

The Diary of a Cabin

By Mary and John Boenke

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This booklet
is dedicated to

Us, Mary and John
Boenke

in memory of all the good times
we had with our
Cabin in the Country

INTRODUCTION

In 1975 our son, Mark, was at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. Our other children were on the verge of graduating High School, and also leaving home for college. In considering what we should do with our time after that, we hit on the idea of having a “country place” to which we could escape on weekends and enjoy being away from the confines of urban life. Even though our urban life was only in the small town of Warren, Ohio, we found this an appealing plan. The aim was to find a small plot, ten to fifteen acres, with enough room for walking trails, perhaps a garden and a small cabin.

I do not recall the details of how long this took, but we did not seem to find anything exactly right. Finally we encountered a farmer who wanted to retire from the heavy farming scene and just grow greenhouse flowers, specifically Poinsettias, which he considered to be a relatively easy and lucrative pursuit. He needed some start up money and planned on selling most of his farm to raise the capital. We on the other hand did not want an entire farm, but with a little negotiation, we agreed to buy sixty acres on the back side of his farm. This part had frontage on the next road to the North. So our land was on the back road, California Road. This was about 25 to 30 miles from our home in Warren, Ohio and located off Ohio State Route 7 near the crossroads village of Williamsfield, Ohio. The motel in Ashtabula turned out to be a distance in the order of 35 to 40 miles from the property.

Starting with great enthusiasm, we bought the land in the fall of 1975, and in the spring of 1976 we planted 2000 pine seedlings on some ten or so acres converting it to forest land and gaining a tax break. This in itself was a fascinating experience. One uses a tree planter tool which consists of a pointed triangular cross section steel piece on the end of a rod with a cross bar for stepping on to force the tool into the ground. This makes a triangular hole into which the seedling is dropped. The tool is then forced into the ground again next to the original hole and pushed over to the side to seal the seedling into the ground and provide a triangular hole next to the young plant to accumulate water and keep it moist. A very neat little system. I still have the tool. I have tried to sell it, but there does not seem to be a great demand for such an instrument. We also invested in a used tractor, Ford 600 series, and a brush hog plus several other pieces of equipment including a plow, a back scoop bucket and a five foot wide scraper blade.

One of the first things we did was to hire a driller and get a water well drilled. Some years previously, we had a well drilled on our property in Kentucky when we built a house there, and it is always an interesting procedure. On this one, I was there watching when the driller hit the first water which was at about 30 feet. The sound of the drilling changed in character becoming more squishy. I forget the final depth, but we went quite a bit farther to assure a good supply of water. Because of the depth of the well and that it was an outdoor installation, we put the actual pump down into the well suspended by the water pipe. Mark helped me with this exploit. We arranged an extension ladder leaning against another ladder all lashed together for stability to serve as a place to stand to hold and guide the long pipes as we lowered them into the well.

To begin with, we assembled the pump to the lower end of the top pipe and the top end of the pipe to the handle and spout structure to have it all ready when we needed it. This section included a rod inside the water pipe to connect the pump to the handle mechanism. Then we maneuvered the intake pipe down into the well and clamped it to keep it from falling. Next we carefully attached the pump section to the intake pipe. The critical stage was releasing the clamp and lowering the whole system down into the well. The pump handle housing sat on the top of the pump casing and sealed against it. The fact that the upper section would drain between

operations meant there was never any water left in the pump housing and it was safe in freezing weather. I was very thankful that Mark helped with this, I probably could not have done it alone.

At this time I was Chief Engineer of the Halsey Taylor Water Cooler company in Niles, Ohio. Out of the blue, the parent company decided to move the plant out to Illinois into a farm community. I was invited to go along and be Chief Engineer of both Halsey Taylor and Structo Division, but on learning they were taking none of the skilled workers and realizing there was not a pool of skilled workers in the area to which they were moving, I declined, as I considered it a bad business move. I had been through the move of GE Refrigeration from Erie, PA to Appliance Park in Louisville; KY and understood some of the problems involved in moving a manufacturing operation into a new community and the training of new employees. It turned out that it was a foolish move for Halsey Taylor as their business declined, and they were sold to another water cooler company sometime later. However, the result of my decision was that I had plenty of time to spend on the land and the cabin.

The building of the rather unique cabin consumed the rest of the Summer. First I built a square wooden platform twenty feet on each side which rested on nine cement block piers which stood well into the ground. I then built the walls of two by ten planks on edge. After getting the initial row in, I erected two by four studs at the corners, window openings and doorway openings. Each row of two by tens was then fastened to the studs as the walls rose to approximately eight feet. Caulking was applied into the cracks between the wall boards and notches were cut in the top boards to accommodate roof trusses. I built the trusses following a pattern I had laid out on the floor, and they went into place quite easily. I simply placed them upside down with one end in the proper position next to a notch in the wall and the other end was easily lifted onto the opposing wall. Then I rotated them to the upright orientation until they fell into the awaiting notch which held them roughly in the correct position until the roof sheathing was applied. The roof was four by eight plywood sheets topped with asphalt shingles which was a very durable roof. Installing windows and doors completed the job. We could now spend time overnight at our new vacation spot.

By early 1977 I had taken a job as Senior Design Engineer at Werner Ladder Company in Greenville, PA which was within commuting distance of Warren, so we could still enjoy the land and cabin. I did have a garden for a while and raised peppers and tomatoes, but never got into it too deeply mainly because the local animals got most of the harvest since we were not there to chase them away effectively. Also my tractor plowing skills are rather lousy and my efforts require a lot of touch up with a shovel.

During the summer of 1977 we had a pond dug. The pond was about a third of an acre in size and the dirt which was bulldozed out of the hole was spread along a roadway leading to the back of our property which, of course, abutted the land of the farmer from whom we had acquired it. This built the roadway up to a level which made it more passable in wet weather and made the back of the land more accessible. Our frontage was about 800 feet on California road, and our roadway ran along the edge of this narrow strip to the larger acreage in the back. This was a swampy area and the fill dirt was well utilized. But the roadway then required several culverts to allow water to flow under it. Putting these in was an fascinating engineering feat since all I had to work with was a shovel and the tractor with the hydraulic lift for attaching the tractor equipment. Dragging the cement pipes back to where they were to be installed was easy with the tractor, after that it got interesting.

