, he walking and I driving up. We found someone was clearing up there.

Before I left him to go down to the store, he said, "Oh you can use my phone anytime!" Explaining it was now the noon hour and I doubted I'd be able to catch anyone, I said I'd go to the store first and come back, and that I'd be back about 6:30 to phone, hoping to get Bond at home then.

"Fine! Fine!" he said. "Just walk in and use the phone—even if I'm gone!"

About my cold he said he thought it might be an allergy from the tree pollen; that he had the same trouble.

I went to the market at...Sultan?...at the foot of the hill, marveling, again, at the fantastic view of the mountains on the way. The woman at the store was quite chatty and friendly, but I was horrified at their high prices.

I bought a cake of ice, among other things, though it seemed uncalled for to pay 67¢ for just a piece of ice.

I went back, lugged the ice in and cleaned out the ice chest. Then I went and cleaned out the shelter ready for the kids to tear down. I was tired then, but cough drops had helped my throat.

I sat on my new "front/back" porch steps and cleaned tools and untangled my survey string. It was so nice out there that I'd left the doors open.

Then, chill of evening beginning, I put on a jacket and walked back down to Case's. "Come in! Come in!" He leaped up and put coffee on to perk. Real coffee sounded so good!

I dialed Bond's number. Again I got only Mrs. Bond.

"Where can I call you?" she asked, taking the message. Case signaled that I could give his number. That's as far as I got with the electrician problem that day.

Chatting over our coffee, Case said that wood he'd cut up from his clearing was for sale, if we needed any.

I asked him where that nice elderly couple were that had been moving into that big double mobile home: the Dooxies.

"Oh, he gave up," he said.

It was getting dark. "Well, I gotta go," I said.

"I'll walk you back," Case said. Though I wasn't afraid to go by myself, he did.

And...any worries I had about whether to ask this slight, rather goodlooking apparently alonemand ten years my junior in to my house were dispelled when he dropped off, half way up the hill, to talk to a Mr. Duke, working on a lot across the street.

"Anything I can do! Be neighborly! Just call me!" he called to me, as I went on.

"When I get my voice back!" I laughed.

I walked back. "And all the dogs did bark". Renters had evidently been allowed to move into that slummy, little old trailer house midway on the street, although Sultan Estates rules forbade renters. For, as I went by, two nasty little dogs ran out and yapped at and chased me. I yelled at them angrily, until, finally, some woman's voice called them back in a disinterested voice.

I went on in the now dusk and in on the trail. My funny little house looked so "cute" and snug there in the woods with the lights on compared to all the bulldozed and muddy and exposed places down below. Welcome home, Lorna!

I went in and sat by the fire awhile and wrote up my notes by candlelight while moths beat at the windows. "I love this place!" I wrote in my diary. Then I went up to the loft to bed.

The next day would be my 65th birthday!

The clock went tick...tick..tick...

Birthday

Saturday, April 12. I was awakened at dawn by what I'd come to call "the whistle bird". And then there was another bird, "scolding". It seemed much warmer. Perhaps I wouldn't need to build a fire. The sky was half blue/half clouds; there was a slight breeze. It was not raining.

I had slept well and felt better. I thought with excitement that I had done all the **big** jobs and could spend the next two days just dawdling and doing the fun things—that I could do as I **pleased** with no one to interfere or scold me or tell me what to do. Just what I wanted for my birthday! I snuggled back to sleep some more happily chanting "I'm here! I'm here!" and chuckling as I thought how Case and I had laughed as I'd told him about how I'd slipped in the mud on my way out and **almost** fallen into Dennis' temporary cess pool.

I tried to sleep, but I couldn't. I was too excited. I wanted to watch the sun rise in my new home. I stood in the loft window and waited for it, thinking: my house is all clean...what a good feeling!...a breeze out there...a tiny bird flitting outside on the porch rafters...birds seem so fearless here; I almost walked up and touched two robins the day before...a moth flits by...a dog barks..the day is **born**ing.

The sun is up. It glints like an eye just to the left of where that PUD guy said to take those two trees out. Take trees out? No! I'd driven around the day before and seen all the denuding of the forest. The mud and exposure and erosion they are inviting!

As I watch, the sun hasn't quite moved into the forest, but the tops of the alders are beginning to glow...rather like lit candles. (candles for my birthday cake?) The sun is moving up the tree trunks..hitting the joists in the loft...flooding the floor...surrounding me...now hitting my paper as I write... !!!

7 a.m. Happy birthday, Lorna!

About noon. Dressed and fed, I took a lounge pad and lay down on the ground in the sun by the path (so I could intercept anyone coming in) and had a long, long nap "in the bosom of Mother Nature"—something I'd been wanting to do for a long, long time—I a wreck from those months in that miserable slum in Vancouver.

I awoke and just lay and appreciated the bliss. There was not a sound but the swishing of the tree tops—not a voice, not a car, not a machine—not even a dog or bird, or insect noise. Not a cloud. Looking up at the alders, it was eerie the way the tops of them swayed three or four feet back and forth.

I got up and went in. It was mid-afternoon. Suddenly I was very lonesome. Where **was** everybody? It was my birthday. A landmark. My 65th. I hadn't meant to be **utterly** ignored.

3:15 p.m. I was startled by a footstep on the porch. Here they all were! Dennis, Abbie, Noah and Sarah! complete with my favorite applesauce cake, with candles, and a home-made card from the kids. Bless them! And they'd even brought their bicycles!

Abbie proceeded to make frosting for the cake and the kids went to play with that new boy moved in down at that rented trailer. So I had a birthday party, after all. There was just the cake. They apologized for no present; said they didn't have any money. But I didn't care! the thoughtfulness of the surprise party was enough. I had nothing to serve them, not even coffee.

The fire was out, but it was plenty warm—a nice day.

None of us worked, Abbie and I both felt bad with nasty colds. We just sat and talked and gloated and dreamed dreams. We gloated about what nice weather it was, after all that rain we'd been through.

"Fun!" Abbie cried. "our first visit to grandma in her new house!"

"Nice!" Dennis said, "to come and find the place warm and someone here!"

"No more tent!" Abbie said, sitting on a log where it used to be.

At some point during the afternoon, I went and cleaned off the north east corner foundation, where we'd incised a date. "What does it say?" Abbie asked. "7/17/78!" I said. "Oh!" she said. (Dennis' birthday, when they'd finished pouring that last foundation.) "Yeah!" I said.

The kids had been riding their bikes down the street, around the cul and over the trails. We called them in for the cake ceremony.

"Make a wish and blow the candles out!"

"Wow!" they all cried and clapped.

"You could blow **trees** down!" Dennis said, referring to his joke when they'd been clearing and he'd made the kids think he **blew** the sawed trees over.

They all chattered about coming to visit grandma. "...and we'll have Christmas here!" Abbie said.

"We'll move you in June!" Dennis said. (I felt a little thrill of fear: would they really fine me and throw me in jail as I'd read that they actually had some people who broke code rules and moved in before a house was finished and final inspection? But that had been in California. I could only try it and see.) "You can start bringing stuff up!" Dennis' eyes glowed and twinkled.

Behind where Dennis and Abbie sat at the picnic table, now inside and being used as a dining table, the sun coming through the window made haloes around both their heads. Apt! I thought. Bless 'em!

"And there's next year's wood!" Dennis said, pointing to a windfallen alder tree outside. I'll tear the shelter down, then I'll get the septic tank in...and the end walls...and a closet...before you come up again. "He sighed. "I'm getting tired of working on it," he said.

"Case said he'd help you with the septic tank," I said.

"And I'll help him with **his** plumbing!" Dennis said, proud of how well **his** plumbing had turned out, whereas Case had had all kinds of troubles.

"Noah asked, 'What're you going to do with that room upstairs?'"

Why...err...umm...my **office!**" I hedged, fending off any ideas he might have that it'd be a **playroom**.

"She's going to paint pictures," Dennis said.

"I **can't**," I wailed, showing him my crippled, swollen, arthritic wrist.

The only spot of friction in that whole afternoon was when the subject of money came up.

I walked with them out to their car. "Well, I shall be sorry to leave," I said. "Why don't you just **stay** here?" Abbie asked. I just shrugged, wishing it were as simple as that. "Well, we'll see you **Monday** (in Seattle)...Make it about noon," Abbie added. "...have things to do. We won't be there."
 "Ok. Fine!" I said, glad of the extra time.
 "Happy birthday," Dennis said, giving me a big hug, which made me cough.
 "I'm all...choked up," I said, pretending it was my cold and blinking my eyes fast where a new "cold symptom" seemed to have manifested itself.
 I waved them off.

> It was a **memorable** day. My 65th birthday.

After they left I fooled around cleaning out dead stuff from around the entry-way sword ferns, for they were "fronding" fast. And I gloated as I found myself sitting on one or the other of my three stairways, all of which I loved. Who needs **furniture**? I thought.

Inside, I gave up battling the moths and mosquitoes which filled the house after all the doors had been open—especially when one committed suicide by falling into my cup of tea and another flew down my cleavage in front. I went upstairs to bed.

April 13th, Sunday. I woke to another nice day. I spent the morning cleaning house for there was an awful lot of dust and sawdust, the latter from all Dennis' work.

Then I went to the store. I stopped at Case's on the way back to give him some of the birthday cake Abbie had left me much too much of, and to tell him what Dennis had said about the septic tank work and all. And got caught. Nothing would do but I must stay and eat some of the stew or something that he was cooking up. Then...

A whole gang of people came: An older couple, and Dwayne's ex-wife and his two sons. It seems they were there to picnic and nothing would do but I must stay and join them. It was very crowded in that little place. Everybody kept pressing wine, beer, and all kinds of good food on me. And they all insisted that I should move into the cabin; that they wouldn't snitch on me. I left after awhile and drove home, where, too tired to go in, I fell fast asleep in the car.

When I woke and came in my note to Bishop(in case they came to visit as promised) was still on the door. I was furious! **Another default** by him.

I went to work on cabin papers, delighted to see my list of things to do on cabin was getting shorter and shorter.

Later. I was out by shelter, chopping up boxes left in there to burn, when I thought I heard voices and saw a glint of red through trees. Here came Lu, in a red pant suit, with another woman. And I noted, again, like when the kids came, that one can't hear anyone coming here until they are right on top of one—startling!

Well, I showed them around, and they just **raved** about it all, and we had lots of laughs. Was fun! The other woman turned out to be Mrs. Easterly, our new Sec./Treas. on the Sultan Estates Board. She, too, like Lu, was all dressed up. "You should just **move in!**" they urged. "**We did,**" said Mrs. E., "before our house was finished—and they didn't do anything to us. We won't snitch on you! You've **gotta** move in!"

I walked them back down the path, flattered that they had come; for, at that time, I was very impressed with these people. They all seemed well-to-do and had nice homes here, lavishly furnished; they made me and our "poorly" cabin here feel like a poor relation. Too, they seemed to be the ruling powers here, all members of the board.

I was awed and impressed. And very much cheered. This was the third assurance that what appeared as the "In" group would back me up if I moved in "illegally". In fact, they all **insisted**. My rather rash decision to move in "come hell or high water" now seemed more a confirmed fact. I began to think this had been a wonderful trip, after all, even if I hadn't felt good.

Later, when I saw a big, bright star, I took it as an omen.

I spent the evening happily roughing out room areas in chalk on the floor and making hasty figures and sketches for Dennis. And then I fell into bed, too tired to start the packing I'd have to do in the morning.

April 14, Monday. I woke to the first overcast sky in days, and, by the time I got around to packing up, it was raining. This annoyed me, for it made it an unpleasant task to gather up that long, heavy temporary light cord sprawled along through the dripping brush and lug other things back and forth. On the other hand, it made me less reluctant to go, finding the place quite different in the gloom and rain. Perhaps the rain is tears at my leaving? I thought wryly.

By 10:30 a.m. I was all packed and ready to go. The rain let up **after** I got everything packed, as I had suspected it would. But it was cold and gloomy. Let's get out of here! I thought, and drove off, but not without a backward look, hating to leave the cabin there...deserted, unused.

I had to detour way out of my way to go to the public garbage dump, where I paid \$2 to dump two bags of garbage and then was on my way to
Seattle.

I spent the night at Dennis' and Abbie's. They were talking about how some friends wanted them to invest with them in some land in Raymond, WA.

"Where's Raymond?" they asked me.

"Oh, it's **wet** country!" I said (coastal area).

"Well, at least I won't have to live in a **wet tent!**" Abbie said.

"Ummm," I said.

"Do you want to live up there (in the cabin)?" Dennis pressed me.

"Yes! Yes, I do!"

So the decision was made.

Trip back

April 15, Tuesday. I left to go back to Vancouver, stopping to see Aunt Alice. It was a beautiful and quite pleasant trip back.

I got in about 7:40 p.m.

And it was very hard to drive back in back at that slum and face all the gruesome things there before I had to set out and go back up north again in about two weeks.

VANCOUVER

There was a notice of a package from Mike and Marylyn to pick up. It was Wednesday before I got down to get it. It was little gift souvenirs from their European trip for me! Among the fun items was a little St. Andrew locket from Scotland. I began to use it as a talisman and it "brought me lots of luck" on trips and highways for...oh...a year? Until someone pointed out to me that it was **St. Christopher** and not St. Andrew that was the travelers' guardian. Ah well....

And then there was a check for **\$100!** I was...stunned!

I called them that night and thanked them. And then I had to call Seattle and tell them about it. "Hey, great!" they said.

April 18, Friday. I was still trying to ferret out that electrician of Bishop's; James Bond. I had sent him a post card from Seattle telling him I was going back to Vancouver and would contact him later. Thursday I labored over a letter explaining what we wanted and mailed it. [Post hoc: I **never did** hear from him....ever!]

I did some work on my cabin plans, since, after being up there, I saw some "bugs" in them.

Bedroom; I worked hard to rearrange the bedroom area better. Even so, I realized it was going to be cramped, crowded and dark. And that code forcing us to turn the cabin around from what it was planned made my bed going to have to be uncomfortably close to what had, now, become my "front door" and to an exposing porch window on the, now, entry porch. But there was no way to change it at this late date. I redid it the best I could.

Then I battled my finances and realized, with horror, that I was "broke". I had made a generous offer when I wrote the electrician. Now I realized I couldn't have paid it. The \$300 left in credit union was already earmarked for cabin needs yet to come. And I had no idea where I could get more money, except from my monthly retirement income, which I needed to live on. It had been an expensive month, and now Dennis needed \$80 for gravel for the sewage system. The only extra I had was that \$100 birthday gift. It seemed a **shitty** way to spend it...but....

I also struggled with trying to write a notice to Villa West Management that "I will be out of here by July 4", but I found myself writing such angry things that I had to keep tearing them up; they would only cause me trouble. I ended up postponing the miserable job.

