

BERRY, Stuart and Berte

Part 1 - Stuart & Berte Berry

Part 2 - Matt & Cheryl Berry (Nov. 2003)



PART 1

Stuart Berry: Born March 2, 1931 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Attended Glenwood school in St. Vital. Was with the Winnipeg Boys Choir for 6 years. Catholic beginnings. Completed Grade 11. Known to hang out with Pete Chiko, Glenn Stewart, Herb Edmonds, Gerry Day, Gerry Armstrong, Vern Carlsen, Tom Ballard and others.

Mt. View: Attended in 47, 48 & 49 after moving from St. Vital to Winnipeg after one year illness. Years at Mt. View were great and sports and extra-curricular activities were foremost, like operetta, volleyball, basketball, rugger, swim club and track.

Outside Activities: Fifth Regiment (rugger team), Canadian football (Whitneys) and Pro Rec.

Early Work Years: Spent between Mc & Mc Hardware as price clerk and BC Forest logging camps (3 or 4 times each). Worked for Jones Wholesale Floral Co. (a great job). Built houses with Gerry Day and became partner in the Motor Inn Garage on Oak Bay Ave. (Victoria) for one year.

Marriage: Tom Ballard arranged blind dates with some girls attending the Victoria Normal School and he told me "I have just the girl for you" so 49 years later I have to believe he was right! On the night of our blind date I had borrowed Gerry Day's DeSoto and, after the dance, we (with Tom & his date) went to a cabin north of Sydney (Deep Cove) and sat in front of a fireplace. When we left (the girls had a deadline at the YWCA) the car wouldn't go, so we sat all night in that car for correctness sake. Two years later I married 'Berte' Roberta Salting from Naramata. Berte taught at Beavercell and Langford schools while we were courting and later at Naramata and Uplands schools in the Okanagan Valley. She taught part time after the baby years and while raising our four wonderful children, 2 girls, 2 boys. Berte is a very well loved and respected teacher in this area.

Career: After a year of marriage in Victoria a first child Debbie appeared and we then moved to Naramata due to homesickness and recommendations for work. In 1954 we purchased a small local trucking company and hauled fruit from orchards to co-ops and soon started selling fuels, gravels, soils and such. Over the years the

company grew and a partnership was formed with Ted Smith and our company incorporated as Berry & Smith Trucking Ltd. In 1968 we purchased a Penticton company that operated School busses for the School District. We still own and operate the school busses and also operate the transit system for the city of Penticton. In 1971 Ted Smith left the company to continue his career as a professional firefighter. The company continued to grow and now operates out of Penticton and Delta and, to a degree, Seattle. Approximately 150 people are employed or contracted to the company. We believe that the success of a venture is brought about by the people who work there. We are a profit sharing company and have equal pay and conditions for all employees.

Interests: Berte and I have maintained an active interest in community all our lives. We both still sing in the Naramata Community Choir after 38 years and have been involved in everything from political to school and business to local clubs and children groups. Still play golf, tennis and bridge. Now actively involved in the Naramata/Blackwell court case in which our town has been sued and ordered to pay. Total costs to date: 5.4 million.

Retirement: Both of us are now retired. Our two sons operate the business and the four children own it (almost). We have six terrific grandchildren and what a treat to watch their personalities.

Geneology: We have always had an interest in our roots and have spent some time travelling and researching our beginnings. Stu just discovered that he is a first cousin of Louis Riel. We are looking forward to the reunion and we wish to thank all of you who have made this possible.

Berte and Stu Berry

PART 2

Their's is a happy story ... beginning with a blind date in Victoria, BC and continuing on more than 50 years later in Naramata. There's been a little romance, a lot of song, more than a few diapers, some hard work and initiative and a dedication to family and community.

Bert and Stu Berry met on a blind date in Victoria. Stu was working in a garage and Bert was attending teaching college. They married in 1953 and, after a short time of living in Victoria, they relocated to Naramata where Bert had grown up with her parents, Don and Helen Salting. Bert's father had also grown up in Naramata as his parents moved to Naramata in 1914.