By early 1978 the commuting and stress of working in a small family owned company got to be too much, and I left Werner Ladder Company. After a few months of looking, we decided to buy a motel and operate it. That turned out to be a very good move which we pursued for the next eleven years and prospered in the endeavor, but it put us farther away from the cabin. Nevertheless, we continued to enjoy trips there when they were possible. However, it seemed appropriate and good judgment to sell the land and cabin a few years later which we did to a fellow whom we thought would use it wisely.

What follows now is taken from the visitors book we kept at the cabin for our comments and for guest comments. Most of the comments are ours, but there are a few by our children, Mark, Heidi and Myra and relatives, sisters, brothers and in-laws with a very few written by friends who are not further identified. I believe they are all signed properly and I believe they give an impression of what our cabin experience meant to us and our friends. I have done a little editing to make complete sentences in some cases and to clarify the ideas, meaning and intent of the writer in others. We are pleased to share this with you, and we hope you find the Cabin Diary enjoyable reading.

John D. Boenke

THE CABIN DIARY
October 1976

OCT 31 1976

Happy Halloween. It is Sunday morning. John and I have spent a pleasant Saturday and Sunday AM here. We had a good long sleep on our double mattress on the floor.

It has been raining since Saturday late afternoon. Our pond/hole is full - in spite of the gravel side and bottom (5-8 feet deep). It has been a relatively dry summer and fall. We can still walk without boots in the meadow and the creek is still dry.

Most of the leaves are down. We can see to the road and into the meadow area for the first time. There were no apples this year except for crabapples due to a late spring frost. We hope for apples next spring.

Yesterday we walked to the back of the property. There is water in the road ruts, but not too bad. The 2000 pine trees we planted last spring are doing well, most have sprouted several tufts. We found a few that had died but not many. Since we did no weed control. We think the surrounding weeds may have protected them from the Sun and the dry weather.

We found that someone had taken out a few trees on our SE corner. We need to put up a sign there. Also walked over to the SW corner, and John showed me the corner post there. It is about 200 feet south of the north edge of Ruetenik's and our field just between two aspen groves.

We finished putting up curtains yesterday. I think they look great.

--Mary

The cabin was started this spring and is now completed to the point of being completely enclosed, roofed and stained (redwood), wood stove, battery lights and chemical toilet. One corner is enclosed for the closet and potty. Mark put in a floor to make a loft in the rafters.

Miscellaneous details remain to be done. Ladder to the loft, back door latch, caulk eaves, hat shelf, roof insulation, etc.

As a rough estimate, we have been burning 12 to 15 cubic feet of wood per week end. There is an inexhaustible supply of dead elm in the swamp. The problem is getting it to the cabin in usable sizes.

--John

Nov, 7, 1976

We have spent another fine weekend in the cabin, It snowed Friday, melted Saturday, and is snowing and melting today. It has been an interesting and eventful weekend. I came out Friday afternoon and Mary came out late Friday. We left our cooler outside to keep the food cool (with a log on top to keep the lid on). Wouldn't you know it, we were robbed. As near as we can tell the culprits were a couple of transient dogs and a

resident rabbit. It was not a big loss, but we won't leave food outside again.

--John

Yes, it has been another lovely weekend. Right now we're finishing up Grammy's apple pie and bread pudding (warm with milk), and the Sun is shining into the south windows.

Yesterday we walked down to the Conner's to say "hello". Bob C. and Dave came along and stopped to talk. While we were standing in the road a large stag ran across their field, the road and across Kohta's field. Huge white tail. One jump onto the road and another over the ditch. It's bow and arrow season and the boys are hoping to get some.

I upholstered the mattress - in two sections so it can double as a sofa. Looks OK. Nice to get the bed out of the middle of the floor.

--Mary

ABOUT THE POND

We had planned to have a pond dug in the meadow area, where the County Conservation Agent and we had staked out red and white flags. We got three estimates and took the lowest one - Greg Crandall. We waited until he finally came with two backhoes and a truck. He dug one small hole and hit gravel - from 5 to 8 feet deep - and said he would not be able to dig it (the pond), and it would not hold water. But then the hole filled up immediately (within a week) to 4 feet deep and gradually up to the top. We now think the gravel itself is saturated and therefore will hold water.

--Mary

Nov. 14, 1976

Lovely sunny clear day. Came out last night directly from Youngstown where we saw a performance of the Youngstown Ballet. I put the collar on the well pipe yesterday and fastened down the pump. Finished the ladder to the loft, cut pieces for the ten foot picnic table and cut pieces for a second bench for the inside table.

I cut a lot of firewood also, and saw a black and white woodpecker. I got very close to him and he remained fearlessly pecking away. Weather has been colder than normal. Yesterday there were 2 -3 inches of snow here, but it has mostly melted now. Fewer flies in the cabin - either it's too cold or the caulking did some good. The sofa is finished and we are planning the tree stump coffee table.

--John

Nov. 21, 1976

Just finished a tour of John and Mary's estate. All I can say is "Great". They have certainly accomplished a great deal to date and should be very proud of what they have done.

--Gertie

Shades of John Muir and John Masefield . We had the pleasure of a return to nature in the great outdoors. Deer tracks and everything. Should be a most restful retreat in spite of all the work one can envision in clearing the land. Long live the pioneers.

-- Frank

Mary and John are true pioneers. Your place is so peaceful and makes a true city person feel close to nature. This place could almost make a nature lover out of me. As I sit here, I wonder what it will be like in the spring. Maybe I will be back to find out.

--Bettie

Nov. 27, 1976

Well, here I am at the cabin ,er, rather, castle. "Home" from school for Thanksgiving weekend. All the trees are really bare and the place looks like an Andrew Wyeth painting. Myra is "home" this weekend too, in fact the whole family is here. We decided this would be a good place for a party, but it needs a stereo system. It's really muddy out here. My new boots got all mucked up.

--Heidi

Dec. 5, 1976

John and I had a lovely weekend here, beginning with having Ken and Belva McAllister for dinner and bridge on Friday. It was 12 degrees in the cabin when we came and got up only to 50-60 degrees that evening. We ate and played near the stove. Saturday John cut down and cut up some trees from across the meadow. Sat. and Sun. We cut a path along the west border, back about 2200 feet. Found many remnants of the fence. Hope to find the SW corner post next weekend.