April 22, Tuesday. I got back the pictures I took of cabin. They weren't **too** bad.

April 28, Monday. I made another attempt to solve the electricity problem: I take my woes down to Glover's "Do it Yourself" store that had helped me so much with the plumbing.

On the way I checked on another moving problem: I stopped at the Social Security office to see about transferring that income to the Monroe bank. I got a blow; they said it might take up to 90 days! What to do for money in the meantime?

I then went to the bank, as told, to complete these arrangements. And there I suffered crushing humiliation. It was bad enough to sit in their plush lobby and listen to people speaking casually of thousands of dollars, while I couldn't even cash a \$10 check, but also, the woman I was assigned to was so arrogant, disputatious and ill-informed that I left there more confused than ever, and very, very angry.

But, at **Glover's** my ego was restored. They treated me graciously and respectfully, even their best men vying to wait on me when I presented my plans and problems, I lauding them for the good help they'd given me before. I felt guilty at all this attention, for I would not be able to buy all the electrical things we'd need from them.

Not expecting to get all this help, I hadn't brought all my plans with me. The man asked if I could bring in the rest. So I went all the way back home and got them, all excited, now, at the possibility of solution.

Back, they were still as gracious and helpful, the man making many phone calls to check on codes and so on. I began to get a sinking feeling as the things he showed me we'd need began to add up to a very big expense. In my bargaining with them I'd quoted electricians' info I'd gleaned from my electrician cousin, Howie Doolittle. I had said that he said they got \$45 an hour. He looked shocked.

"Well, that's for commercial work," I added. And then I went on, not able to recall who had told me, "Here in Vancouver they charge \$35 an hour."

"That's more like it, He said. "Only, we can't go way up **there!**"

"I know," I sighed.

"But we'll meet their price..." We'd been talking about a "split buss panel" something he said I could use at "only \$45, but it's for aluminum wiring..."

"Oh that's ok," I said (not knowing the slightest what he was talking about.)

"No no! You don't want aluminum! That's dangerous!" and on and on he went.

They were very busy. I finally thanked him and wandered around, after gathering up all my papers, looking at all the mysterious things, new to me—"service heads"—"buss panels"—and trying to register them in my brain.

We had done a lot of scuttlebutting about collusion between power companies and electricians, and rip offs on electrical equipment—so much so that people were standing around listening to us.

"Well, if you can do the **plumbing**," he said, "the electricity is easy!"

"They all say that," I'd said, my mind reeling with the complexities of all he'd told me. I left and went out and sat in the car, trying to digest it all.

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April 29, Tuesday. The news kept telling about Mt. St. Helens bulging ominously. Feeling somewhat akin to "something about to blow" I called the credit union and made an appointment for Wednesday afternoon to find out the results of the loan I had applied for to finance the electricity.

Mike had insisted this was the way for me to go. "**Nobody** builds on **cash!**" he'd said. But it distressed me very much to borrow. I had **just** gotten myself out of debt and had **almost** gotten the cabin built with my "nest egg".

Credit union

April 30, Wednesday. I dressed all up and went down to my appointment with my nice gal, Sue, at the credit union. I went in high spirits; the highway credit union had always been very nice to me. I had read in the paper something about loans being cut off in March, but I had heaved a sigh of relief; I was getting in just under the line.

But a blow awaited me. When Sue told me "No more loans!" I literally felt my heart plummet into my shoes. Not only that, but she told me that the loan I had taken out before and was currently paying on had been cut back to only \$1000. I am now in debt to them for \$1300, she explained, for I had to leave that last \$300 in to keep my account going. That was the \$300 I was going to draw out and send to Dennis for the rest of the things he needed, but, no, I couldn't have it. "And, she warned me, the interest rate has gone up to 14%".

She was so sweet that, upset, I found myself telling her "my life story"—the whole story of the cabin building and so on. Then she told me the nice manager I'd dealt with before was gone. "We have a new one; we **hate** him!" she indicated. "But let's see what we can do for you...mmmm...Maybe we can give you \$800 on your car—if you turn over the title..." I sighed. I'd worked so **hard** to get title to that car.

Well, as I got further and further into my sad tale she got madder and madder (at how I'd been **used**). She had given me a great deal of her time and had someone waiting, so I said, "Well, I'll think it over (about the car)". "Well," she said, sweet and sympathetic, "I agree! Go ahead and move in and by the time they **fine** you...your "Time line" (I was paying them \$50 a month) will be up again...and we can pay the **fine** for you!" She laughed. I laughed.

And left—with one parting shot: "Why in hell couldn't they let people **know**!? Here we made all these plans..." The whole office looked at me kindly..."You have been a good customer," they said.

I left—on the verge of hysteria. But...sometimes things are so awful one just feels...numb. That's the way I felt then. In my ensuing search for "a shoulder to cry on", I talked to many people.

The guys at the office said everybody was caught in the same thing; no more money!" Or, if they give you a loan, the interest so high it breaks you!" Everybody was **MAD**! Brian told me they wouldn't even give Elderkin, one of the VIPs, a loan.

I wanted very much to call my kids—all of them, but it was working hours and I was too upset; I couldn't think. So, it was not until

Early evening, I called Dennis.

"How's it going?" I asked, using his line of greeting.

"Well, I didn't get the drain field in."

"Did you talk to Case?"

"Yeah, but he doesn't know...if he can...I think I'll have to do it myself. I got the window in and the shakes on the end walls, but I ran out of shakes...will have to get some more. It looks great, though!"

"Well, I **was** going to call you **tomorrow** night," I said, but something happened."

"Oh?"

I told him about the credit union. "No money! But...other things we can do..." I added lamely. "Will tell you when I get up there. I'll come straight through—not stop at Alice's...if that's all right?"

"Uh...Abbie's family..." He went to check. "no, it's Saturday they'll be here...some big family whing ding."

"You sure it's ok?" Assured it was, I told him I'd be there Friday night. He sounded quite blithe and unconcerned, whereas I felt...disaster!

Later, I called Mike. Marylyn answered and then Mike got on the other phone. I tried to tell my tale. They didn't know what I was talking about.

"Well, don't worry," I settled for saying. "I'll talk to you later."

"Well, don't worry," they said to me and put Chris on the phone, though I was in no mood to talk to kids.

"I got the machete sharpened," was all I could think of to say.

"Hey, neat! That was fun!" he said, referring to their visit when the kids had cut a trail. We hung up. By that time the evening, and I, were too far gone to get much else done.

May

May 1, Thursday. That morning I washed the car— bucket and sponge chore—not having access to a hose, and packed until time for my credit union appointment.

Loan on car—I'd fretted and fretted about it. I was miserable with that choice presented me. To forfeit my car to finish the cabin? Win a home and lose a car? The new rural home no good without a car. Whatever, I decided no. And told them so. I'd find some other solution...only to find out they wouldn't loan me any money on the car anyway—that banged up fender, the age of the car, and so on—no way!

Still fretting about not getting that loan, I went to Jeff's service station to get gas for my trip. He said he, too, had been turned down for a loan.

A sudden thunder storm that night and so much uproar going on in that slum place I didn't even get my packing done.

Trip North

Friday, May 2, I was tired, upset and late getting started on that trip. The weather was windy and chilly.

It was 12:45 p.m. by the time I finished packing and stopped over at the storage place to pick up some more things to take to the cabin—a folding chair, rug, pegboard—the first of starting to move furnishings up. And I was delayed long there by three guys trying to move in a boat.

I finally got going and the sun came out by the time I hit the freeway, but driving was unpleasant for I had a very sore and swollen wrist for some reason

Toutle Creek. I stopped there, as usual, and talked to the new caretaker, a girl, not a man. So much of that lately: girls getting formerly men's jobs.

The back route I took again, to avoid the freeway as much as possible. And, though although I got a bit lost again, I was glad for the radio told of congestion and accidents on the freeway. And telling of the boat regatta in Seattle Saturday worried me—would be traffic jams on my usual route to the cabin. Also, still the gas shortage—and all those people traveling—would I be able to get gas?

It was 5:45 p.m. before I got to Alki, later than usual.

Seattle

I stayed there overnight with the kids.

How long are you going to stay up there now?" Dennis asked me.

"Oh, the usual," I said. "All the effort of moving all this stuff in and getting gas—about ten days?"

"Well—er—uh—" He and Abbie looked at each other. "I'd sort of planned to go up there and work Monday—Thursday." A fact I hadn't been aware of. Also, I'd forgotten: "Next Sunday is Mothers' Day," Sarah said.

Both Dennis and Abbie agreed with not putting the car in hock at 14% interest...They offered me the TV to take up there, but it not color not interest me.

Can we start coming up on week ends?" Abbie asked. "Would be so nice to be able to get away from here!"

"Why, sure!" I said. "That's what it's for!"

"We'll be down to move you about the 20th of June!" they said.

May 3, Saturday. I kept thinking about that with delight as I struggled to find my way up to cabin by an untried route. For the radio had warned travelers about the congestion on the Evergreen bridge because of the regatta, so Dennis told me of a new way they'd been going.

I set out to follow his directions, but it was a complex route and I only got halfway on it before the crowding of traffic foiled my ramp turnoff and I ended up having to go over the bridge after all.

However, it turned out to be all right, for I got there before it started and car and I "sailed" over the bridge through the regatta. And I felt lucky I got to see it for it was a thrilling sight—Seattle at its best—a beautiful day with the snow-capped Olympic mountains above the **thousands** of colorful boats all decked out with flags and "burgies".

And I felt lucky again as, just as I hit the home stretch into Monroe the radio came on warning to stay off the route I would have gone because of construction and bridges up and telling of the route I had just come through now absolutely crammed both ways with stalled cars.

The rest of the way, clear in to Monroe, was more jammed with traffic than I'd ever seen it, so I tried that first off ramp into Monroe and discovered a **pretty** part of that ugly little town—an avenue of nice old homes and lawns and landscaped center strip in the street. It made me feel better about the place I was going to have to live in.

So that turned out a very colorful trip. And I drove into my little piece of greeny woods all lighted up with sunshine about 12:30 p.m. happy! and **home!**

About 6:30 that night I was tired, tired, tired! but happy, happy happy! The woods were all greeny—gold and the sun poured through the "A" window Dennis had **finished** and made the most interesting dappled patterns in the cabin. And I **liked** the shakes he'd put on the outside end walls. It was just perfect! I just loved it! And Dennis had said the plumbing inspector had come and said "Fine!" I was so proud of Dennis! And thankful to him!

I'd spent the afternoon, besides moving stuff in and so on, rigging up a maze of temporary electric cords to bring light to needed areas. Dangerous, perhaps—Mike would have a fit. (But how can you blow a fuse when you don't have any or any circuits to overload? I reassured myself laughing.)

A tiny bird had made a nest in the peak of the "A", Dennis had **said**. A wren? It sang like mad as I enjoyed my first evening in the cabin. Dennis had also said there was one blossom on the dogwood tree—so it wasn't dead. From the loft window I could see lots of blossoms!

I ran around doing things—down too inspect the "shelter". What a wreck it was, but behind it, now, soaring strong—the cabin. I wanted a picture but by time I ran and got camera the sun gone.

—My little piece of rug and chair I'd brought...I made a tiny sort of "sitting room" in cabin...

—Going out to car, later, relishing in the privacy that enabled me to run out in my "nightclothes", I gasped to see something I hadn't noticed before: the two vacant adjacent lots were gorgeous with white blossoms on those ancient fruit trees!

Going up to the loft to bed, I got sidetracked: what in the world? Huge sheets of something marked "fascia siding" piled carelessly on floor. I struggled to lift one to see what was on the other side. It was some kind of synthetic wood paneling. I liked it! If Dennis can't use it, I'll certainly find some use for it, I thought. I tried to move it to rearrange the loft a bit, but it was too heavy for me.

I went to bed.

I woke about 11 to dark, dank silence. It was such a contrast to the din and noise of my Vancouver place that, for the first time, I was rather scared. I even found, when I dared to open the loft window and peer out, that the twinkling lights of neighbors down below were reassuring instead of intrusive, as I'd found neighbors before.

★ ★ ★ ★

★ ★ So were the many stars I could see. ★

May 4, Sunday. I awoke with a jolt about 8:30. It was chilly, but sun was flooding the cabin with a kind of greenish light. I ran downstairs and out to take a picture of the shakes on the cabin while the sun on them.

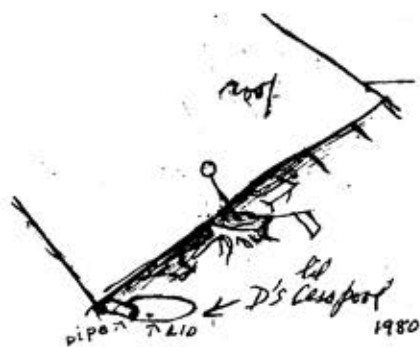
Then I scrambled around in all that mess of stuff down there and found a can of Sterno I'd left and made some instant coffee. Then I built a fire. Then disaster: that teakettle Dennis had tried to fix, still leaking, but I grabbed a big fry pan and put under it. I found these little problem solving things fun to do, though. Now I would have hot water to bathe with. But I realized I'd have to learn to "bathe" and dress while the fire going and it warm.

I turned on the radio and enjoyed the crackle of the fire as I began to dress to go to that meeting. I was very happy as I ran around my little house, even when I found I'd have to keep the door shut because a big wasp had gotten into the cabin. And mice had been eating the soap? Odd: they seemed to like only the "Ivory" soap?—the other kinds left alone. And I was happy in spite of finding Dennis' little temporary cess pool was pretty slow in draining. Did that mean our septic

field might not perc? Case saying he "couldn't help Dennis with digging the drain field"; seems he had insisted all the trees had to come out.

"Guess I'll have to do it myself," Dennis had said.

I struggled and cursed trying to rig a light extension into the bathroom, newly realizing how **little** I am: I have to have things down so low to reach. Oh well, tiny house; tiny me, I thought.



The meeting

5 p.m. I came back, depressed. This time when I mentioned some of our woes with finishing up the cabin and getting moved into it, I didn't get the fervid backing I'd felt before. The people there made me feel ill at ease and, well—different. This eased off when people started to leave and thin out and the people I already knew were left.

I'd gotten there late, thinking it at 1:30 instead of one. They were already in session when I got there and I had to sit by myself near the door. Later, Lu moved over and sat by me. The people there were a motley bunch, almost all of them new to me. I was not too impressed, rather rough looking people—young people—and **kids**. It seems that the original club founders, the retired people, like me, were all moving out...

Case was there with that weird ex-wife of his. Jerry, the president of the board, I was impressed with: he seemed and able, knowledgeable, efficient, personable youngish man.

I had prepared papers and brought all my state anti-noise pollution literature I had been given by my cohorts in the Highway Department when they'd wanted me to be on their state traveling public information crew. (I had declined because I was too involved in the cabin building.) This I thought would help them in their evident ignorance about state laws and on noise: their problems with motorcycles, cars racing through up here, dogs and neighbor noise and all they'd been complaining about.

