

Audrey Sloan.

Audrey Sloan, Friend and Neighbour
-by Renee Hester

Eagle Bay residents are saddened by the death of Audrey Sloan, long time resident of the community. She was truly a good neighbour and friend to all who knew her, and a lady who dedicated her life to the service of others. Audrey was a devoted daughter who cared for an aging mother for many, many years. She was a devoted wife who diligently and cheerfully cared for husband, Don, who was injured in an accident. She was a devoted sister to brothers, Leo, Frances and Joe, and a devoted aunt to her nieces and nephews. Audrey experienced great sadness when brother, Joe, passed away a few years ago.

I spent several happy afternoons with Audrey. She seldom spoke of herself. This was a lady who loved Eagle Bay and was happiest when relating memories of times past.

Audrey Turgeon was a teen-ager when she came to Eagle Bay with her family. They settled on the homestead formerly owned by the James and Mary Smith. There were few local pioneers that Audrey did not know. She and her family took part in the clearing of land for the Eagle Bay Community Church and Cemetery. She was reluctant to speak of her accomplishments, but those who knew her, tell of the many years Audrey was a faithful steward who contributed much to the establishment and operation of Eagle Bay Community Church.

I suppose the most memorable afternoon I spent with Audrey was one that she spent telling me of the first Eagle Bay Days, held in the early 1950s, and organized as fund raisers for the construction of a community hall. There were four early Eagle Bay Days; two held on Joan and Hans Whitehead's beach and two held on the beach of Major and Mrs. Howden, near where the Simon property is today. It was hard work, but judging from the enthusiasm Audrey had in telling me these stories, it was a labour of love.

The ladies of Eagle Bay worked all year to make Eagle Bay Days a success. They sewed, knitted, crocheted, and as the big day approached, they cooked and baked. These ladies garnered donations of yard goods from Eatons and Woodwards and put to good use all that was given. One year it was satin, which they made into swimming trunks. Another year, bolts of cotton became aprons and sunbonnets. The sunbonnets were an instant success and the fashion for the day.

This part of the project was known as the "*Sale of Work*". These were hard times and people saved all year to buy gifts on this special day. Audrey recalled Mr. Shannon, an elderly Eagle Bay bachelor, who always came to her to buy a little something for a "widder" lady in Osoyoos. At age 80, Mr. Shannon married this lady who he romanced with gifts from the "*Sale of Work*". Audrey packaged, addressed and sent the parcels to Mr. Shannon's "widder" lady, and took pleasure knowing she had helped a good friend.

Eagle Bay Day activities took place in booths on the beach or on the beach itself. There were cake walks, candy sales, races, boat rides, "beautiful baby" contests, sales of hundreds of bottles of homemade root beer and more. As well, meals were served---largely cooked on site. The logistics of this feat are mind

boggling. There was no electricity, hence no refrigeration as we know it. Truck loads of ice kept the food fresh and palatable. Customers were given a choice of two meals and Audrey said every kind of pie ever invented was served for dessert. These memories brought Audrey much happiness for they were examples of the community she loved, working towards a common goal. When Mr. and Mrs. Coates donated land, volunteers were able to build a community hall for all to enjoy.

Audrey giggled as she told me of dances held at the hall. Those who directed the activities needed a band to play at these dances, but before they could hire a band, they needed a piano! How do you get a piano with no money in the kitty? Audrey's friend, Elizabeth Galligan, loaned the money to the Hall Society, interest free, and the loan was repaid from the proceeds of ensuing dances. Liquor was not allowed in the hall, but one could always nip outside for a wee snort. When things became rowdy, someone would announce that the R.C.M.P. were outside, whether they were or not! This always kept the lid on proceedings.

Audrey recalled with affection, bingo games and whist drives. She spoke of bake sales and sales of work held in partnership with Eagle Bay Community Church. She remembered the "bucket brigade" bringing water to the hall for every function.

I know Audrey would wish to be remembered with a smile and as one who contributed to the betterment of the community she loved. She will always be remembered as a person who loved nature and all God's creatures. She kept two horses which she could never bear to part with. Audrey fed a resident coyote for years and her house was bedecked with the nests of mud swallows. The sight and fragrance of wild lupin prevailed in Audrey's yard each June, bringing beauty and joy to all who passed by.

Eagle Bay is richer for having an Audrey Sloan, who seldom spoke of herself, but willingly shared the history of Eagle Bay for all to treasure. We will miss her.