Reading Agatha Christie's Dead Man's Folly - second time. Determined to find the murderer! Our new sofa bed works well. Upholstered old bed mattress in two halves (Vinyl) and John built a frame for it. Good sofa by day, good bed at night.

--Mary

Dec. 12, 1976

This has been a short weekend. Came out Saturday afternoon and going back by 1:00PM today. However, we've accomplished a lot . Finished making a path along the west fence all the way to the back corner and marked it with rags on trees. It needs some more cleaning, big logs, etc. But we can now get through and know where the fence is.

--John

John also put up another shelf in the closet and one over the coat rack. I covered two more "Kitchen " shelves with vinyl and painted the

"dining room" table and bench. Our new sofa bed works very well. Saw some chickadees and a mouse just west of the cabin.

--Mary

Feb. 12, 1977

It's been a snowy cold winter. There is an average of one foot of snow on the ground, but it is melting rapidly now. After several weeks of bitter cold and snow, there is finally a break in the weather this week. It has gone up into the forties and maybe fifty today.

We have been "snowed out" of the cabin, but today we came out with a fully charged tractor battery and plowed out some of the driveway. Very difficult, very wet snow. Changed the lock on the door to a type that will accommodate to all the movement between the frame and door. Must get new keys all around.

I have been here only two or three times since Christmas and only for a few hours each time. Put out a salt lick, put up a new fluorescent lamp, cut wood and changed some wiring on those occasions. It's raining now and will probably rain all night. It is nice to be snug and warm and dry with all the comforts of home.

--John

It has been a record breaking winter - nine degrees average temperature in the Warren area. Fuel shortage and all. I've missed the cabin weekends having to deal with cough and cold, Christmas activities and bitter cold. GLAD to be back. I built a fire - paper, wood then coal. Still took about 5 -6 hours to get cabin up from 39 degrees outside to 68 degrees inside. Saw two flies, an inch worm and a blue jay. No sign of deer at the salt lick yet. Working on the gold color in my lovely hook rug.

--Mary

Feb. 26-27 1977

Short weekend visit to cabin from Saturday afternoon to Sunday afternoon.

(John went shopping and bought a new color TV at home, and I washed and ironed - very busy week with Ballet meetings and Walter Nick's parties).

Warmer and balmy breezes - up in 40's Sunday. Very wet from supernormal snow accumulation and melting. Did a tough crossword puzzle, worked on Affirmative Action plans and hook rug. Slept very well.

--Mary

Still some snow in the woods, but we can drive in again. Planned new orchard area, front garden and row of trees for a wind break. Did a little general clearing and trimming. Easy to get in and around the trees with all the dead weeds beaten down by the snow.

Swamp is full of water and snow. Wonder how long until we can get in there again to clear and cut wood. We are planning a garage, pond and road for this year. New coal box is working fine. It's nice to have a fire that lasts all night.

--John

April 3, 1977

This is the first night we have stayed overnight for a while. We've spent a few hours the last few weekends clearing the front orchard acre. Many thorn apple trees and willow bushes have been hauled down to the meadow to burn. The trailer on the tractor has been a great help.

Thorn apples are difficult to take out. They tangle together and fight back. Last week one stabbed me in the arm. We have sixteen fruit trees coming soon, and we need the space for planting. It is very wet. The streams and creeks are fat and flowing fast.

It was warm enough last night we had just a wood fire and let it go out overnight. It was down to 48 degrees in the morning and still comfortable. Myra and Heidi will be home later today and Mark may also come to Warren. We'll celebrate Myra's birthday.

--John

We brought Grammy Boenke out last weekend to watch us while we cleared and chopped. Beautiful Saturday. This weekend it is too wet even to use the tractor and trailer.

Bob Conner and Dave and Chuck(?) Kohta stopped over yesterday to chat. Bob is looking at bulldozers and would probably like to do our pond and road for us if he can get a dozer. Nice people.

New menu last night - cut up a package of chipped beef and sauteed it mixed in a can of mushroom soup and a small can of peas. Served over toast. Very good. Love it here.

--Mary

May 14-15 1977

We have been out here every weekend, but haven't taken the time to write. John now has a converter so he can run his electric razor from the battery and so we can stay from Friday to Monday - someday! We both were out of town Monday and Tuesday. John to Chicago, I went to Columbus, so it was a long week. Sunday we leave early for a brunch at Anderson's to meet Zack

Went to the Wagon Wheel for smorgasbord dinner last night (very nice), took a drive around the lake, and visited the Connors.

--Mary

I have finished planting the fruit trees, and all the wind-break trees except twenty Red Pine and four Autumn Olive. Also I have a screen door and frame stained and ready to put up.

Used the watering trough on the trailer and pulled by the tractor to carry water to all the new trees. It works very well. Went out to inspect the 2000 Pines yesterday. They are doing well for the most part. Five percent dead or brown, but the others seem to be growing well.

--John

May 22, 1977

Didn't need a fire last night or this morning. Up to the high 80's yesterday and probably again today. Down to 60's overnight, very good

sleeping. Watered new fruit trees yesterday and will again today. Still have Red Pine to plant and four Autumn Olive. Mark paid us a surprise visit yesterday and stayed for dinner. We went to the Wagon Wheel, our local fancy restaurant. Started to put up screen doors yesterday and ran into problems. I didn't allow for the difference in thickness in the doors and frames. I'll make shims and do it next week.

--John

June 1, 1977

Schultz cleared an acre south of the meadow.

June 2, 1977

Pond dug and half of road covered (raised).

--Mary

June 4, 1977

Our first visit to the J & M Boenke Estate since the cabin was built. Can hardly believe all that the Boenke family has done to make this piece of wild land into the "Retreat of Dreams" it is now. One can visualize the beautiful area that will soon be around the pond. We must return as often as possible to get back to nature with the Boenkes.

--"Al" Shortt

Daisy, Grammy and Gertie all came out for Saturday picnic lunch. Lovely day.

--Mary

June 5 1977

This has been a very good weekend. Al, Mark and I spent Friday night here. Saturday morning we went hiking and inspected the pines. They seem OK. Came back along west fence and amazed how much it has grown up. Path is not obvious, and we got off to the east for a while. Much P. I. Along the fence at northern end and in Maple corner. I came back out today and I am planting the last ten wind break trees. Watered everything yesterday. Part of the road was put in and the pond dug on Thursday, but it was too damp and Schultz is letting it dry for a month before finishing. Picnic table half done.