I got up and made my little speech and handed Jerry all those papers to study and use, but I didn't feel I had made much impression or that my professional expertise was accepted.

There weren't any **big fights**, as I'd seen in Highway public meetings, though when Jerry got up and read them the riot act about not observing the rules in the club covenant, the new people reacted with a We'll-do-aswe-damn-please-thank-you attitude.

The man with the dog kennel (against the rules) had applied to the county for a permit to keep even more dogs. When told that the county allowed only two dogs per family unless a kennel license, they replied that they'd keep as many dogs as they liked. Some had as many as six!

When the young people asked defiantly, "So what are you going to ~~do~~ to us if we ~~do~~ break the swimming pool rules?" I was dismayed that the answer was only "Err...umm.." etc...And I was envious when they all talked in thousands of dollars as if it were nothing; and I was frightened when they began to list the dues and fees we'd have to be paying.

Most of the young, new people left, as they had in former meetings, when the potluck food time began. Only a few stayed for the food, which was lavish and good, though I could see the inroads of inflation between the ham and chicken and such of the last time and now. This time it was more beans and pasta dishes.

I enjoyed myself more, then, with the "core corps", so to speak. Someone said the Carrolls, that young couple in the new house nearest to the cabin, were having a "cheap" electrician come up that next week. I made a note to find out who he was and see if I could get him to do our work.

I loitered till the very last, a good thing, because, one: by then I remembered to ask about the garbage. Seems there was no pick up service; each had to gather their own and take it to the dump.

Two: I wanted to get to Lu and my other former backers and tell them about my new dilemma—the delay. I managed to. They were shocked and sympathetic, but no longer acted like the encouraging advocates they were before.

I told the Cases I'd stop by and see them later. I'd sat with Lu and Marv, but it was rather a waste of time, for they gabbled with others all the time. There was a well-to-do appearing, youngish, very beautiful Mrs. Delp who sat right across from me, but she gave me the real snob cool. The women all insisted I take my (expensive) bakery cookies that had hardly been touched, there were so many others. I wished I hadn't wasted the money.

So, I took my cookies and trudged up the hill to Cases", feeling quite let down.

They were sitting outside on the steps, it being too hot inside their metal trailer home. I refused a drink, being too full of food. We sat and talked about electricity, I hintingly. His strange wife acted bored and disinterested and kept making frequent trips into the house.

I had sent James Bond Case's telephone number as a means of getting hold of me. But Case said he hadn't heard from him; nor did he make any of his former offers of help and encouragement. In fact he said he was through with his work here and made me envious saying he was going to a new project: a community club on Whidbey Island where salt water, view and beach (my original preference).

It was all rather a stilted conversation and I made excuses to leave. At this he began to make derogatory remarks about all our trees up there and asked his wife to walk up and see. She bitched, wanting to know why we didn't drive up, but then agreed.

So we three started to walk up the hill, Dwayne bragging all the way about all he'd done around the properties on our street—bringing in those trailer homes, fixing them up, selling them, buying another lot and doing the same, and so on while she "Yes, deared" him.

I had meant to stop at Carroll's, Lu saying everyone seemed friendlier lately, and ask about the electrician, but as we passed, their big dog came out and started at us. Then she came out, a pretty young career gal type gal. So I asked her about the electrician. But everyone was hassling that bothersome pup, so we went on, "Mrs." Case going on ahead as if anxious to get it over with, while I joshed the so-proficient Dwayne about asking him to do the electricity for us. "Oh no no no!" he didn't ~~do~~ that sort of thing. This puzzled me, for he had told me before that he always did his own and would be glad to help us.

Just then here came Mrs. Carroll and the dog following us in on the trail. She handed me the name and address of the electrician (Markley in Sultan.) "Oh, have you seen our funny little pointy house?" I asked, inviting her in and talking about electricity as we went. "Have him come and give our place a look when he's up- here," I said.

Visitors!

I let them all go on ahead as I stopped to check if there was a breaker in the temporary electric box on the tree trailside. Here came Mr. Carroll. They had all paused and grouped admiring that big, old cottonwood tree by the trail. "Yes!" I said. "We want to save **that!**"

It was one of my proudest moments: I could show off my cabin! Key in hand, I said "Come!" I unlocked the door. Suddenly I sensed vaguely that something was wrong, but it wasn't until much later that I realized they had all filed in **silently**.

"Oh my!" I said, "It was all sunny in here when I left!" It was very dark in there now. They all looked about and said nothing. Suddenly I realized how unfinished and campy (in the literal sense of the word) it looked in there. But I babbled on "...and this is the front/back..." happily, proudly, "...and that," I laughed is the 'shelter'! It's **had it!** I even **slept** in there!" I giggled.

But...I'd caught sight of Mrs. Case's face; it was full of **amusement, pity**. And Mr. Carroll took one look about, turned on his heel and led them all back out. (What was wrong?) "Err..ah...umm.." I said to their silently departing forms, "...oh...something I need in the car; I'll walk out with you."

We were all laughing now—at that fool dog. He was blundering, racing, galloping all over the place in great joy as if trying to tell us something. "He **likes** it in here," his mistress said. "It's **cool** in **here!**"

Case had dropped behind with me. "I'd be glad to help Dennis with his electrical plans," he said.

"Well, Dennis is not going to do the **electrical**," I said. "But my older son, who knows about electricity, will be here in **July...**"

"Oh, afraid I'm going to be **traveling then**," he said.

As they left, Case was the only one who looked back and murmured, "Thanks."

I went in and changed my clothes and opened a beer and then went and sat disconsolately on (facing woods side) back steps. What was wrong? Something was! Then I realized there hadn't been a single "Oh!" or "Ah!" or "How beautiful!" or "How perfect!" I sat there, hurting, and thinking bitter thoughts about people who have only dollar signs in their eyes. (But I like it! I said to myself.)

I sat and thought about other remarks and things from that afternoon...

—When I asked Mrs. Carroll why they needed an electrician—"I thought the house was finished."

She said, "Oh we're having the **rec room** done in the **basement!**"

"Oh great!" I bluffed, hating the kind of people who move into the woods, then cut all the trees down and bring all the city things in.

—I looked questioningly at Case when I saw Mrs. Carroll suddenly grab the frolicking dog by the flesh of his neck and pinch so hard the dog winced in pain. "Oh, she's having the dog **trained**," he said.

—"See?" I said to him. I pointed to those two, graceful, screening little trees, "those two the PUD want out." "The **alders?**" he asked pointedly. "Oh no! just the **firs**." (Hemlocks. At the time I thought they were firs. Either, to me they were beautiful.) "Well, just **junk trees**," he said.

—At the meeting: "Mr. Case?" Jerry had asked. "Would **you** explain why nobody can get **perc** test approvals here?" (A "perc" is a test of the soil's ability to absorb the moisture of a sewage drain field.) At the time Case had impressed everyone with his years of experience as an engineer in the city waterworks, unquote. Well, "...he got up..." "It's this **ecology** (foolishness)..." and away he went..." (Ooch! I'd thought; I'd just handed them my Dept. of Ecology noise pollution "lesson".)

—Jerry had told all he was moving back to town. "Shoot 'em!" he'd said. "If your neighbor or his dog bothers you—shoot 'em!"

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—Later. "Any more questions?" My hand was waving, but..."Meeting closed!" he said. But I went up and nabbed him, for I had a quip. All during the meeting, he, while chairman, smoked one cigarette after another and just tossed the butts out the open window. I kidded him about it: "Do we have covenant rules about littering?" I asked. He laughed. "Read what I gave you," I pleaded. "There are other ways to settle these problems." "I will," he said.

That was the last I saw of my papers and the last I ever heard of the matter.

That evening: I noticed that Dennis' cesspool was overflowing. So I got a shovel and pruning shears (to cut roots), and there I was, in the proper costume for it, I'm sure—an old shortie robe and a new \$45 permanent wave digging away in—well, at least it was my own...

May 5, Monday. I wake about 7:30. The sky is overcast—no sun, but it isn't too cold. During the night, some "critter" was making noise downstairs. I kept banging on the wall to scare it off...Later, I find signs of mice all over. I hope it's only mice? The teethmarks look so big!

Later, the sun comes out but then it starts to rain again. I make a fire to have it all cozy for Dennis when he comes—about ten he said.

By 11:30 I am getting worried: no Dennis—car trouble?—and annoyed at burning so much wood, trying to keep the cozy effect going. In situations like this I realize how inconvenient it is without a phone.

Noon before Dennis finally came, and he was so cross and complaining about having to do the septic tank with no help, and he'd forgotten his tape, (and I had seemed to have lost mine someplace) that I was glad to have errands to do and set off for Monroe—to the bank and so on.

But I dared to stop at Case's and set it up for him to go up and help Dennis and take him a tape.

By the time I got back about 4 Dennis was in a good mood and we had a pleasant evening working on the shingles and fixing dinner. He stayed all night.

May 6, Tuesday. While Dennis worked, I set out on errands and to get information, but I didn't have much luck. Dennis wanted \$20 for more lumber, which began to eat into my cash...I encountered a garbage truck and asked the man service: you have to sign up for it... But I had no luck going clear into Monroe to phone about moving van destinations at this end..had to call Snohomish, and, since **all** calls here are long distance, it cost me \$1.10 to have some kid tell me he didn't know.

I went clear back into Sultan and searched for that electrician's address Mrs. Carroll had given me. No luck. All I could find at that address was a kind of old shack and nobody there! I went back so frustrated I wanted to stop at that miniature roadside chapel and put in a prayer! But somebody else was there talking to God.—beat me to it.. I went on.

Dennis had a big trash pile fire going. "Where did all that come from?" I asked him. "Oh the clearing PUD insisted we do.."

That night. "Mice sure do make a lot of noise for being so little," Dennis remarked. I slept downstairs on my cot and Dennis slept in the loft. A nightmare woke me about 3 a.m. I decided to sneak out by the car and see if I could see the moon. There was none, but lots of stars. But this time the beauty of it was spoiled by that big ugly new PUD pole there.

The next morning Dennis wanted to know what I was doing in the night. "Did I wake you up?" "Yes! I thought you were leaving!"

May 6, Wednesday. After we finished our work that day, we were tired, but we took a walk around in the woods.

"What's that!?" Dennis cried. We were down by the cedar grove near the creek by the adjacent lot. "Something white! in the woods!"

"Oh, it's just a pretty bush," I said. "I noticed it the other day."



But Dennis crashed through the brush and I struggled after. And then he never stopped marveling. "I've never seen anything like it before!" he said.



There was an old fallen mossy tree lying almost flat on the ground, but it had huge big white blossoms on it, an unbelievable almost five inches across. But with all his forestry degree, Dennis couldn't quite identify it. "Apple blossom? But so huge!"

"Look!" I cried. "There's more! And more! And even up there, higher!"

We just stood and marveled. The tree and blossoms were exactly like apple except for the outsized blossoms; and there used to be an old homestead fruit orchard in that low place. We decided it must be an apple tree.

"You see how plants renew themselves?" Dennis thrilled. "It's making one last try." (Dennis taught me lots about the woods that he'd learned in his forestry classes.) I picked a bouquet of them for our dinner table that night. They lasted for days without shattering.

(Post hoc: I never saw those blossoms in there again.)

Blossoms on table! "And, for your work today, I bought a steak dinner!" I told Dennis. "I'd like that!" he said.

We had three beers and a very nice dinner and then Dennis listened to the sports news while I did dishes. We spoke of the mouse (above) and of all the moths that filled the cabin in the evening. "It's Moth-ers' Day Sunday, that's why." I quipped.

"It's sure strange around here," I told him speaking of my grocery shopping; all this A-1 farmland around here and they have the dingiest produce in the markets! Lettuce, rotten, small and 89¢ a head! What am I going to do for greens when I live up here? Uh...could you build me a shelf? I could grow some chives and parsley and...cuttings...(I had many daydreams about the vegetable garden I would have.) "Sure!" he said. "You design it..."

About four days

Dennis and I spent working at the cabin. We got a lot done, after we kind of hit our stride, working as a team, even getting Case to help with an agreement of exchange of work between him and Dennis.

I marveled at Dennis' capabilities, strength and endurance. He just never stopped! He worked from 7 a.m till 10:30 p.m. on several different projects all going at once. He'd filin the waiting periods on big jobs by filling in with little one. And he was very patient with me; and a good sport about my we'll-use-what-we've-got and when I'd make a request for something done, it would be done with patience, humor and enjoyment.

The weather stayed so perfect, too.

Dennis' work: He finished the bathroom; put in the hot water tank, and fixed the leaking faucet, so the plumbing was all done. He even put in an outside faucet for the hose. My design for the plumbing system worked out. No problems. Dennis is now quite an expert on plumbing, figuring all that out. He even rescued Case from mistakes he was making on his poorwork attempt to get his plumbing in.

At one point, during the plumbing work, he sent me to get a "female" hose connection. So I went all the way down to the stores. They didn't have one. On a chance I took what they did have and was nearly weeping when Dennis cried "Wrong!" angrily. Then I was standing and twisting the pipe fitting in my hands trying to figure it out..."Hey!" Dennis cried, "I can use that!"

He and Case worked on positioning where the septic field would go, cussing and stewing and shouting down my suggestion so much that I silently gloated when where they finally figured it out it was exactly where I'd planned for it to be.

He fixed those broken casement window panes. He got all the shakes up on the end. He enlarged the cut through the log across the path so the wheelbarrow could go through more easily.

Was there ever a woman whose dream of a kitchen and bath ever came exactly true? I was rather disappointed in mine; it was not the rustic effect I'd wanted. It was more market-fashion pressures and expediency than choice, I guess, though...the result.

But this was offset by the success of the "plastic glass" for the big "A" window; and by how well Dennis had solved the stairway problem I'd spent so many months struggling with at the drawing board.

The cedar shake shingles:

On my last trip up Dennis had said he was "going to stop by that barnsite and pick up a few more shingles." I was always quite vague about just where he's gotten them—salvaged from some old barn he and Godfrey got paid to demolish, as I understood it. Nor was I quite sure just what he had in mind to do with them.

There was certainly not enough to do the roof with. Besides we had long since given up the idea of cedar shake roofing after we saw the size of the roof and priced shakes at the current rate. It would have cost us almost half of what we'd already put into the cabin, and we simply didn't have the money.

Besides, in my stuying of that forestry fire protection material I'd gathered cedar shake roofs were deemed a real fire hazard and prone to moss, splitting and other impermanence traits. That all made a good excuse anyway; so I assumed that Dennis was just going to try some decorative trim—like a few shakes on the east (street end) "for appearance".

But no! Here he had brought **piles** of shakes! Seems he wanted to do the west end wall with them, too. The trouble was that they were **filthy**! Seems that the barn had fallen down and **chickens** had roosted on them! They were also odd bits and pieces—definitely ruins salvage.