Life was busy for the Berrys. They lived in a converted coal shack on 8th Ave. for several years and had four children: Deb, Mark, Julie and Matt.

Stu bought some trucks and started hauling coal and fruit. They even tried some adventuresome ideas such as making and selling coated pine cones that gave off special light when burned. Stu joined forces with Ted Smith and the Company Berry and Smith Trucking Ltd was incorporated in 1958. Stu and Ted quickly earned a reputation as hard working, honest individuals which led to the growth of the company. Ted Smith became a firefighter in 1970 and Stu continued on with the business and, through his hard work and absolute belief in treating the customer and the employees as fairly as you can, the company prospered.

In 1962, Stu and Buck and Don Salting built the Berry's present home on Robinson Rd.

Bert went back to teaching in the late 60s and taught at both Naramata Elementary School and Uplands Elementary. She taught school for over 30 years and was very well liked and respected by students, parents and fellow teachers. (Just remember not to chew gum in her class).

Bert and Stu were founding members of the Naramata Community Choir led by Carol McGibney. They have a

tremendous affiliation with this choir and literally plan their lives around choir practice, concerts and other choir events. They have performed such classics as “Bicycle Built for Two,” “Daisy” and “I Remember it Well.” Bert and Stu have helped with the behind the scenes work of the choir, making posters, selling tickets, setting up sets and hauling around risers for more than forty years.

The couple have a strong sense of community. Bert, herself a May Queen in elementary school, taught the maypole dances to the children for many years. Stu was the Emcee for many May Days. He was the one always asking the red-faced queen about her love interests. Stu and Buck Salting have set up and taken down the chairs and equipment for May Day and August Faire for many years. It is being considered that the park will have to remain permanently set up if they ever get too old to do this work. Bert and Stu donate silver spoons that are awarded to race winners each year at May Day.

Bert is very involved in the Naramata Museum, spending many hours there painting walls, setting up new exhibits and touring visitors around.

Stu has served on many boards over the years. He was on the board of the Regional District; he served on the South Okanagan Children Services Society (a group that helped troubled kids); he sat on the Economic Development Board of Penticton; he was the President of the Penticton Industrial Development Association for many years; he was a member of the Rotary Club and a member of the Toastmasters Club (which is evident if you have ever heard him speak). Stu also organized and hosted badminton in Naramata twice per week during the 70s. Stu is an active member of the Naramata Woodwackers and can often be found on the KVR with a chainsaw.

Stu is courageous. He served as Chairman of the Naramata Water Advisory Committee (NWAC) during the past few years, which is a testimony to the fact that he is not afraid to take on an unpopular and difficult role to aid the community.

Last year, Stu was honored with one of the Queen’s Golden Jubilee awards for outstanding contribution to his community.

Stu and Bert have both been involved in the committee to find a replacement doctor for Dr Quandt. Stu took on the Chair of this role and organized a group of Naramata citizens to assist while Bert hosted many meetings and was involved in touring around potential doctors in Naramata.

Both were involved in the Naramata Emergency Preparedness and, during this summer’s recent fire, Stu spent many hours in the fire dispatch centre as a volunteer.

The Berry's have hosted many great events at their property over the years, including many company picnics and hundreds of functions for family and friends. They are well know for their positive attitude and interesting conversation. Family is very important to them and they are involved in all of their kids’ lives. They are excellent grandparents, babysitting the younger kids and offering companionship and leadership to the older ones.

For fun, they like to travel and have taken several trips to Scotland, many trips in their fifth wheel down south and throughout Canada. Stu is an avid golfer and they both play a mean game of tennis. Bert loves to do pottery. They have both enjoyed the advent of the computer, email and accessing the vast amount of information that the internet provides.

As you can see, Stu and Bert have lived many productive years in Naramata and have a deep affiliation to its history and present day events. They believe in doing their part for the community and the honour that you give them with this award will deeply touch them.

Matt Berry & Cheryl Nov 2003