--John

June 11, 1977

Bridge Party - Barbara and Ardel Morgan, Vil and Lee Hicks, Kay and Bill Brown (McAllisters unable to come). They brought salads and beer; I made campers stew (mushrooms, soup, ham and peas). Perfect weather; fun party

The bath tub in the meadow works perfectly! I mowed around front gate with lawn mower, and almost finished second picnic table. The hook rug (my first) also nearing completion. Love it out here.

--Mary

June 12, 1977

I plowed. Since Schultz had cleared the road and made mounds over the culverts, I was able to take the tractor to the back and get the plow from where I had left it. I finished clearing the garden by the entrance and plowed it up. Very rough job. Lots of roots and thick sod, but now it is usable. There are three feet of water in the pond and fresh deer tracks around it.

--John

July 9, 1977

Well, I can see that no one is very faithful to this log book. But as I am sitting here with nothing to do , I'll add a few words. I was supposed to have a "party" out here tonight, but it looks like no one is going to show. The pond is very full. It's been rainy the past couple of nights, heavy winds knocked down a small tree at the pond's edge and a few branches elsewhere. There were some trees down in Kinsman and nearby on Rt. 7. The Sun is just setting now and everything looks so picturesque in this light. I stood at the gate and looked across the road and field on the other side at an old dead tree there that looked just like an Andrew Wyeth. There was a rabbit by the gate when I came in, and the tadpoles in the pond are still tadpoles.

--Heidi

July 24, 1977

Stayed all night. Yesterday Heidi and Grammy came out with us, but went back after lunch. Apples are getting bigger and riper. It looks like there will be plenty. Hope to save some over winter. The single remaining cabbage is growing well but needs some bug control. Tomatoes are doing fine and some flowers starting. Peppers are 6-8 inches high. We've had a handful of beans and hope for some more. We may have found some Elderberries on the west side of the copse by the pine trees. Some of the windbreak trees (Red Pine and Norway Spruce) are dying. Don't know why but will have to replace. I have put in extra four foot lengths of culvert pipe at each end of the three culverts on "Tamarack Trail" (roadway to the back of the property). I still need to put in culverts on the stream path to the maples. The weather has been extremely hot for two or three weeks, but cooled off this weekend.

--John

We had a nice lazy Saturday, and we worked Sunday AM putting first drainage tile across the creek bed. Then swimming; it was marvelous! I was skinny dipping when we heard a car horn and saw Mr. Schultz and son arrive. John talked with them until they wandered down the trail and I made a bee line for the cabin! Home early for a Grammy cooked dinner with Gram and Heidi. (Myra is working at Copperweld - plus Denny's, Heidi works evenings as supervisor at D. Q. and Mark is back at G. E.)

--Mary

July 28, 1977

Came out after work and stayed overnight. Going directly back to work from here. Mary, Myra, Heidi and Mom came out for supper and the evening. It was rather chilly overnight. Temperature was 50 degrees inside when I looked this morning. I put the second six foot culvert pipe on the stream by the maples last evening.

--John

And Mary stayed overnight, too! Actually I have a "hurt" in my back and this was the first night ever that I didn't sleep like a log out here.

--Mary

Aug. 7 1977

We had a lovely rainy weekend with Nora and Lou Ciz- Madia out for Saturday steak supper. It was good to see them again after eight years. The little red wagon works well carrying the commode to the dump. Glued bark onto the stump. Went for a swim. Home for 3PM dinner with all the kids and Gram. Apples are falling off trees by the picnic table and cover the ground.

--Mary

Aug. 18, 1977

I had some of the office staff out for a training meeting - Paula Harrison, Canetta Bonner, Jane Latcham, Minnie Bryant, Debbie Segi, Diane Nasonti, Pat Gede Meyer and myself. They really enjoyed getting "out" - lovely day. Six of us for dinner and Paula stayed overnight. Very nice to get better acquainted with her.

--Mary

Aug 20, 1977

We came out Saturday AM and found Shultz and son here with bulldozer and scraper. They moved the "mountain" away from the pond, filled the road to the third culvert. Still too wet to do more.

Then Connors came over - all but Holly. Looked at the pond and road and cabin and visited. Marty is sixteen and a senior. He was "King" at the Ashtabula County Fair.. The apples are abundant- almost covering the ground by the cabin and part of the picnic grove.

--Mary

Sept. 7, 1977

Spending the night here. Came directly from Werner after work and started on the porch foundation, leveling the dirt. I hope to start building the porch this weekend. Next week we are taking a vacation and spending the whole week here. We were here Sunday and Monday (Labor Day) doing odds and ends. I'm lowering the pond level slightly by cutting down the overflow. I'll put in an overflow pipe when I get it right. We had a

pepper and a tomato from the garden finally last Sunday. The weeds are rapidly taking over the garden as I have no time to fight them. And so it goes.

--John

Sept. 15, 1977

We've been here since Saturday, and we have done all kinds of things. I even weeded the garden. We've had peppers and tomatoes aplenty. I have the overflow pipe ready to put in, but it has rained and the pond level is not down to where I want it yet. I didn't get back to mow the fields while it was dry enough to do so and now it is wet again. I have the porch floor done, and I will start the walls tomorrow, if the weather cooperates. Cider mill doesn't open till next week and by then all our apples will be gone or rotten.

--John

Lovely vacation. A whole week! Picked all kinds of apples, made apple sauce, apple pies, apple pancakes and just plain ate a lot of juicy crisp apples. Also cooking everything with tomatoes and peppers. Made brownies and cake in my stove top baker. Good!

I started labeling apple trees, and cut a "view path" from cabin window to pond,. Nice to see it. We brought out the canoe and went canoeing on the pond (and one day on Pymatuning last weekend). Lovely and peaceful. I cut down a couple of Aspen that had broken, and discovered they are blighted, but they will make good logs for home.

We went to all the local antique and junk yards, but found no cider mills. We bought a pitch fork (for the mulch pile). I caulked all the cracks, varnished the log table and worked on Title VII Re-application. We did cross word puzzles and played cards. I love the new light over my kitchen "Sink"/stove area.

Weather- cool and rainy! Pond high.

--Mary

Oct 2, 1977

Another rainy weekend. Thursday we finished the rafters on the porch and planned to do the roof Saturday, but then could not. Sunday morning everything is wet and it looks like it may rain. Might have to just work in the cabin. Leaves are beginning to turn and apples are about all off the trees. We are still picking peppers and tomatoes.