So, it meant a whole afternoon and evening cleaning the darned things up and sorting them. It was my idea to use the hose—why Dennis sent me for that coupling. So, while Dennis worked on other things, I took on the laborious task of getting those shingles ready.

In my "efficient, organized" way that drives everyone nuts, I got out the little plastic portable toilet seat I'd bought for the kids and sat me down with the scrub brush and hose to clean, sort and stack. They had to dry to be ready for Dennis to use the next day. It was hard, nasty, messy work.



About what seemed like ten thousand shakes later, I was shaking with hystericval, silly laughter. Dennis! I cried, "if somebody would just ask me what I'm doing! I'm sitting on a toilet seat scrubbing chicken shit off cedar shakes!"

I thought it was hilarious, but Dennis didn't. He got impatient with my "ladylike" efforts and took over, and crashed and banged around, obsessed, cleaning shakes till dark, while I snuck inside and did more ladylike things like washing windows.

Later, I often thought of that task when everyone oh'd and ah'd about how nice the shakes look (and they do!)

Meantime, while Dennis was doing all that work described, I had ...

- contacted the bank about transfer of my account...
- arranged for new delivery with the post office
- Made appointments with the garbage service and an electrician.
- I had cleaned up the construction mess, burning crates and salvaging plastic, cleaned up the area under the house, dismantled most of the shelter, gotten rid of trash, set up a temporary kitchen and lighting arrangement there, and checked with moving companies' service in the area. (None.)

As I finished up the final cleaning "Hey! I didn't know I had **that** left!" Dennis kept crying as things surfaced. "You mind if I take these?" he asked, indicating some of the good tools he'd had to get. "I bought them out of the fund."

"Fine!" I said.

"Hey, ya got any money left?"

"No."

"Well, we gotta do the **top** of the house, and the railings, and the lumber for shelves, closets...things like that."

I could only give him \$20 cash for railing lumber at the time; I'd still have to find some for septic field gravel, pipe, etc. I'd made a list of things Dennis "forgets". "Here." I gave it to him.

"Oh..well," he stuffed it in his crammed file.

About 2:30 p.m. Thursday, he got ready to leave. We were very proud of all we'd done. "Well, all the house exterior things are done except the porch railings," he said. And added he'd do them later. He also intends to put a railing on the stairs to loft, and frame in a closet and put on window locks and **get in the septic tank** (with Case's promised help) **this next week.**

Dennis, the builder, looked back on his handiwork as he left:

"Where can I carve my name?" he twinkled.

The next day after Dennis left: It was a cold and gloomy morning, but by the time I had finished creosoting both outside steps the sun was out and it was nice. I was very tired after that job and decided I'd stay down and nap in the car, for all the new changes had deprived me of my former lounging set-ups around the cabin.

Later: I was sound asleep in the car. A man goes crunching by in the gravel headed toward the cabin. "Hey!" I scrambled up.

"Has the electrical inspector been here yet?" he is asking me. It's a PUD man; evidently Case had sent him. He seemed to think we were ready to hitch up.

"Err...umm...I can't seem to find an electrician.." I say.

"I thought your son was going to do yours?"

"Uh...oh no! He's in California!"

"Then you won't be ready for awhile?"

"No."

He goes.

The creosoting job of all exposed beams around and under cabin was a long, hard, nasty, smelly, dirty job.

It was 7 p.m. before I had it and clean up done. I'd cleaned out under the north side of the cabin and I stashed all those heavy cans of "goop" there, worrying that it might be dangerous to store all that inflammable stuff near the house. But I didn't know where else to put it, since the shelter down, where Dennis and Abbie had stored them before.

And I wondered why they got so much? There were about 2 or 3 gallons of roof "goop" and about 6 of creosote, all rusting and spilling. What a mess! By the end of that day I never wanted to see another can of "goop" again!

New Rest Area: Weary, weary I fixed a drink and took my cigs to a new little rest place I'd discovered: on the north side of the cabin there is a sawed-off stump amongst the foundations. I put a pillow on it and leaned my tired back against the roof. It was just right. The two foundations on either side made convenient "coffee tables". No matter that Dennis' now-full little cesspool right beside me, for, in front of me, nothing but virgin woods to look at. Perfect. I rested.



Cess pool: I rested, and began to chuckle, thinking of my adventure with it the day Case called Dennis down to help him. →



I was circling the cabin doing the bases of the rafters when I came upon a horrifying sight—the full and uncovered cess pool!

I recalled that round piece of counter topping Dennis had cut out to put in the wash basin...Aha! A cover?

I ran and got it. It fitted exactly! But...I thought I'd better prod to loosen any packed-ahem!—sediment at the bottom of the hole...I took a long stick, and

—There went my precious cigarettes into the hole!

Actually, only one fell in, but why not a good story? They were hard to come by up there in the woods.

The mysterious tracks. What in the world? The roof had tracks on it as if some gigantic bird had walked across. Then I began to laugh. During that creosoting, my favorite garden gloves had become saturated and ruined with creosote. (And my hands were aflame with the stuff.) I had leaned with one hand on the roof as I progressed, painting. It looked—as if some webfooted elf had tried to climb the roof!

May 9, Friday. I was alarmed because it was 8 a.m. before I awoke. I would be late for my appointment at noon; for this city gal always dressed up for appointments and dates, especially new ones like today's appointment with...the garbage man.

Though the little house? wren sang merrily, my euphoria was gone: it was chill and overcast and my money was about gone. My cash for this trip, that is. Later, I felt cheered at the cozy noises of the clock ticking and the fire crackling.

But Case came before the garbage man. He acted very nervous. He wanted some more help from Dennis. I told him he'd gone.

"Oh, by the way," he said, "three cars were stolen down around my place. Mine was, too."

I sighed inwardly: here I thought I was getting away from all that by moving from the city into the woods.

I walked out with Case. "Ya gotta **cute** cabin here!" he said, and fled while I growled my way back to the cabin—cute! grrr!

Case's car they found later down the road, abandoned and stripped of some parts.

The garbage man: I saw his truck come a little early—before noon, and raced down to catch him, but...whoops!...delayed for had to take a different route: Dennis and Case had left septic field line over the path. But he waved, "Be right back!"

Dennis had said "Oh, just give him \$5 and he'll lug all that stuff away." But I didn't have a \$5 bill.

But the man didn't come back until after I'd made a couple of trips racing back and forth trying to spot him. Then he was back.

"Wrong order," he said. "Went up next street."

"Could you...would you..." I asked, fingering my \$17 and fresh from city garbage pirates experiences, "...two bags?"

"Sure!"

"How much?" I asked, warily.

"Oh...50¢."

Terribly relieved, I led him back in to get the bags.

"Gee!" he cries, "This is **great!** I'd give **anything** for a place like **this!**"

"Well, **thank** you! I said and gave him a dollar and a wink (keep the change).. "Plastic bags ok for my garbage?"

"Yeah! I prefer them! People are always bitching about our banging up their cans!"

He left. All was fine.

May 10, Saturday. I worked hard all day long, mostly inside, non-stop. Though I wanted badly to get out in that sun, I didn't take time to rest until 7 p.m. Then I put a (waterproof) lawn chair out in the cedar grove to create a new escape rest area.

I worked hard, but had fun, for I was doing things I like to do: perfecting, organizing, "neatifying". I just wished I didn't have to hurry so: a deadline of only two more days.

What a mess it was! But I got it all clean, and back to Dennis' workshop condition—my stuff all packed out of his way. I got the bathroom and kitchen perfected as much as possible. I salvaged all that construction plastic—what a job that was!—and stashed it. I regretted I didn't take a picture, for it looked so silly, pinned all along the roof to dry. I did a little primitive laundry.

In the evening, I made a fire and concocted a box step stool out of scrap lumber before they burn it all. I sorted Dennis' nails. I made some instant soup. And "fell upstairs" into bed about 10:30 p.m. It was along, hard day.

May 11, Sunday: I wake early to bright overcast and quiet, quiet. The mouse that had been rustling the foil I'd left down there as noise trap for it seems to be gone—after I banged at it. No birds. No dogs. Just the ticking of the clock. But, as the sun tops the trees, a bird, a dog, a faraway machine...the world wakes.

I wished myself "**Happy Mothers' Day!**" as the birds sang and the sun shone. And then I began happily cleaning out the stove and getting wood in (the Comumbia River sand worked fine!)—and cleaning my casement windows. These things I'd been looking forward to doing for a long, long time. Casement windows are so easy to clean! After all the stinker kinds of windows I've had to clean all my life!

I was very content just **playing** house in my own new house, all the rough work done. I "bathed" and cleaned up, deciding to do only paper work the rest of the day.

Laugh: Mouse such an Ivory soap addict it even managed to get the cover off the soap dish to get at it! I try to fool it by putting the soap up high in soap caddy in shower.

I did a few more little chores, like cleaning out the car preparatory to leaving, and then I settled down at the table in the sun and worked hard all afternoon on those papers.

It was all so ideal I almost got the weeps at the thought of having to leave.

Later I felt even more loathe to leave when, coming back from a trip to the store, the cabin looked so beautiful and inviting—all my dark-colored creosoting and Dennis' new shingles all melted into a woodsy brown with the sun highlighting into a contrasting brilliant chartreuse that graceful little vine maple in front; and the sun filtering through the trees and it so quiet—just the swish of the tree tops—a soft bird call now and then—the sound of a twig falling—it was very pretty and peaceful, and, again, I hated to think of having to leave.

That evening I found myself hacking and hewing at brush. I had two reasons: one, to clear to be able to see what we called "the salmonberry patch"—the only place where the afternoon sun came in: two, to cut off overhanging branches that would get in Dennis' and Case's way when they started to work on the septic tank.

I was doing the latter when the peace and quiet was rent by **angry voices**. I could hear every word. It sounded like a marital fight? And then noises like gun shots. A woman's voice, "Open that door, Marty!"

I sneaked down to the cul-de-sac to peek. Seemed to be a party or something in that first house where the young couple? I sighed. (You can't get away from it.)

But, it simmered down, and, later evening the silence was so utter, I even missed the mouse!

And, later, near dawn, when I got up to go to the bathroom, I wondered when I found the door standing open: only me and the mouse here and whatever was that loud crash in the night? Fear never entered my head: I only thought a pretty competent mouse that can open doors!

I was beginning my trip home, money worries, and leavings frets. I wanted to be all ready to leave when Dennis came, but I would have some last minute "business" things to talk over...He had said he might be late—wanted to stop and get some 2x4's for the railings. I had surveyed everything; all was neat and clean...(Good work, Dennis! It's beginning to be a house, a little house in the woods—"away from the madding throng"....) Speaking of which...Oh no!

Early morning. Car doors begin slamming down below: people going to work. People. The city...intruding...I see Case and his wife sitting outside nigh onto the roadside, puffing and panting because it is so hot in their camper, their lot denuded of trees and their shade and beside them a large pile of the downed trees signed "for sale". (Fools!)

May 12, Monday. The day is cloudy and cold. I am glad, because it makes it easier to leave.

I waited for Dennis, who brought me a piece of rhubarb pie—all I had for breakfast—and then we parted early afternoon—about 1:30 p.m.—he anxious to get to work on the cabin and I off on my long trip to Vancouver. But we parted in rather a controversial scene, which roiled in my mind as I left...

I stopped and chatted a bit with Case. "Sure! Move in!" he cries.

Then I stopped in Monroe at bank and to call Abbie...

And then I treated myself to a huge "truckers' breakfast" at the Holiday Inn at the stop light at the junction of Main Street and the Highway. There, when they wanted 65¢ to fill my pint thermos, I said, "No!", ordered a refill on my breakfast coffee and poured it in the thermos myself!

TRIP BACK TO VANCOUVER

It was a long, arduous, boring trip.

I went via Kent Valley and got fouled up **again** and got lost **again**—two or three times on all those interchanges for I got to thinking about... things...and the cabin...and missed the turn-offs. I decided I'd better turn off **thinking** about that last scene with Dennis and concentrate on driving...

→ The first goof was when I was figuring how much that electrician would cost at \$20 an hour—and next thing I knew I was driving into **Everett!**—and had to go all the way back...

→ Then I made a wrong turn again going into **Parkland** to stop and shop at that discount hardware there, where all I bought was some orange knobs for the bathroom door...

→ Later, **Chehalis**, tired, I found that little park near there and got out and walked around and stretched, and so on...

→ The last stint was dreary and long—drizzling—hard to see...

I got home about 9 p.m.

I allotted the next day to trying to clarify that leave-taking in Monroe, for new developments in Vancouver were forcing me to figure out just where I stood.

Last day at the cabin: Dennis seemed to be in a touchy mood when he came, just walking in and surprising me. (That trail needs some gravel or sound making device; one can't hear anyone coming.)

I was all dressed and ready except for a few things I had to pack up and get out. I had interrupted this because I'd realized that putting the electrical fuse box in the bedroom would interfere in closet plans, and so I was making marks for the closet trying to figure it out.

When Dennis came in all laden with his gear, I began flying around trying to get my stuff out of the way. "Well, hi!" I'd said, and was chattering on trying to tell him all the good things I'd saved up to tell him, and about my plans and ideas I'd had. I wanted to do this before I got out my notes to show him.

He seemed annoyed and said he'd forgotten all the tools he'd meant to bring. But still I couldn't understand the glare he gave me as he said, "You realize I am not coming up here anymore."

"Yes, yes," I said, well aware that his time for working on the cabin was running out and he had to get on with his own life. "I realize that. I...was just trying to figure out the closet."

"Well, what in hell do you want?" he asked.

I told him the best I could, but I hadn't had time to figure it out.

"Well, I've got this ship-lap," he said.

"What's that?"

He showed me; it was some of the salvage lumber he'd gotten from that barn.

"Gonna make you a closet out of that..and make some doors for it out of that, too." (I had sort of planned curtain doors to save room, but I let it go.) "Should get a frame inspector up here."

"Uh...Case said that comes later; can't close off walls until electricity in."

Dennis turned and walked off. Then, "You're not going to get the electricity in?"

"I can't! I just don't have a big enough hunk of money for it until I see about that loan...I...hope it will go smoothly...(meaning the loan.)" Dennis muttered something about his time limit.


"Oh, I understand," I said. "Your life..gotta get on with it. Won't you be glad when you don't have to move family around? So many times! And you moved Julie (his sister) so many times.."(and now me)

He glared at me. "Don't tell me **your** troubles!" he snapped.

"Uh...were you all planning to come down to move me?"

"Oh no! I'll come on the bus!"

"Well, I hope I can pay your fare, then."

We didn't talk anymore about the electricity or the closet. I went on with my packing up and Dennis went, across the room, put a foot up on a bench and started playing his harmonica—"Turkey in the Straw"—and then he started singing the words "It don't rain on my house when it's raining!" 

