

Early Days Memories

by Barb Schaffer

Well, my first introduction to Carlyon Beach was in 1975. My parents bought a lot and brought their boat into the marina. We would come on weekends. We drove up from Portland, never thinking we'd ever get to live here. We stayed on the boat in the marina, because the house wasn't built yet. The kids jiggged for salt herring, and would jump off the dock for a swim. We dug clams, and fished. The kids loved eating steamer clams at the boat's table and throwing the empty shells out the window! They had contests to see who could eat the most clams.

My parents' home went on the lot in 1976. So many weekends spent clamming, fishing, and digging geoducks. Once we were digging a geoduck, I was on my stomach with my arm in the hole up to my shoulder, with my fingers on the neck of the geoduck, and a seagull walked up so he could watch. Then he bit me on the butt! Must have wanted to steal my geoduck!

Every weekend we looked forward to walking the beach around the island. Don't I wish I could do that now? The kids always brought a stick with them, for poking the net at the slippery neck at the point. Unfortunately, dad died four months after he retired in 1977. Mom stayed and always welcomed us, anyone that wanted to come.

Family gatherings were always around food, drinks, and fun. One 4th of July our cousin decided to scare us and threw an M-80, or 100, or maybe even a 200 off the deck, and blew a crater in mom's yard. She took it with a good humor. After my dad died, my girlfriend and I would often come up for the weekend. The first night we always overdid on martinis. Mom would come in to our rooms in the morning and say "Aren't you girls EVER going to get up?"

And again, we dug clams, walked the beach, and would walk the roads at night. I would always say "Listen." And Maggie would say "What?" And I'd say, "You hear nothing!" The stillness was overwhelming and it was wonderful! Maggie and I spent many weekends there. It was our secret get-away place!

One weekend Warren Dibble took us over to Hope island. We walked around it and then through the orchard. The tall grass started moving and Warren told us it was full of snakes, as they stayed by the old well. They were only garter snakes, but that didn't sit well with me and Maggie. We scrambled up onto the cement base of the well and from up there we could see the snakes slithering through the grass. NO WAY were we going to walk through that so Warren carried us piggy-back down to the beach, one at a time!

My daughter remembers the Squamish Indians harvesting the geoducks under water and coming up to our dock. We could buy HUGE geoducks for just \$5 a piece back then. She also remembers walking the beach and seeing all the beautifully colored starfish: red, blue, purple, orange, yellow. Now they are all gone.