--John

Cool and drizzly. Frustrating! The trees are still mostly green with a few beginning to turn here and there. Probably later than usual due to the rain.

On Sept. 25 we had a church picnic here - about 25 people altogether. For once it was a lovely day. John took kids (of all ages) for rides in the

wagon behind the tractor. He had cut and trimmed some pretty paths through the woods. We also had the canoe in the pond and some even went swimming. Others picked apples. We furnished hot dogs and cold drinks. They brought all sorts of delicious things. It really was a fine day.

--Mary

Oct. 8, 1977

Had a trip out to the "cabin" and environs - what a fine place it has turned into. I saw the land two years ago and had my doubts as to what could be done with it - so marshy and overgrown!! Now we know- and it is lovely and still nice and "wild". We spent the afternoon by the stove - a cold rainy day - then later walked around and saw the various clearings, the pond, thousand of apples - and the garden.. I love it all and am so glad Mary and John and the family are enjoying the results of their labors. Keep it up. I'll be back - I hope.

.--Selma Mueller

Feb.5,1978

It is being a rather long hard winter again. The ground hog saw his shadow, and we are in for more bad weather. We had a blizzard a couple of weeks ago and we are "snowed out". I cleared a place by the road to park, but we walk in (and carry) from there. I'm surprised to see only one tree (near the pond) blown down by the blizzard. We've been feeding the nuthatches seed, bran and old pancakes. There are several that come to our feeder. We came here yesterday directly from Greenville after work. Had a fire going quickly and were reasonably comfortable. It almost went out this morning, but I caught it just in time. Cut more wood and brought in some coal. All set for next time. Snow is drifted to two feet in some places. I started the tractor, but I couldn't maneuver it out of its snow drift and couldn't attach the scraper blade, so I gave up. At least I ran it and charged the battery a while.

--John

Feb 18-19, 1978

Came out again with John, for a bit of peace and beauty. John has just resigned from Werner Ladder. It was a tough decision, probably with long range implications. He will now look for a small business, possibly a campground, to buy and operate. At any rate, the cabin is a lovely respite.

John is a master at starting fires and can warm up the cabin from 20 degrees to 60 degrees in two hours. This time we brought the toboggan and pulled the battery and miscellaneous in. A great help. We will also take the camp stove home for emergency cooking - so long as the coal strike threatens us with loss of electricity.

The chickadees are enjoying the feeder and a new supply of sunflower seed. They are very polite - only one at a time on the feeder. Also saw a rabbit near the cabin this morning. The trees are covered with frost this A. M., but will gradually lose their covering in the Sun, The moon last night was exceptionally bright, making clear shadows everywhere.

We are using the coal we bought (Since the coal from Grammy's is gone) and it is much softer. It makes a lot of smoke and soot in the stove and soot on the snow outside the cabin. John cut three dead trees and hauled logs from one on the toboggan up to the cabin. We also dried a lot of icy logs by the stove.

The ground has been covered with deep snow since early January (since the girls and I got back from Hawaii Jan 10). We wonder how the critters keep alive! The pond is frozen solid and easy to walk on with only about six inches of snow. We see lots of tracks in the snow - dogs, deer mice rabbits and birds. Lovely to see and to guess what they are.

--Mary

March 19, 1978

The snow is finally melting. It has been a long hard winter. We still could not drive in because of the pile of snow in the in the driveway, but I cleared that away with the tractor and scraper blade which leaves only a few inches on the road. Next week we will drive in again. We brought the cook stove back. We didn't use it at home, but it was good to have in case we had needed it. The coal strike isn't quite over, but things seem to be returning to normal.

The pond is still frozen and snow covered, but water is running during the day. The Sun has been shining more recently. The chickadees were glad to see us and have sunflower seeds again. They are interesting to watch, but they are too nervous.

Since it is warmer (about freezing) we could burn the fire slower and soot was less of a problem. Also burned some wood with it which seems to help. Bought a new chain saw file yesterday to replace the lost one. The township seems to be more in earnest about the ditching project. We signed a permit last week and the trustee (Fred Reutenick, Jr.) seems to think they will be down here in a few days.

--John

Apr. 8, 1978

Went to Ashtabula and we made an informal offer to John Palo on the Cedar's motel. Also looked at another motel. Then came to the cabin and prepared supper for the Kubej's. Ed has quit Werner and taken a job with Elkay in Illinois. We had a pleasant visit. Afterwards we stayed overnight and then home early so I could get to Friendship Baptist Church in Girard for a meeting.

--Mary

Apr. 14, 1978

Supper at home for Louise Tsschuganov and then to the Utah Dance Company concert.

Apr 15-17

Went to visit Myra and Lester Ludwig at Cornell. They seem happy together and we had a lovely time. Italian dinner out and Lester's birthday cake at their apartment. Bell tower, walk over gorge, visited the house they plan to rent, supper in their apartment, saw "Maltese Falcon" and "Earth Walk". Really a fine weekend in spite of snow. Stopped at the cabin en route home, looked at our bushes (barely budding), put out seed for the chickadees. Noticed some foundation blocks crumbling - darn! Some crocuses and jonquils (from the Connors) are blooming. Crocuses were out last week, already. The guide at Cornell's Earth Rise walk this morning said the wild flowers are about one and a half weeks late this year - at least!

--Mary

May 6, 1978

Stopped at the cabin after talking with the Welchs, who hold a mortgage on the motel. We are trying to negotiate and untangle a deadlock on the motel deal. Cold and dreary. No apple blossoms in sight yet. Trees barely budding - except for willows elsewhere which are green. John is looking at the problem with crumbling foundation blocks, and he can't do porch screening until foundation is square. Will spring never come?

But we did have a nice lunch by the fire. John loaded the trailer full of dirt for the road and uncovered a nest of three moles. I piled them together under some sod. John says (later) that there is a new hole in the pile of dirt where mama must have taken them. Chickadees also come fearlessly close to John and an owl is hooting and others.

--Mary

May 28, 1978

Came to the cabin yesterday after spending the morning with the Palo's (who own Cedar's Motel) and their attorney, Carey Sheldon. We worked out an agreement last week and came up to start learning the details of motel operation. Carey stopped in to talk to John Palo, on behalf of Attorney Diamond who is out of town, and wanted Palo to be aware of the risks involved. Anyway, the papers will be signed Wednesday May 31, 1978 and we take legal position 12:01 AM June 1, 1978 Hurrah!