I laughed. I'd never heard those words to it before.

All was ok.

Later: "I think I'll call Abbie...and, do you think she'd mind if I not stop by there...just go on straight through?" I told Dennis. He shrugged.

He was already assembling stuff to get to work.

I started getting my stuff out to the car, Dennis insisting on taking the garbage sack out and just **looked** at me when the wheelbarrow tipped and my beer cans and wine bottles rolled out. (Oh well, I'm a big girl, now.)

We made a last tour of inspection. Dennis lauded me on my creosote job, and appreciated my trimming off branches for the septic tank work. "Wouldn't it be nice, " I said, to pile rocks around those (starkly ugly) foundations and plant vines or something?"

"Yeah!" he said. "You want me to save rocks for you?"

"Yeah! Alluvial ones! Round ones!" (All there is on the property.) "I'll leave the shelter mess for Abbie and the kids to finish tearing down," I said, gesturing, "and that cot out there, I've covered it with plastic...It'll be ok."

"But that's the kids' favorite bed! "

"We'll bring it back in, then. I just thought it'd be out of your way when you work.. I'll be fussing around down there putting stuff into the car," I told him.

"Oh would you mind moving your car out of the way so I can get out?"

He walked out with me. "You sure you want to live up here?" he asked.

"Yes! Yes! and Yes!...Any message for Abbie when I call her?"

"Um...no." He seemed anxious to get back to work. We only shook hands and he hastened back up the trail and I set off.

No kiss this time? I thought? And...oh...I forgot to tell him the little house wren is nesting in the rafters again.

Case was roaming around outside when I went by, so I pulled up and chatted a bit. "Dennis is up there," I said. And..."Guess I'll move in."

"We-e-l-l, nobody will tell...unless Marty (Carroll) I don't like her," he said. "She's...unfeminine."

"Well, she is a 'career gal' type," I said. I told him about my squabbles about electricity. You get your electrical inspection ok?"

"No. No. The guy never came. And I was here **all the time**."

I objected. "Oh no you weren't...I stopped by and..."

"Oh well, guess we **did** go to town. We took my daughter out to dinner for Mothers' Day. Dennis take you out?"

"No no..."

"You mean he didn't even..."

But my mind was busy. "Oh he wished me 'happy Mothers' Day' today...and brought me a piece of home made rhubarb pie...Well, you and Dennis get along!" I chided.

"Oh we **will**!"

"Dennis says it's nice, cool weather for digging!" I called as I drove off and he trudged thoughtfully up the slope to his ugly little house.

When I called Abbie from Monroe to tell her I wasn't going to stop but go straight on, "Oh fine!" she lilted. And that was all. I set out anxious to get the trip over with.

" Vancouver. Troubles. "

Back in my dismal abode, my gossip-monger pesky fat neighbor informed me, first thing, that the new managers said I was a trouble-maker and they were going to get rid of me as fast as they could! "

I wasted no time fretting that, but got immediately on actions to speed my long-awaited departure:

*** I called U-Haul moving company...and was relieved that renting a truck was not as expensive as I'd feared: not \$300, but only \$200 to Lynwood. And 3 days to turn the truck in up there. Gas they filled at their end and we filled when returned. \$40 deposit on gas and equipment—returnable. Whee! It was possible! I could even charge on my master-charge if I needed to!

*** I measured the nice big closet that was the one thing I enjoyed in my Dump apartment and found that the one Dennis was going to build would be as big. Whee! Things were looking up!

*** I called and found out bus fare for Dennis would be only \$9.50. Whee!

*** I wrote three post cards giving written notice that I would be out by June 17th, the day Dennis and I had tentatively set. I mailed one to Villa West managers and one to the cartel of crooks that had just bought that Dump and one "to me" c/o Bob Barnes—in case I needed a witness.

*** I set to work trying to find money for the electricity.

May 14, Wednesday. 7:30 p.m. I called **Mike and Marylyn**, loathe to, to test them out about a loan. They both came on their two phones.

"Just talking about you at dinner! Wondering what you were doing!"

"Oh, can't afford this call...new developments...will talk about them sometime..."

"Why not now?" Mike asked.

So I rushed into a hasty tale about the credit union and using the car as collateral. "Don't want to," I said.

Mike didn't seem upset about my information or the 14% interest. "Oh that's usual," he said.

I blathered on. "Well, we're about through at cabin, but...need electricity...a hunk of money for. Hey! How much would **you** charge me? I can pay back..."

"Oh, never thought of it." Marylyn comes on, "Well, we're broke, too, you know"

Ignoring that, I rushed on with the necessity of giving 30 days notice to move and how I feared they'd cheat me out of return of down payment. "Just...would you back me up if I fall on my face?"

"Oh, sure."

"The moving...got some more to check on that...maybe \$200-\$300."

"Oh yeah," says Mike, unruffled. "But what are you going to do?"

"Oh...well..." And I told him I'd set up a date. "All I need to do is find the means and the money to effect it. If I can just get out of here and paying the \$200 a month it's costing me...I'll pay you back; I've got \$600 coming in and a raise of \$50 in social security..."

"Oh!?" They began to give me a lot of advice about writing the electrician and getting an estimate.

I quibbled, burned about my experience of trying to contact that James Bond.

"Well, he should put it in when you're not there."

"No no. I want to see what he does. Besides he'd be getting in Dennis' way—he is putting in the railings and the septic tank—and then...he's **through**..as of June 30! And we can't get inspection until the electricity is in."

We went on and on. I tried to sum it up: "Well, all I want to know is if you'll back me up if I go ahead and give notice..."

"Oh sure."

"If I can just get my hands on that \$200 a month..."

"Well, get a copy of the code up there," Mike said, "and maybe...I..."

"Oh, I've been through all that," I said. And I went into my hassles with the credit union and the car loan.

"Oh, we'll help you!"

We changed the subject to talk about their proposed trip up. They had not, as yet, even seen the property, remember. They, on their two phones, were starting a little marital bickering about details of the trip. "You'd better go to Dennis—the cabin is a hard place to find." I suggested.

To which Mike said, "Do we have to? There's no place to stay there. Can't you just draw us up a map and we can go straight to your place?"

"Oh yes. But that's a long drive!"

"Well, we won't drive straight through...(more marital bickering).

"There are no motels in West Seattle," I said.

"I **know**!" Mike said. (His trips up to settle Ed's estate.)

"There's one at Monroe...not very sophisticated, but..."

"Neither is West Seattle!" Mike cried.

"Well, there's lots of room at the cabin...for sleeping bags, etc...Are you planning to stop in Vancouver?"

"Oh no. On way back." Seems he had some mysterious business there for the firm he worked for (HP), but he didn't divulge it. There was still nothing settled about where they'd stay when they came up. "I haven't talked to Bud and Paula lately," I said, wondering if I could set something up for them to stay there. Silence.

"Well, we'll back you up...emergency...and, next time...call collect!"

I began to feel happier. "Oh tell the boys there's a windfall tree there Dennis means to cut up for firewood...and a bucksaw...they'll get a lot of exercise!" (Did I hear whoops from the background?)

We hung up. It was a very expensive call. But, I hung up thinking Whee! I'll be free of Vancouver! And landlords! and, Toyota! my precious car! You are saved! I can tell the credit union to go to hell!

A sudden blaze of setting sunlight fell on my papers as I made notes.

May 15, Thursday. Office. I made a prolonged visit back there, though things and people were so changed that I was no longer welcomed except by the few friends I had left there, but I had "business" to attend to and some scuttlebutting to do....

I caught the current head of the credit union there and confronted him about that 14% interest when Washington State law had a limit of 12%. "Oh credit unions are exempt!" he said. When some of the men and I discussed this, it created quite a furor. "How in the hell do they get away with that?" Brian said.

And there were other chicaneries I found out about, some of which were:

*** I found out about the local land use maps, grist for my battle with Villa West.

*** I studied maps and plotted a truck moving route. And I talked to the guys about trucking companies and moving, but I didn't get much help there.

*** I got a gal to xerox the Washington Landlord/tenants laws I'd procured anent my battle with Villa West. And I explained to Bob why I was sending him that post card.

*** I found out a lot about Jack Hall, who'd kicked me out of my triplex.

I went home and began to mark off the days on the calendar and make lists of things that had to be done. I got a little thrill, both of fear and joy; this is a major undertaking, and in **one month**—Memorial Day week end—I shall start packing! And the day I leave Vancouver will indeed be a memorial day!

***I worked on arranging to see people and getting legal information on what I feared was going to be another one of those big landlord/tenant battles I was getting all too familiar with before I left.

***I made last arrangements with the telephone company. (They said I'd been a very good customer!)

***I worked my finances over "to a fare-thee-well" (to Vancouver?), not even counting on getting back my deposit due from Villa West.

The electricity: I decided I'd write the guy and get the work scheduled for June. But, I weary of the lone-lil-le-lady battle, I'd sic him onto Mike; use the male buddy buddy system. Still problems to hassle there...

For fun, I planned my garden I'd have up there, Brian having given me pointers on how to make a greenhouse and so on.

I began to sweat the details and difficulties of Dennis moving me all alone in one day all that distance and no way we could get help; Bob and Dave would have to work. The more I thought of it the more impossible it seemed.

Meantime, as if an omen? my "talisman", the St. Andrew's cross, which I still thought was the travelers' patron saint and was afraid to take off even when bathing was beginning to chafe my neck raw and sore.

May 19, Sunday. Morning. I call Dennis. He's quite excited! The hole's all dug for the septic tank; Case helped him. It went "easy" but they hit "hard pan"—old river bed he called it (alluvial till probably) but not before the hole was finished. The little trees there ok; didn't disturb them. He'd wanted to go ahead with getting the tank in, but Case disappeared.

He said Case had to pay \$90 for his septic tank gravel. That was bad news, but he said he'd call me the next week and let me know how much. He figured the drain field would be done in two weeks. And he lamented that he hadn't **built** me a septic tank and saved me money. (Heavens! Hadn't he done enough?!)

He got the chimney fixed. And the front wall finished. And the railings all in in the loft. Hadn't done anything on the closet yet—worried about how much space I'd need for the bed...

Yes, my lost rain coat was up there. No he hadn't found my tape yet...

I told him about Mike and the electricity deal. "Hey! Ok!" he was excited and thrilled. He approved of my putting the electric hassle with Markley off on Mike. He said Case said he'd help with the electricity. I told him Mike said he'd do some of it if I got a copy of the code.

"Hey! maybe I can get the walls framed up!" he cried as we agreed we'd both been told the same thing: that electricity was a simple job, really, and "would only only take a few days, and only a few minutes to hitch up heaters" I reported I'd been told.

"Yeah! That's what they all **tell** me. Well, gosh!" he says. "Wish I were **up** on electricity—I'd put that in for you." (Again, hadn't he done enough? And, one wonders if it were all that simple, why I was having such a long hassle about it, eh?)

I was giving him the information about the bus. "What about the trucks?"

"Ok. Two possibles: U-Haul cheaper..." I explained. "And Western wants..."

"Who are they? Never heard of them."

"Oh...agents for...uh...Ryder trucks...but they want \$350 outlay."

"Ooch! What size truck?"

"Oh...let me...notes...14'x20'but, figured a 20'..."

"**You** don't need a 20! Take a 14... be ok." (would save \$10.)

"But my stuff...all packed...big heavy cases..."

"Oh. Ok," he said.

"But I can get a **dolly**! I figured that in the expenses."

"Hey! That's be **helpful**...that trail up there..."

We had to stop talking for, on the other side my apartment door, a workman hired to work on a **Sunday** by new managers was banging away ripping off baseboards in the hall. "Have to talk to you later," I explained to Dennis. "Too much noise here..."

We hung up. I was all **excited!** As excited as Dennis was! I ran to the typewriter to start the letter to Markley, the electrician...as TV played some pretty Irish music...vs the hallway din...

My phone rings. It's Loraine, my fat gossip-monger next door neighbor. "The mountain just blew up!" she cries. "I-5 (the route north) all closed off!"

I don't know whether to believe her or not, she always so full of "dire tales"; and odd I didn't notice anything!

"Hardest hit in Yakima!" she goes on, "3 inches of soot! Situation in Yakima **extremely dangerous!**"

I start to giggle. (A person's revenge against the town of my birth I hated so?)

Phone AGAIN! My aunt Alice. "Are you ok?"

"Why, yes!" I reassure her. "Didn't even know it happened! Neighbor just called me! Watch Channel 10, they say." I tell Alice.

I call Dennis back and tell him. "Yeah!" he says. "You gonna go see?" "I dunno..." I say.

So I dress and take the car out and go see if I can see anything, though everything looks as usual outside. I drive clear to I-5 and park by roadside since the plateau of plains of Vancouver shut off any view of the mountain from the lowlands slump where the Villi West slum is located.

I park (illegally) on the freeway shoulder, (but so are others) and leave the radio on. A young man with a baby on his back is there.

"I'm worried," he says. "I've got a brother up at Toutle River!"

The radio is blating out mass hysteria; yet when I drove through Vancouver, there were teen agers roaming around, complacent, as if they cared less.

There was really nothing to see. All I could see was a gray mass—like a cloud—drifting east from the mountain top. I kidded everyone. but then, a little bored with it all, I went home.

The workman in the hall was as far as the door of my apartment, laying, not the fine new red carpeting they'd put down in the more public part of the building, but the old green stuff they'd ripped up from the halls.

"No red carpet for me?" I quipped.

"For you! a red rose!" he said. Hmmm. Well, I had tried to be nice to him and sympathized with his being asked to work on a Sunday...

Later: I went out to see the progress of the work they were doing out there. That broken back door that had stood open all the time I was there, letting in vandals and prowling kids they were—at last—putting a lock on; the door Dennis and I would have to bug all my stuff through we'd now have to stop and lock and unlock each trip...

It was only later that day it hit me—

The incredible!

A year I'd tried to get out of that slum—
And then the mountain blew and blocked the route out

Leftovers from that day:

The telephone company: They were so nice. "We can transfer your account", she said.

"To General?"

"Well..no."

"Their salesmen have been buggin' me for a year!" I said. "Uh...people don't seem to like General!"

"Oh?" she said.

"Well, Ma Bell, I'll miss you!" I said.

Leftover 2: **Dennis and the refrigerator:** I'd been explaining about the mileage expense with rented trucks. "I'll have to go into Seattle with it to get the refrigerator," he'd said.

"Oh...look..it's ok. You don't have to..." For now I didn't have the money to keep my part of deal to buy them a new refrigerator when I took their old little one. But he insisted. "Oh...it's ok...we'll...manage..." he said.
(God bless 'em!)

The next day, I called Bob Barnes at the office, distraught about the highway being closed. "Oh, it's ok," Bob said, unperturbed. "They'll just reroute the traffic." (Which perturbed me! with Dennis and I sweating every tiny bit of mileage to pay!)