The trees are all green and there are a few apple blossoms, but it looks like the frost must have gotten most of the blossoms. The crabapples are just in bud, also not as full as last year - and a month later!

John rebuilt the cabin support in the NE corner, which was crumbling. (an inferior cement block) I painted the cabin floor - in three stages - after much moving and sweeping! John also planted my strawberries. Sure hope they grow.

On May 23, Mark graduated from Case "with highest honors" in Physics. Myra came home without Lester the night before, and Heidi met us in Cleveland. We had a wonderful day together - saw Mark's computer equipment and new three dimensional computer program and his "office". Then lunch and off to Severance Hall. Met with Frank and Bettie there. Then to a reception for grads and parents and visited with Leslie Foldy. Then we had a roast beef dinner for 16 at the Holiday Inn (I-271 and 422) - Christine, Janet, four Rodericks, three Foldys and seven Boenkes. Really great.

John has done lot of work on the house in Warren windows doors, trim, yard, etc. All is well!

--Mary

Everything needs mowing. Maybe next time I can get something done. The pond is down to normal level, but it is inhabited by millions of tadpoles at the moment. I hope something that likes tadpoles discovers it soon, I saw two large hawk-like birds today. They were circling overhead and were being harassed by two small birds. We went to the flea market today to shop for useless stuff and found it.

--John

July 2, 1978

Mary, Adele and I came out to see the cabin and the famous 60 acre tract of land. It was a bit cloudy and overcast and the sand flies out

biting. We walked around the perimeter of the acreage. We saw the Elm tree, young evergreen plantings, trail, well and had an interesting lunch and conversation in the cabin. By the way "Ginger" our dog was also here. Adele and I have enjoyed our visit to Mary and John's Cedar's Motel. I think the motel is in good repair and they will do very well. I am going to spend a few days in Erie, on vacation - visit Lincoln Ave., go swimming on the peninsula and see the old town again.

--Love, Mark and Adele Mueller

Sept. 12, 1978

Resting a few minutes while emptying the cabin of valuables remaining. Cabin was broken into sometime in the last two weeks . Conners called Thursday to tell us and I came down that night and inspected with the sheriff. Now I am fixing a broken window and loading remaining tools etc into the car. They stole mostly resalable items. Chain saw, lawnmower, battery, hydraulic jack, many small items. I think I will put up a sign "No valuables inside".

--John

Oct 22, 1978

Sunday. Marvelous warm Indian Summer. Trees beautiful. Heidi is home on fall break from her Junior year at Oberlin and offered to "Motel sit" Yesterday she made bread while I made sugar cookies for John's birthday. Also made stuffed pork chops and cherry pie and got a Norelco shaver,

Today John and I came out for a walk back to see the pine trees (still there mostly buried in the weeds). Walked around the pond - several types of weeds starting to grow. Also had a picnic lunch outside with the yellow jackets and inch worms. Then loaded the smaller table on the trailer. We can use it in the patio at the motel. Lots of deer tracks. I took down the salt lick until after hunting season. Strawberries doing well.

--Mary

Feb. 18, 1979

John came down a month or so ago and the cabin had been broken into again. He had fixed the window from the first break in, but this time they pried up the window and broke the latch. So today he fixed the latch and I will write a sad note for the door. Helen Leslie is motel sitting today. We are getting her used to it so she can take a long day at the end of the month when John goes to Florida for his Innkeepers Convention.

John built a fine fire, the kindling and logs were nice and dry. We had chili, cocoa and cucumber sandwiches by the fire on the nice bench that John built. It has been an easy winter, i. e. not too much snow, but it has been extra cold lately. It was 27 degrees below zero in Erie the other day. Below zero around the motel in Ashtabula several nights. In the cabin today, when we arrived, one thermometer read -5 degrees and the other +5 degrees (probably +5).

I made a double sleeping bag last night of old blankets and mattress covers. Cost nothing and will "do" if needed.

--Mary

Aug. 15, 1979

I came out just to inspect. Cabin OK. Weeds everywhere. Pine trees are competing well with the weeds. Some are higher than the weeds, but most are still "down in". Next year they should really show up. There is no time to do anything for them, but everything seems to be holding its own. Some good apples on old apple trees.

The weeds are growing unimpeded because I had taken the tractor and scraper blade to Cedar's Motel, so that I could plow the snow out of the parking lot and driveway which was of higher priority than cutting weeds with the brush hog on the land. On an earlier weekend when Myra and Lester were at the motel visiting us, we made the tractor transfer. They drove me down to the property and stayed around to be sure I got the tractor going. Unfortunately, it did not seem to have any power. After fiddling around for a while, I took the air cleaner apart and discovered the problem. A mouse family had taken up residence in the chamber of the air intake and filled it full of grass. After disassembling and cleaning it, I refilled it with oil and put it back together.

I then took the tractor out on the road and opened it up to full speed in fourth gear. Lo, and behold, I could top out at the full 14 miles per hour rating. So after closing up the cabin we set off up the road. I had planned a route to the motel using mostly back roads, and Myra and Lester came along behind me, until they disappeared somewhere for a while, but eventually they reappeared. I never did hear about their digression, and the trip took more than two hours. We made a grand and noisy entrance into Ashtabula and the motel.

The down side was that a light rain had started and some of the roads I used were only dirt roads. I was mud bespattered enough, that I left most of my clothes outside when I came into the house. The coat I was wearing has never recovered.

--John

Oct 6, 1979

John and I came out this afternoon, and we are staying through tomorrow afternoon. Millie is "baby sitting" the motel. She made us some marvelous zucchini bread!

I had to get things set up for the Health Fair this morning. Ron didn't come to run the projector and the Tel-Med phone didn't work. Oh Well! Took a basket of grapes to the Conners. Holly and Marty are back home again.

We have been too busy with work and the motel to come to the cabin for a full weekend for months which seems like forever. I have really missed the cabin and tramping through the fields. We picked a variety of apples, the best ones are on the other side of the creek. Some don't cook well. We made applesauce with the good ones. Still mostly green outside. Picked a lot of wild flowers. Love it here!

--Mary

Oct 7, 1979

Slept late this morning, but the weather cooperated by raining all morning (so far). Weeds are everywhere, but the Conners must have mowed some and been in and out occasionally. Planning a trip back to look at the pine trees in spite of the rain. Cabin is in good shape and we cooked on the wood (and a little coal) stove. Cut down a dead Elm and cut up half of it for the fire. We about replaced what we used this weekend. (not very cold) Used the new chain saw which works quite well. We saw two chickadees yesterday. They came to look us over while we were walking through the woods.. They perched fearlessly in a tree just a few feet from us. We put out sunflower seeds, but they haven't found them

yet.
--John

Feb. 23, 1980

Brought some pails of coal out and just getting the cabin to livable temperatures. It has warmed up to the 40's and low 50's outside the last few days and most of the snow has disappeared. So much for our cross country skiing weekend at the cabin. We may finally put up the "Boenke's" sign today. Need to make a trip to Andover for candles and lamp fuel (forgot battery for lights). No birds. Ice layer on the pond. Hope to go out and see the trees later. Foggy and damp today, but it seems to be clearing a little. There have been no more break-ins. Maybe our notes and extra locking arrangements are doing some good.
--John

Feb. 24, 1980

We are watching the birds while we are eating our breakfast. We discovered some Tufted Titmice mixing with the Chickadees getting the seeds. Two blue jays are maintaining a safer distance and not coming to get seeds yet. Just saw a rabbit run by. First rabbit I have seen here in at least a couple of years. It's a gray windy day, but not too cold, about 40 degrees. I will go back to look at the trees this morning. Last night a little Owl hooted around for a while.
--John

Millie is motel sitting; Business is good, we've been full all week. Went to see Myra and Lester earlier this week. Awfully nice to see the cabin again. Put up gold curtains in front of "kitchen cabinets" yesterday. Marietta Fitts came for a visit and brought lovely gooey rolls. Forgot the battery; went to Andover for lamp fuel and candles. Set 3-4 candles in front of mirror and managed a pleasant evening. Reading Creative Aggression - excellent! John is reading The Book Of Mormons with work on a crossword puzzle in between times. Went for a short walk with John; he says the pine trees in back are clearly visible in all directions.

I've started cross country skiing and had hoped to ski this weekend, but it is a very mild winter and all the snow is melted. The American Olympic Hockey team beat the Russians Friday night; very exciting game. Have you heard the good and bad news? The Russians are pulling out of Afghanistan, but the Lake Placid Olympic committee is arranging their transportation! Eric Heiden has 5+ gold medals and Meyers got a silver for Slalom. Not bad. Wonder how Linda Fratiane did in figure skating last night?

Wish we could come to the cabin more often - finish the porch and expand the cabin. Maybe retire here? CONTACT is doing well; enjoying my work there, but not forever.
--Mary

May 4, 1980

Lovely warm sunny Sunday, Millie motel sitting for the afternoon. Picnic lunch, sun bathing and a loving visit to a pretty spot beyond the creek. Christmas tree badly eaten, many wasps nests. Time for a puzzle!!
--Mary

The creek bed is fairly dry, not much rain recently. One tree is in full bloom with little white flowers, some sort of apple. Meadow is weedy and so is the pond. There are frogs and minnows in the pond now.
--John

May 30, 1980

The "Boenke's" sign is finally up!! The little trees aren't so little anymore. Land is dry.
--Mary

June 15, 1980

John unpacked his Father's Day gifts - inflatable boat and pump. Bonnie, Bobbie and Heidi watched while Bradley, Myra, John and I swam and Lester paddled. It's a lovely warm day and we had a walk around the property and a picnic with our three new graduates. Heidi leaves in a few days for the west coast; Bobbie, Bonnie and Bradley will drive back to Texas; Mark and Lori off to house hunt in New Jersey, Really lovely weekend with very special nice "Guests"!
-- Mary

Today I enjoyed the cabin and pond - hope to have something like this someday.
--Myra

July 4, 1980 Friday to Sunday

Whee! A long lovely weekend. Swimming twice in pond along with John's new inflatable boat. John worked at screening in the porch; got it almost finished including a counter and shelf at north end. I did some staining and caulking; got a new (wrong kind) tin of stain.

Peg and Dalt Love came for a visit and a long walk wading through brush back to the pine forest. The weeds are high; the pines are higher! Made some blue berry pies with my new pie maker.

Rained once - hard and brief - when we needed a break. Otherwise sunny and ever so lovely. Also got some kitchen chairs at Dolly's (\$2.00) and some stuff at the Sunday Flea Market. Fun.
--Mary

Aug 1 -3, 1980 Friday AM thru Sunday.

Lovely long weekend. Worked on cabin Friday - John screened in the porch and I stained wood. Saturday AM we went to Andover for wood,

misc. and groceries during a rain storm. Saturday afternoon Glenn and Barbara Roderick, Carolyn and Jim all came for a picnic supper. They brought wine, watermelon and cake. John roasted corn and boneless pork chops - delicious! Then the rains came - again and again and most of the night and Sunday.

But the porch was lovely and dry. We also turned the wagon and potty holder into a coffee table and tray. Works fine!!

--Mary

Sept. 12 - 14, 1980

Warm balmy weekend in the 80's. A few trees have many apples, those in front of the porch, those just north of the dump and those in the field south of the Christmas tree on the east border. Most trees though have no apples.

Nice long weekend at cabin. Shelby and Carrie Cole and Gail Markijohn came down for Friday supper, late due to bad directions. We had cocktails, steak, roast corn, homemade apple sauce and apple "pies". Saturday to Andover, then cut path by back door, mowed. Bill Wilber and son Mark dropped in plus four Conner kids. Bryan came with tractor and brush hog and mowed paths and meadow. Soup to nuts supper. Got up early Sunday morning to enjoy porch and birds and later a pancake and bacon breakfast.

--Mary

We like having some clear area around the cabin. Went back to look at the pine trees. About half are one to two feet above the goldenrod. They are making good progress. Cleaned and repaired the stove pipe up to the chimney. I have fins to put on it and then we are ready for winter. Cleaned out some of the pond with a rake and a post hole digger. Cat-tail infection is spreading rapidly. Used some herbicide and will use more in the spring.

--John

Dec. 12, 1980

Friday - Saturday weekend at the cabin. John also got cross country skis, so we did a little skiing first thing before the snow melted. It will be great when we can ski back to the pine trees. Then lunch, nap in the loft and a trip to town for a "board" and a bucket. Also looked at two seat sofas for the apartment at the motel.