I hope it would be all right, for, the date set, the irony of my position struck me: **two years** since my retirement I'd been trying to get out of Vancouver and now the escape routes were blocked off! Not only I-5, the main route, but the inland route I'd been taking around by Morton wiped out.

Also, all this time I'd been lamenting what an awful slum I was living in, and now, just before Dennis coming down so I could prove how awful it was, the new management was getting it all fixed up—rugs in halls, lawn grass finally cut, new paint, and so on!

May 20, Tuesday. I was making headway in my moving preparation chores.

***I went downtown and worked some more with the Social Security office and the tangled mess they'd made of transferring my check onto direct deposit. They said it's be a month or so before it would transfer. This didn't help my tight financial situation, of course.

*** Then to the bank and the knotty hassle they made about my account transfer. It finally straightened out. The stupid woman I'd had to work with said I'd been a joy to work with—which is more than I could say about her. She'd said, "You'd better tell your son to get that mail box up for we'll be sending stuff to you."

***So I went to the stationer's and got some stick-on letters for the mail box.

***Then to the credit union, where Sue was very sweet and flattering and insisted I come in and see them before I left.

***To storage next, where I loaded up the car with packing boxes only to have one fall out onto the street on my way back. For I took that bumpy back road, trying to do all this secretly, hoping not to alert those vindictive managers into thinking I was skipping out on them.

During all this the car radio news: "They expect Spirit Lake dam to break and wipe out I-5! Might be a 200 mile detour!" And we paying mileage.

Home. The phone rang. It was Paula, checking on me to see if I was all right—the mountain. I assured her I was and asked about Madeline in Yakima. They all right, too. I told her about my moving plans. She was delighted! and offered hospitality for Mike and Marylyn when they came up.

I called Mike then, to tell him that. "Uh, yes," he said. "Maybe we can get around to seeing them while we are there." He was glad to hear that the mountain had not hurt me. "I'll write that electrician tomorrow," I said. "Oh, are you still going that route?"

I hung up feeling discouraged again.

And it didn't help; all these dire reports.

How in the world are we going to effect this move?

Sue said her husband was a trucker, and that they had a roadblock at Troutle River bridge. They sent him all the way back and around by way of Astoria. And traffic the other way was held up for three hours.

May 21, Wednesday. I finally sweated out that blasted letter to the electrician. It was hard to accomplish in my dismantled place. I made a copy of it, enclosed my plans for circuits to show him how simple a job it was so he wouldn't estimate too high, and then went to the post office and mailed it.

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Then home to ~~WORRY, WORRY, WORRY~~

- * Will I have enough money to effect this move?
- * Will that highway be open?
- * Will the managers and their coldblooded consortium owners give me a bad time before I get out?
- * How much is Dennis going to need for that gravel? He said he'd call this week end, but it's a 3-day Holiday: will he get involved and forget?

Conversely: things that were good: I was getting down to the last chores. How much easier this move was as to packing compared to all my others! Those packing cartons the Highway Department bought me are so handy; and so much of my stuff is already up there.

Looking at the moving van brochure—Dennis will like that! The vans have a radio—and a ramp—we can use that to get the stuff over those back steps here...I was getting excited: Mike said he'd give me a TV for a house warming present...(maybe)...but I'd rather he'd help with the electricity expense...Wonder if I'll really get to have those three spotlights I designed to have over my kitchen sink? I've **never** had a well-lighted sink!

Getting it all done! Heavens! I'll be all ready by the first...Then what'll I do for those 17 days?...I go on dismantling the living room, sorting and salvaging my possessions and all my art equipment and stuff...Desk is ready. Tools...all my silly little momentoes and treasures...car...a place for us! A **home**! Never to move again!

I call Dennis: He didn't get up there at all last week—car trouble—dead battery—didn't get anything done at all. He said they were all going up there for the Holiday week end. I was envious!

"And what are you going to do?" he asked.

"Pack!!!"

May 24, Saturday

On the news: "Another blow up on the mountain this afternoon. Ash is falling all over Vancouver and Portland!"

I go outside to see. Oh no! My car is all all covered with volcanic ash! How can I get it off? There is no hose or outside faucet here. I do the best I can with a bucket of water and rags, thinking, Well, that's something I've never done: clean a volcano off my car! [Note: None of us knew, then, of the abrasive qualities of that ash. I was to regret my scrubbing that stuff off.]

News. Later. "The mountain is not quieting down."

Next day: I wake up and find myself coughing on the way to the bathroom. Why does it look so strange outside? All the little trees are drooping. **Everything** is grey! The sky, too. The air is motionless. There is no wind. Silence. It's like a world entombed. Satan has been here and left a dusting of brimstone all over Vancouver? Memorial Day...ashes to ashes...

I'll have to wash the car off again. But this time on the news: "Don't use a brush; it'll scratch" and "ash can ruin motors." Wonder if I can find a new air filter before I leave? What will this do to a rented motor? "Stay inside," warns the news. Guess everyone does. It is eerie out there. Not a sign of life.

Later: TV news: "Another major explosion last night! Ash is going clear up to Seattle! Kelso area all socked in. I-5 closed! Mountain blew at 2:30 this morning. May be earthquakes. Wind will not change until Wednesday. Please stay inside!"

Later: There are scavenger birds out there fighting over worms...I sneak out and check car. The world looks as if someone had dumped a huge bag of cement all over it. The sky—thick grey clouds, but they are scudding east. Hope? As if derisive, the carborundum plant over there is spewing out even more grit from its chimney...Inside, it's cold; there is no heat.

News: "Kelso—Longview—power and phones out. Flood warnings. Log jams. I-5 open only to people who might be stranded. Do not go out!"

I'm scared. Lonesome. I try to call Mike and Marylyn. Can't get through.

Later: It starts to rain. I go out to check the car. It's horrible out there. Everything all caked with mud, but rain is starting to wash the leaves off. I get some mud off the car and try engine. It starts.
A guy goes by. I quip, "Bet it's the first time ever cars get cleaned off from a volcano!"

"They never had cars...before," he rejoins.

I venture to go to the store. On the way there is a kid and a man using a hose. I offer to pay to use the hose. "Go ahead," the man says, "You don't have to pay." I wash the car off. But by the time I get home again the car is all powdery white again. (You **can't** wash that stuff off!)

Later: I get Mike and Marylyn on the phone. They didn't even know about the mountain! "Maybe we'd better check with you before we come up," Mike says.

The next day. May 26, Monday. There is a new ash fall. Everything like grey velvet. People are going around with cloths over their noses. Rain makes the stuff slippery; there are accidents.

May 27, Tuesday. Dennis calls. He wants \$80 for gravel. Is broke. Can't go up to the cabin unless he has money. Will use it and pay back. Spent three days up there, but couldn't work on septic tank as it rained. I told him I'd arrange a transfer that day and call him back so he could go up the next day. I did.

I check with the Highway Department. Bob says the road is open. All ok.

The sun came out. I went and closed out both the credit union and my bank account. I had \$100 left in the bank. I will send some to Dennis for gas; and keep some for me. And I sold my plastic flower collection to a junk shop for \$3.

I go to a nice restaurant and treat myself.

That night I called Dennis. I told him I'd sent the money and I'd found \$5 in the bottom of the barrel I'd send for gas.

"Oh really?" he said. Then..."I promised you I'd do the septic tank this week, but it's full of water."

I groaned. "Does that mean no absorption, then?"

"Oh, it's ok. It goes down...a week of good weather..." He said that Abbie's parents weren't in Yakima at the time of the ash fall, but that some of the were coming out of church—there was a dark sky and thunder and lightning and pieces of black things falling out of the sky.

"Must have been frightening!" I said.

"Yeah! you have that?"

"No. It's just...well...like cement...flour all over." I noticed my notes: "Hey, would you crayon these numbers on the mail box?"

"Where do you want the mail box?" he asked, sounding very excited. (It was that huge box they'd given me for Christmas.)

"Oh, where the next tenants (the two adjoining lots) can use it, too." (What the post office had told me—have to group them, roadside.)

"I'm going to use those cedar logs for post!" he cried,

"Great! I don't expect much mail, but will you check it once in awhile?"

The mail box up! Almost...home!

But, as I suffered the bangings and bumpings and uproars of the Dump, and new grit and ashfall outside, a little apprehension crept in: will I be lonesome and bored up there? after the novelty wears off? with no neighbors to cuss at, no phone, no TV, no nearby store to run to when I get stir crazy? But I'll have **work** to do, and things to **love**. Here I hate and resent everything about me.

May 31, Saturday. I awake to a leaden sky. Inside and out everything is gritty and filthy from the ash fall, the trouble now being that people are not driving slowly on what is on the streets as requested to, but speeding, so that it is falling **up**, not down.

I spend the day washing down the apartment. Nice of me, but something I always do no matter how nasty my landlords have been. Later, I took stuff up to the Goodwill wagon, parting, as one has to do, with old treasures. I have 2¢ left in my purse. As I drive back, the sun is going and a bank of dark, evil looking clouds is pouring in from the west!

So ended May.



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JUNE 1980

June 1, Sunday. It has rained. There is no sign of new ash from our vindictive mountain outside, but inside—disaster! My newly scrubbed and polished living room is all dusted over with fine, grey, gritty stuff! But I worked on with my moving chores.

Evening news: Nothing new about the mountain, but—pathetic: speaking on TV the ambitious young geologist who created a panic by reporting that the mountain was spewing lava had tears in his eyes as he admitted he'd made a mistake.

Mike calls: He talked a long time, but didn't say anything about hearing from the electrician until I asked him. Then—yes, he'd heard. Ensued a long quibbling between us to find out what he'd said.

"He estimated \$1395. On top of that I'd have to buy the light fixtures, the heaters and the smoke alarm." Mike adjured me to get another bid. This distressed me as I knew not where, but encouraged me with hope of possibility of getting **someone** to do it.

Mike added that he wants to pay the property taxes—something about his income tax. He also said, as we discussed our convoluted financial set up on the cabin, "We did this all wrong. We should have set up a 'company' or something."

"I know," I sighed. Did he also say that 8 months wasn't too long to pay off a bill? But then I wondered who I'd be owing for the heaters and the extras beyond the electrician's bill?

I told him that some electronics manufacturer was going to build a big plant here. He said that wasn't his company (HP), for they couldn't make the silicon wafers where there was volcanic ash; they had to be absolutely **sterile!** That was interesting!

I **called Dennis** after we hung up. He was unenthusiastic; he thought it was all too much money. He hadn't done any work on the septic tank, still waiting for the rain to stop so it could dry. He got the mail box up and the closet in.

Then I set to work with a "magnetic" duster and "dust collecting" goop trying to clean up that stubborn film that kept drifting in and thinking about what Mike had said about ash. Closing the windows might have helped, but these slum "apartments" were stifling closed up.

June 2, Monday. I had financial problems to effect—the bank. And then I wanted to go to the office and hear about Dave's trip to Europe.

*** First, I accosted Helen, the new manager's wife. I tried to bargain with her. I admitted I'd "given notice" and wanted to know if I could just pay rent for the remaining time I'd be there? No. She was adamant; they wanted a full month's rent whether I there or not. This on top of the \$100 "good faith and/or damage" deposit I'd had to pay and was supposed to get at least half of back. I walked off furious! And went back and phoned the guys at the office for advice. But no help there.

*** I went down to the bank and talked to the gal there. She said there was no way they could help me; why didn't I try the city attorney? I asked her about cashier's checks—or something I could stop payment on.

*** I went to the City Hall and stood in line forever. Nope. Nothing they could do either. Everybody just shrugged—too bad. Why didn't I sue?

During these futile errands, I came across two electricians in trucks. I stopped and asked them what electricians charged? "Oh, about \$20 an hour is usual," they said.

I went on to the office. I had the newest issue of Time magazine with me that I hadn't even read; the cover story about the mountain blowing up. I also had all those tenant/landlord legal information papers I'd been working so hard to acquire. I wanted to make copies of them. I also wanted to start saying my goodbyes to office friends.

I went to landscaping first.

Nobody was there but the new girl employee. She was working hard on a new map of southwestern Washington, which had all been changed and obliterated by the mountain blow up. Her boss, she said, had told her it was for National Geographic magazine.

"But they must have better cartographers than I!" she said.

"But not—cheaper!" I said.

People gathering all pounced onto my Time magazine. I finally left it to circulate while I went to circulate myself. Everybody was talking about the mountain. It was fun!

In the office where they plot land ownerships, a bit of information erupted, shall we say, that particularly pleased me with my loathing of the site of my banishment and sufferings: Vancouver and District #4 Highway Department and, especially, my slum abode beside the Burlington Northern Railway switchyard.

It had never occurred to me, but it seems the top of the mountain belonged to someone. "Who owns it?" someone brought up, "all that land?"

"Burlington Northern!"

"Where is it **now**?" someone asked.

Bob and I laughed. "Gone **east**!" (the ashes).

"I always told you this place would blow up before I left! I laughed.

[So many secret shenanigans being stifled.]

Brian and I had punning contests: "Where's my **magma**-zine?" I asked before I left. "How's that for a pun?" I asked Brian.

They had been talking about everyone wearing face masks on TV. "Here," Dave said. "Here's two—one for you and one for Dennis. Hide them!" he said. "In your purse!" I did. "I stole them from the boss' car!" he said.

"Gee, thanks!" I said.

"Well," I told Dave. "You can come and get your TV." (hoping he'd give me a chance to buy it, but he didn't.) "Mike has promised me a house warming gift...a microwave oven or..."

"What you need is a little color TV," Dave said. "Well, what did you choose?"

"Electricity!" I snapped.

"Oh...sorry." Dave said.

They weren't much help to me on my landlord troubles. "Tell 'em to go to hell!" Reuben said. He'd just been through some real estate deals in that neighborhood. "I've talked to owners! They feel lucky if they get **any** money!"

In fact, all the battling I did downtown—I was all over town talking to people—I didn't find any help offered or available. But I sure collected a lot of angry sob stories about what had happened to **them**!

At the credit union: I was so nervous, the money all gone from my account—to transfer it to my bank account. "This has cost me dearly, (the cabin)," I said.

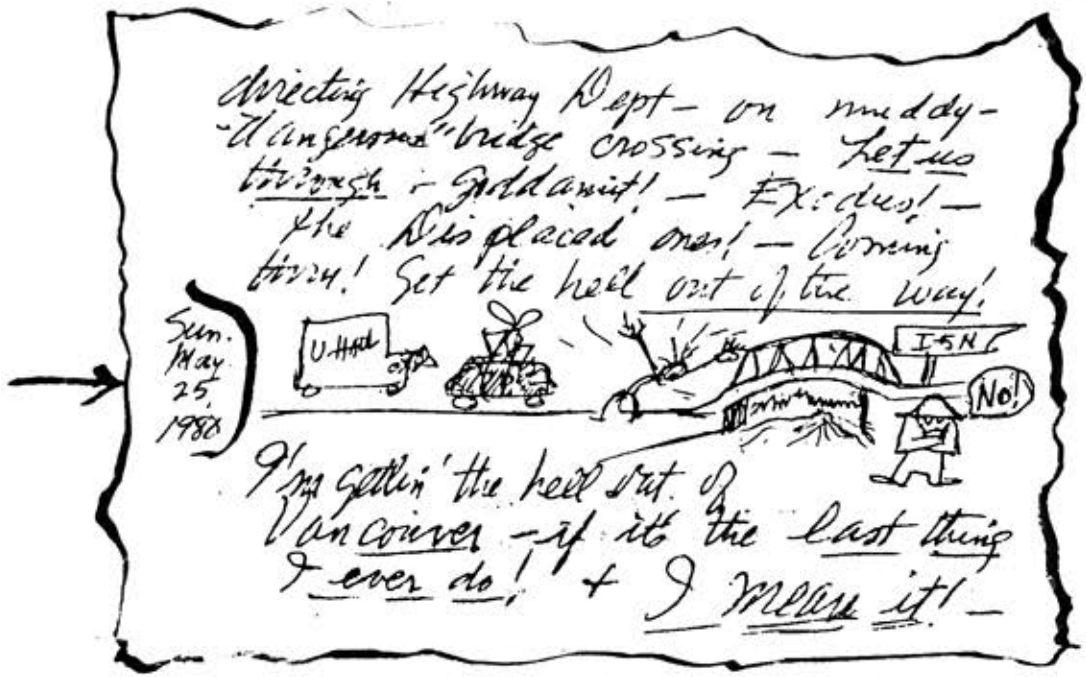
"Yes, we **know**!" said my friendly gal helper. "You're **overdrawn**!" And she handed me a form. "But don't show them this at the bank," she went on. "We **know** your social security check is coming!"

"I've got 2¢ left! I cried.

They all laughed.

On my way home, I was puzzled: I couldn't get anything on car radio, or, later, on TV. Dead.

June 3, Tuesday: I got an early call from my friend, Pam, announcing she'd had her baby earlier than expected. This was good news, but it added to the frantic, complex madhouse my leaving was becoming, for I had to add a promised and demanded visit to see the baby to the list of things I had to tend to. I spent days and much chasing around trying to find her, not knowing or informed that she and the baby had complications and all were flying around back and forth to the hospital in Portland.



I began phoning friends to make my adieu, only to find that, after all these years and my leaving at last, there were evidently not going to be any farewell parties.

Dave had changed his slides- showing party to showing them "sometime at noon" at the office; Bob was going to be out of town on a seminar; some people I was unable to reach—out of town; others were tied down with sickness or injury.

Nobody even asked me out to lunch. It looked like alonesome and uncelebrated leavetaking. It was not, I'm sure, any "brush-offs"—just a set of circumstances that didn't work out.

In all this calamity I still had to get that letter off to the electrician.

June 4, Wednesday: I went and gave the credit union draft to the landlady. Now, after all that harrassing of me, she was sweet as sweet. "Is this a check?" she asked me. I explained. "Oh, we would have taken your check!" she cries. I left before I murdered her.



I have two weeksto go before Ileave. I paid bills and went through a slapstick comedy session battling my big heavydouble mattress to scrub it andlean it against the wall to dry. It would have to be ready for Dennis to sleep on. Where I was to sleep meantime, I didn't know... I ended up sleeping on the box springs.

Life was getting uncomfortable with everything packed.

June 5, Thursday: I set out to tackle more problems:

*** I had to settle with the storage people, with whomI expected another battle, they having given me a lot of argument,too: "not able to change their rules of only full month rental" and "the boss out of town" and so on.,

*** I also had to figure out what to do about those three clumsy big round "tubs" Pat had given me that I'd packed full of papers I wanted to keep. I was afraid Dennis would object to them. Also they were prone to fly open.

*** Too, there were those five big, heavy concrete construction blocks Joan Whitehill had used as base for the "coffee table" she hd concocted and given me many apartments ago. I wanted the big heavy black-painted board she'd used as a top,but I wanted to dispose of the "bricks".

*** Then there was a straight-back kitchen chair I'd decided to dispose of.

It all ended up in what I called "brick day" and turned out quite an adventure.

First I went to the dingy little neighborhood mall where a Goodwill truck always stood. The little green man attendant (he was dressed all in green) said, yes, he'd take the chair but he didn't want the bricks. Dilemma: what would I do with them? "Don't you have some neighbors you could give them to?" he asked. "Well, the kind of neighbors I have," I said, "I'd throw 'em at!" I left him doubled up with laughter.

I then headed toward the storage complex down the narrow street, one side of which was residential, lined with old houses from Vancouver's past, it now a slum area. There was a truck parked at right angles to the street, barring the way. I had to wait. They were backed up to a once handsome old brick house evidently being demolished and two young men were loading used brick into the back of the truck, on the side of which it said "Hidden Brick Co."

This I must explain: when I first came to Vancouver, I was very confused; there was a restaurant called "Hidden House"; there were buildings all over town called "Hidden"—all of them the handsomest establishments in town. In time I found out it was a family name of one of the first pioneer families who had come in, set up a brick kiln and eventually ended up owning the whole town.

This accounted, I suppose, for the lavish and ubiquitous use of brick in Vancouver's fine old historical buildings and streets. They represented historical Vancouver just as the Fort and other things represented Chambreau history in the diaries of great grandpa "Ned" Chambreau Dennis had dug up and worked on. Vancouver history is very exciting and rich in lore.

And, at the time I was there, the original Hidden brick kiln and factory was proudly preserved and still making bricks in the original way! It was located just across the street from that decrepit mall I mentioned, where I did my shopping. And every time I shopped I was just dying to go in there and prowl around, but there was something forbidding looking about it. It looked so old and overgrown and falling down. It had a "private property" effect; it did not invite the public, so to speak.

So. I sat and watched those youths loading that brick from an ancient and charming old brick apartment so hidden in overgrown shrubbery I'd never noticed it before, and I got to wondering if I could just sneak into the ruins of that Hidden factory and just dispose of my "brick" there? And then I began to laugh.

Those poor kids, they'd no sooner get the brick on the truck than they'd spill out. I got out. "Hey!" I said, kidding them, "I've got some brick here I want to get rid of...would you?"

"Sure!" said this handsome youth. Just bring them over to the yard later and ask for me."

"Well, I gotta go to the storage first," I said.

And then we all laughed as they tried to back the truck up over the curb to clear the street and a good part of the bricks they'd so laboriously piled up in the truck cascaded out. I left them laughing and loading.

At the storage units: I went into the office laughing, for outside the door was a big brick tile! "This is brick day!" I cried and told the woman about the above.

"And here I come up to your door and there's a big brick!"

"I just put it there," she said. "My daughter had her plants on it and someone just walked in and stole all her plants!" We sighed over what a sickie world it was.

"Now," I sighed (again). "Do you want to get my file out?" And I prepared to write a check and battle over paying for a month for only a half month's use. I began to dig out the papers I'd prepared preparatory to a fight, for I'd found out some things about the way they did business in the meantime.

She turned to get my file, and then turned around. "Oh...why don't you just return the key and forget it?" I gasped. "You owe ten; you already have credit for seven..."

"Why, thanks!" I cried.

"...and don't worry about moving," she said. "I gotta move, too—to Utah—and I don't wanna."

We chatted a bit more, now friends, and I left.

Moving stories (sob!)

And went to my storage unit. My right wrist was lame—excruciating pain...all that moving and packing, I guess. The storage unit had a big, heavy door; usually the wind would bang it shut, imprisoning me in that dark little cave, and I'd have to use the key to open it each time, never having anything to prop the door open with. This time I did—the bricks. But this time the door **didn't** bang!

I dug out those heavy cement "stepping stones" (from my Pepper Tree garden) one at a time with my left hand and piled them in the car. Then I hassled those round containers. I had marked them "Don't roll" for Dennis for I found out those strange hasps would fly open when rolled (which negated my whole point in taking them from Pat; I thought they'd be easy to just roll in on the path.) Then I discovered they locked.

Next, after a long, cursing struggle, my wrist hurting me so, I scrounged around on the ground and found some nails and secured them further, pounding the nails flat so that Dennis wouldn't cut himself. Then I couldn't get my warning marking off. I finally discovered car polish would take it off. I was exhausted; I'd hoarded those handy-moving-containers for a year; I hoped this was the end of it?

Oh. I stopped back at the office and asked her when they opened, for I'd remembered Dennis said he wanted to get an early start.

"Nine o'clock," she said.

The brickyard: It was now the noon hour. I went back to the Hidden brickyard to get rid of my bricks. I drove in. The place looked utterly deserted, though a couple of cars were parked there. I had driven in slowly, waiting for alarms or confrontations, but not a person showed. I parked and waited. Nothing.

I got out and began to explore. There was a rickety fence and behind that a pile of trash. But beyond that it rather opened up into the ruins of an old brickyard. I sneaked in further, expecting to be confronted by some irate person any minute. Not a soul. So I went on in.

It was utterly charming! Like going back in time—about a hundred years, I'd say. it was all a mess and ruins back there, but someone had made an attempt to sort out and pile things. There were brick walks. And bricks, bricks, bricks. Then there was an old kiln, practically in ruins, but some signs of use? And an old chair tipped back against the wall as if some workman's lunch or resting place?

I prowled around. It was like a museum, only this was the original. There was all kinds of "Rube Goldberg" machinery. On the ground were laid out several trays of clay bricks formed, ready to be fired? For I could hear the hiss of fire behind the closed kiln door. I puzzled at the clay bricks being coated with **sand**!?

But still there was no one around.

I was going to need some fire brick for under my wood stove. I prowled around in the trash wondering if I could find or steal a few. Then...how fascinating! A pile of **burned** bricks, almost turned to glass! Must be their mistake pile, I thought...and coveted. They were twisted, burned, tortured into iridescent colors. "Slag?" I laughed; as if man had tried to imitate Mt. St. Helens, I thought.

I sure wanted some of that "slag"? I wondered if they just threw it away? Could I just steal some? But I'd have to drag it out to my car and run the gauntlet of those silent, dark office windows. I sighed. Decided not. I went back out to my car and dragged out my "bricks" and deposited them on one of the trash heaps.



There was still no sign of life. I backed the car and parked by one of the office doors. A young woman looked out the window. A sign said "Use other door". I did.

Inside, again it was like stepping back a hundred years in time. it was dark and messy in there, but a roll top desk...like an office of long ago...

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A very beautiful young woman emerged from the dimness; "May I help you?" "Why...I...err..." I tried to explain my weird tale. "I have a wood stove...I wondered if those (slag) are for free? I'd like...you see our great great grandfather...here...t Port...I'd kind of like some souvenirs of Vancouver..There was nobody around..." I began.

"Oh, I saw you," she said. You dumped something out of your car." I felt a perfect fool.

"Well," I said and explained about the young man and all.

"Oh that must have been (she named a name) he leaves at 11:30," She seemed unperturbed.

"Those burned ones...I was wondering...I wanted a few bricks...stove..."

"Oh **those** are the **most** expensive," she said. "They use them decoratively."

"Well...I...uh"

"What do you want?" she asked gently.

"Oh...some souvenirs.." I went into my pitch again...

"Well, Bob should be back any minute. Can you wait?"

"Oh no," I claimed, wondering who Bob was.

Then I noticed something about her..she was so beautiful, so well dressed, so gracious, but seemed uncomfortable somehow...She was a cripple! "Bob's going to take me to lunch," she said. "Wait for Bob."

"No, No," I kept saying, feeling foolish.

"Oh here he is now!"

I went out.

A very patrician-looking silver haired old man drove up in a very handsome station wagon, parked, and busied himself taking a cup of fresh strawberries out of the car. Hesitantly I broached my request. Something about his manner made me assume that this was **the** Mr. Hidden, the owner himself.

"I want some firebrick...something that won't burn..stove..thinking of the slag.."

"Lady," he said,"We cook that at 119 degrees. I'm sure they won't burn. Sand formed?" he asked.

Oh...oh...oh yes." The girl had explained to me about the sand: it is used to form the rough surface on the bricks—the old method they used a hundred years ago.

"Did you get any bricks?" he asked. "No, no." He seemed more interested in his luncheon date than in selling me a few bricks. "Well, a salvage job. They're selling them up the street for twenty cents apiece." He took his strawberries in to his pretty lady.

I went back up Kaufman Street, near where those youths had loaded brick. I saw a sign "Salvage Sale" and another old brick house nearly demolished. Again I went and prowled around. Again there seemed to be nobody around.

Then another big, silver-haired man appeared, but this one was heavy set and rather truculent. "Uh...you work here?"

"Well, in a way. Whaddaya want?"

I explained about the brick..a few...souvenirs." There were two big piles of salvaged brick there.

"These are for an order; waiting to be picked up." He was neither helpful or pleasant.

Just then a rather nice car drives up and a little old lady, well-dressed and cultured-looking gets out. "Isn't this charming?" she says, "...this old house? I think Vancouver has some very interesting old historical things..." or something to that effect.

Whatever, we hit it off right away and began chatting.

"Where are you from?"

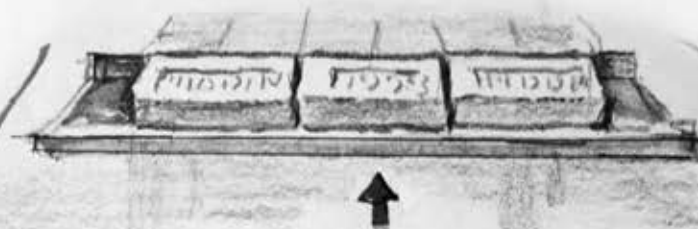
"Oh, not around here! I **hate** Vancouver!" she hissed at me.

"I, too!" I cried. She had a slight accent I couldn't quite place. And she seemed quite at ease there, as if she had some authority. I explained to her what I wanted and why.

"Why, of course you can have some! Help yourself!"

"I'll go and get my car," I said.

When I brought it around, she had already picked out four of the best with date and name on them and set them aside. At the office, the girl had explained to me that they didn't have any really old ones on hand; collectors' items and quite expensive. "Oh that's all right," I'd said.



THE BRICKS

And so I picked up my four bricks dated "1968" and imprinted with the famous Hidden name and parted gaily from my new friend.

And that, my children, is the story of the "Hidden" bricks by the stove in the cabin. (One got lost somewhere along the way.)
broken

I went back to my slum home, intending to write that electrician letter, only to find I had misplaced his address. I compromised by calling the post office and getting the zip code for Sultan, figuring it such a small place he'd be sure to get it.

And then I wrote post card notices to friends informing them of change of address, using a pun I'd thought up: "From Mt. St. Helen's dis-~~ash~~-ter area." And I made a map to send Mike and Marylyn showing them how to get to cabin.

June 7, Saturday. Forenoon. Dennis called. A short report. He tells me that they'd had some mail up there—from the bank. He got the septic tank in, but it was a hassle because of the rain. Still has the drain field to do. He said that Case thought that was much too much for the electricity; that the material would only cost \$400. He thought I'd better get a thousand dollar loan and shop around some more; that a 3-bedroom house built near us up there done for \$1200 (the electricity I assume). He thought he had enough for bus fare.

I spent the afternoon dismantling the kitchen and scrubbing it down, shocked at how dirty it was from that ash. And my car was all scratched from it. And my hair was filthy with it.

And I was still fighting that mattress trying to keep it up against the wall to dry; it kept falling down and attacking me.

June 8, Sunday. Pam called and said the baby was home and invited me over for dinner. So I did get a farewell invitation after all!

The next week...

Things began to get rather grim:

Jeff, at the service station, couldn't find me a filter for my car. We had to settle for his blowing out the old one and just hoping it would hold the ash. And, on inspection of car engine, I found it coated with ash. And the price of gas was to go up the end of the week.

Also pundits were predicting another mountain blow-up (on Friday, the 13th!) when there would be another moon pull on the mountain as there had been before when it blew up. And there was an earthquake in the Olympic Peninsula and a big one in Mexico. And the weather on Monday looked black as midnight as if a big storm coming.

I battled with the sorry state of my budget, sighing.

Dave said he'd pick up the TV Monday... A letter from Mike:
"All ok. Go ahead on the electricity... We'll have to get you a phone."

Wednesday: I called Dennis. He was mad! All the pipe he'd gotten for the septic field—they'd changed code; he couldn't use.

I called Brian and talked to him to see what he thought and tried to call Snohomish County, meaning to help Dennis, but he just got mad at me.

Thursday: The weather was cloudy and rainy and gloomy. My arm hurt terribly, but I spent the day scrubbing and dismantling...

The experts were scoffing at the pundit's prediction about the mountain;
"Old wives' tales" they said.

June 13, Friday. 5:30 a.m. Wake to find the mountain blew up again!

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There is ash fall all over out there! heavier, blacker than before. Happened about 9 o'clock the night before, they say. "Not as bad as the first one, but worse than the last one. Don't drive! Don't breathe it! Wear masks!" Nothing said about I-5 but the said Cougar, WA a mess! Rocks the size of marbles fell there!"

One geologist had laughed: "If the mountain blows up the 13th 'due to the moon' it will set science back ten years!" Well?

"The mountain has quit sending out ash; it is steaming now."

It rains and drizzles all day. Of all times to leave my raincoat up north! I've never needed it so much. And, it was supposed to have been a nice day Friday, so, of all times, I left my windows open.

What a mess! All that ~~last~~, I thought, painstaking scrubbing I did. I'm in shock; too numbed to even cry. And all that long wakefulness I had during the night; one wonders if one sensed something? I was upset before. Now what? I can't even drive the car to the bank. I was just going to squeak through trying to get the car through that other ash fall—now. Will this ruin the car?

I am all alone, cooped up; no one to talk to. It's too early to call anyone. I start washing the ash off the windows sills so I can close the windows... Grit in my teeth... What does one do with the dirty water? Will it clog up the drains?

Later: People seem to be out driving and going to work, though the airport closed and the Rose Parade in Portland called off. I'll have to dress and go check the manager's office and see if the mail is going out...

What if Dennis doesn't get that check? What if he doesn't get that drain field in and approved? They won't let me move in?

I'll have to clean the car off and venture out and tend to things—but they say the trouble with driving is that it is so **slippery**—rain or ash. It is black as night... I feel as if I'd gone to hell.

Later: I'm bathed and dressed. I call Dave at the office. He says it's all right out there—just slippery. I go out to the car. What a mess! There's a half-inch of sand all over it as if it had been buried at the beach—much worse than before. Impossible to get it off without a hose. And there is none. It has to be cleaned off for the windows are so caked with it I couldn't see to drive.

I set to work to clean off the car. I feel very sorry for myself. It is cold and wet and I have no raincoat. And nobody to help me. I haul pails of water in and out that long hall. I track in all that mud and slime into my clean apartment I've spent weeks cleaning. There is mud all over me...

Later: I got it cleaned off and set out. It was hellish out there. It has poured rain all day, which is good because it "settles" the stuff, I suppose. But all that cold and wet and mess...

I went down and spent a couple of hours at the office—just to be with people. But everyone was dull and went on working as if I weren't even there. The only cheering I got was when I called Bishop: he was fun! The news said the rain is caused by the ash seeding the clouds. My pun—I tried on Bishop—dam! They "swiped" it; dis-ash-ter—being used.

Evening: Dennis calls. "Now I'm not going to get mad..."

"I hope not," I say. "Had a rough day here."

"But I didn't get the drainfield finished. Abbie and her brother-in-law—we were all going up there and then my check didn't come. No money; we couldn't go. And then I forgot to lock the car last night—punks **stole all my tools!**"

"Not your power saw?"

"No, no." Left that at the cabin, thank God, but **five years** of tool build up. I called the police, but they... just... shrugged." I let out a wail. "If I'd caught those punks I'd have cracked their backs, police or no."

"Well, I went **ahead**," I said, "...truck... bus... et al. I had the office check—road ok."

"Ok," he said. "We'll get through **somehow**. I'll be down... We'll get you moved... out of that **ash** area. None here... We'll just have to finish up... **after**. Well, **disaster** all over!" he laughed, wryly.

"Hope you have a **strong back**," I said, "...all this stuff to move..."

"Gotta be better!" we cried. "It couldn't get worse!"

Then, called and got Marylyn on phone. "We want to have a big surprise birthday party for Mike at Zirkles's." (who live way off the freeway on the beach at Olympia).

"Oh, please!" And I began to plead: "I'd rather have it... at cabin... I'll be... (busy, broke, involved with workmen...) I tried. I hung up feeling she thought me a "party pooper"—not—cooperate, but, somehow, the idea of a big splashy dress-up party miles out of my way didn't appeal to me at the moment.

Ash fall reports: Pam: "It ruined our garden!" lament.

"Oh they say volcanic ash doesn't hurt plants," I said.

"No, but the **weight** of the ash broke everything off!"

Jerry Perry: "People are having their rain gutters fall off with the weight of the stuff."

June 14, Saturday: I sit thinking how that trip to the office was my last trip there—my last goodbye. No fanfare for my leaving? After three years?... I think about how hard that trip is going to be—Dennis and I—"Oh we'll make it! We'll make it!" he cries.

Bottom of the barrel! Couldn't be worse; gotta start getting better!

I burst into tears. And cry and cry and cry. At last!

News: "A plume of steam from the mountain at 7:30 a.m."

The day has been dark and overcast all day, but the ash has dried out. It is like white flour all over everything and swirls up into the air at every movement of air. My car is all dirty again.

Next day: The sun has come out, but when I went to the store to get some food and coca-cola in for Dennis, the ash was terrible! I am so worried about my car!

Later: The moon, a new crescent, is out. Seems like it's been ages since we've seen it... **News:** "We can predict the mountain activity for only 24 hours, but we do say it will go on."

June 15, Sunday: I tried wearing the mask today while cleaning and fighting the ash, but found it suffocating! "D" day tomorrow—Dennis day. Odd! he's been through an earthquake (Sylmar, CA) and now, if he comes here, he can say he's been through a volcano blow up!

Later: I'm getting kind of excited! Challenge! Adventure again! And... "who, me worry" about a move?—God knows I've had enough **practice** in moving!

"D" day

June 16, Monday. Over cast out there. And the ash is **bad**. I'll have to wash it off the car again before I go to the bus depot and pick up Dennis. Worry, worry—will all this stuff damage the car—With no clean filter? Will all this stuff I packed go in the small truck I rented? What if it won't?

My throat is raw; my nose stuffy; my back killing me... oh dear, I just split my right thumb, using a razor blade on a packing chore—blood all over and all band-aids packed...

I call the telephone company and close my account. They are very nice. They tell me to take the instrument to their receiving agency—a little store nearby...

Bob and Dave come for the TV. They are strangely formal; not their usual silly selves. Bob says the highway is ok; he just drove down the night before. They both insist they're coming up sometime and see my place. They go.

A light drizzle begins to fall. I set out for downtown to pick up Dennis at the bus depot, though I not sure where this one is. There is a Chevron station in that area. On a chance I stop and ask for a filter. They have one; put it in. I am a little late.

[Post hoc: I was unable to make notes that day. We were too busy and harrassed. It was a very trying afternoon. And Dennis had misunderstood me? For—as I remember it—]

Dennis was shivering and soaked and annoyed when I finally found the place and picked him up. He had been standing on the street corner for...a long time.

And he seemed to think I already **had** the truck.

"No, no," I said and tried to placate him as we drove eight miles clear across town to the truck rental place.

And there, it took **forever!** First we had to wait as the only attendant negotiated a long time with a man ahead of us. There was no place to sit or wait inside and it was cold and rainy outside. Dennis paced impatiently out there in the rain while I leaned on the counter and waited our turn.

When it came it helped to have the young black man attendant so nice, but I went through a very long and complicated process signing many papers, arranging for payment and getting clear our directions with what to do with the truck at the other end. It went on and on and on...

And then! It seemed the truck we'd signed for **wasn't there!** And they had to find another one. And when they did Dennis nearly blew up.

"That's not big enough!" he cried at me. "You should have gotten a bigger one!"

"But I measured, Dennis...my stuff..." I argued, my insides a rawness of fear and despair.

But it was too late then. To get a bigger one would have taken us another half day, they said. Besides I didn't have the money for it. Dennis shrugged and went out again and paced in the cold and rain while it took them forever to put gas in the truck.

Then he drove the truck back, following me clear across town—back to the Dump—and parked it beside the back door where we'd need it to start packing it in the morning. (if the local vandals didn't do something to it in the night.)

He seemed a little more placated after driving the truck. "Nice," he said, "Radio...nice seat..." and so on. When we came into the building, he did say, "I see what you mean! It's...pretty **bad.**" (He should have seen it before they "fixed it up!")

Our afternoon was pretty glum, as I remember it. Dennis wouldn't eat, after I'd gotten all that stuff in for him. Nor would he go and meet the management I was so anxious to show that I had **big, strong, male** help behind me after all the kicking around and arrogance they'd shown me.

The TV was gone, and the phone disconnected so he couldn't call home. Dennis just kept fussing about "wanting to get up early and pack!" I think we finally just bedded down, he on the mattress, I on the couch.

June 17, Tuesday. The next morning he was up early and frenziedly packing the truck, ignoring both the dolly and the ramp I'd made such a point of paying extra to get. He just carried everything out in his arms. I left him alone and busied myself with packing my car.

At last Dennis came in—all smiles.

"It all went **in!** Perfectly! Just **exactly!**"

From then on I don't know which of us was the more anxious to get the hell out of there. Dennis had fussed with the truck engine—something wrong with it he had to fix. And then, I gave him my Union credit card, for the s.o.b.'s hadn't quite filled the tank! And then...

"See you at the cabin!" he cried.

And I kissed him
and away he went!

We had, I think, three days, in which to return the truck to Lynwood.

After Dennis left...

10:50 a.m. I am ready to leave this town!—tired already. Rough a.m.—up at 6:30 and all that packing—Beautiful day...first sun we've seen and **no new ashes!**—I am flying around—was too late getting going to leave **with** Dennis...

Helen (landlady) nice, but I don't trust her...will give her a few days to see if I get my deposit back before I mail off my packet of legal threats—Took the phone over to the little store. It **rang** on the way; silly!—my hand is very crippled—

I turn on the car radio; music plays **"Spread your wings and fly away!"**
I gotta go! Dennis will wonder where I am!

Well, I'm off!

How I dread this long drive. Hafta go freeway; they say a lot of ash at Chehalis, so can't go that way this time—thank God for the new filter—gas is low...will have to try to find a Chevron station somewhere as I gave Dennis my Union card—

I won't have any refrigerator; Dennis said money they'd saved for a new one had to go to an impatient creditor—

Dennis hoped he'd get to see the mountain...he took some ash for the kids—He liked the bricks for the stove—

Notes en route...

Wished so I had film in camera. The big day of my life and no pictures—It's hot! As Dennis said, first nice weather we've had since I was north last...hot...but I can't use the vents in car...the ash...most uncomfortable trip of all the ones I've made—

→ **Just out of Vancouver**, right "by" the mountain, I test vents to see if they're closed?...Oh no! a **blast** of ash comes pouring in...all over the front seat and over my lunch on the seat beside me, but no place to stop to clean it out here and...unable to see the mountain...

Castle Rock: First glimpse of river mud flow...strange!

Toutle River: Oh boy! **the mud flow!** like a scene from the moon...grey mud a hundred feet thick with dead trees sticking out of it...

Toutle River rest area: spend half an hour here...have to clean out front seat...I laugh: Vancouver made one last **snot** at me? blew ash all over me and my lunch on my exodus?...Odd: all that historical phenomena we passed through—the Toutle River devastation—and people here in rest area don't even mention it—

I showed Dennis my letter from the state that I got in the mail this morning asking me to be a member of the State Ecology Staff—with travel and per diem—...Too bad. If they'd only asked me sooner...

Well, I gotta get going...

Chehalis: Where they said the ash was so bad. Not? Oh, yes! Very bad! Highway clean-up crews working all over...

(Oh dear, there's no wood at the cabin...and Dennis said he didn't get the log across trail cut through; that means I can't use my cart to move things in with)...

Olympia: **What!? no ash!? For the first time! out of it!...**

Need gas..my usual gas stop...Oh no, have wrong card...is there...is there...somewhere a Chevron station?...Yes! There's one! As car radio breaks

into **"Alleluia!"** song!

Nisqually Valley: my usual pull-off to that VIP restaurant. I go. Order a small salad and coffee...want so much to talk to people about the ash and the Toutle River devastation...I try to talk to guy next to me. He just turns his back. Traveling isn't fun anymore; people won't talk to you...

3:45 p.m. **Whew!** Made it through that crazed mess of highways from Tacoma on-across Kent Valley—and the Factoria Interchange spaghetti mess into...

405! Smooth sailing now—the knots in me begin to unwind—I made it! I made it! **Almost to Monroe!**...the prayer to St. Andrew? worked?...

The beauty of the Skykomish Valley spreads out before me...the sun breaks out...car radio breaks into **"Try to Remember!"** song...as I drive into Monroe—church bells peal! (Post hoc; there is a rest home with carillon there.)

Monroe: 4 p.m. 194 miles through all that ash and hellish traffic...

We're home, Toyota! We made it!

Thanks to you...and Dennis...and Abbie...and St. Andrew!?