John is filling in the chimney. Guess I'll read and do a cross word puzzle before cocktails and supper. Millie is motel sitting and tomorrow we'll go to Garth Winkler's Director's party. We've sent out all our Christmas letters and boxes of packages to Heidi and to Myra and Lester. (Mark will be home with us).

--Mary

Most of the snow melted this afternoon, but the pond is half frozen. Winter has settled in a couple of weeks early. Tomorrow we'll go to look at the trees, and talk about things to do in the spring. I put some "heat fins" on the stove pipe to get more heat. Maybe it works.

--John

Mar. 14 - 15, 1981

We've spent a short weekend here from Saturday lunch through Sunday lunch. The cabin was broken into for the third time last month. The Connors called; Brian had noticed a broken window. John called the sheriff's department and met them down here. The thieves took the stove, toboggan and an old family mirror. Damn!!

John bought a nice kerosene stove which we brought along. It's neat and easy to operate; raised the temperature from the 20 to 40 outside to a comfortable zone near the heater, but only to 55 degrees on the far thermometers.

I met with members of the FISH group in Andover. CONTACT may develop an agreement with them to handle their phone calls. Bought some groceries and back to the cabin for wine, snacks, chow mien supper and Amish apple pie. Slept in the loft, which kept us as warm or warmer than the rest of the cabin, and we didn't have to un-make the sofa.

There was no snow in Ashtabula but almost an inch here yesterday, mostly gone today. Sorry we didn't get to ski here, but we had a fine time skiing at Chautauqua, Maple Ridge Golf Course and Ashtabula Country Club this winter.

Big question, "Keep or sell the land now that we realize the cabin will keep getting broken into?"

--Mary

I went back to look at the trees and brought in the metal posts and signs I had put back there. The trees are now one to six feet in height and can hardly be overlooked and trampled. I am designing a cheapie wood stove to augment the heat situation. Three buckets and a hood should do it. I need to mow and clean out around the trees, and clean weeds from the pond and need time to do it.

--John

May 6, 1981

Cool and gray. No rain (though it was raining earlier). Very quiet here, very peaceful. Saw lots of deer tracks, but no deer. A few cardinals. Walked back to the trees. Very wet along the "road". Trees are standing tall, the weeds are all flattened from the winter (snow). Nice to see these little trees being successful. Pond is very full - no sign of tadpoles yet. I guess I might not be seeing this place again if Mom and Dad decide to sell soon. I brought my boots all the way from Oregon, knowing I would be here and it would be wet. I think I would like to live here, if I could feel safe alone, except that I like Eugene so much.

--Heidi

May 17, 1981

The air smells so good here and everything is so peaceful.

Hear the wind and lots of birds, but here's a general hush and calmness. Me likes.

--Anne

July 11, 1981

I came out to put up the "For Sale" sign. It's hot and humid and weedy. The place needs mowing and some attention, but there is just no time for that.

--John

May 30, 1982

Raining on Sunday morning. We are here for two and a half days, and allowing our new motel help some practical experience back home. Marty Conners now lives in a trailer "next door" with wife Sherry and three dogs: Barney, Ebony and Imp.

We tried sailing yesterday and sank. I will make a trip back to look at the trees later.

--John

All three older Conners kids got married last summer - Bob, Marty and Holly. Bob and Charlene are remodeling the family barn into a lovely three story home, Marty and Sherry are in a trailer next to us, and Holly and husband in Denmark with a new baby boy - ten days old.

I visited Helen and Gene - neither very well. Gene had a bad auto accident and missed Holly's wedding. Helen has kidney problems and not walking well. I sat outside and talked with Brian and Charlene.

I put my new Dolphin in the water for the first time. I had a nice little sail out into Pymatuning Lake, but not much wind. I came back and tied up at the dock while we had lunch. Then I tried to take John for a ride. First we tipped over (at the dock), bailed out and tried again. Discovered the space between the hulls was largely filled with water and nearly sinking. We pulled it out and discovered an uncorked drain hole. John tipped it to drain with the assistance of a plank, and we went into town for a cork and another wing nut.

The pond is filling up with weeds and reeds. Cabin still wonderful! Sleeping in the loft. I brought a pad and blanket bag back from Florida (where I was for two months this last winter and spring). It was a cold snowy long winter here. The pine tree by the cabin is over eight feet tall, sprouting fast. Eggs and tofu for breakfast. Stopped at the Fairway Lounge yesterday.

--Mary

Aug. 14, 1982

Rachel and Laurel enjoyed a day of sailing, eating and talking with Mary and John! Much fun.

--?

Oct. 8, 1982

Checked cabin, every thing OK. I took down the "For Sale" sign for the winter. Beautiful sunny day.

--John

April 16, 1983

We come to the cabin so seldom anymore. We miss it and the pond and the weeds and silence and sunny breezes. Today we walked back to the pines; many are ten feet tall, and took some pictures. Sunny and Breezy. John has put up a new "For Sale" sign. I have been skiing in Kitzbuhel this spring, taking classes at Edinboro College and a weekend each month in Gestalt. No time for the cabin, still it is lovely here, We hope to come back for a weekend in June.

--Mary

May 21 - 22, 1983

We came late Friday evening after dinner and bridge at the McAllister's with Morgans and Howells. Weather is mild. We used the kerosene stove early Saturday and Sunday AM only. Visited Gene (arm accident, unable to work, lost fifty pounds) and Helen (dying, fragile, in much pain). Marty and Sherry came over; both healthy and very friendly. Holly's baby is eleven months old and Charlene is due in July.

Saturday we went for groceries in Andover and Kinsman Mini-Mall. We had our drinks in the cabin, then dinner at Crooked Creek Restaurant just west of the causeway. We drove up through Linesville (must try Driftwood Restaurant), back to play Lady Bug at Crooked Creek, soft ice cream at the corner and home. Lovely to sleep late and laze about. I am struggling with the decision to resign from CONTACT.

--Mary

Much rubbish in the front ditch. Marty and Brian have started to clear in front. The cabin foundation is showing more deterioration. I am hoping to sell the land soon.

--John

May 30, 1983

Thorn apples are about to bloom, but the other apple blooms have come and gone. Winter 82 - 83 was mild, warm early spring, cool in late spring and frost into May.

--Mary

Jan 4, 1984

I came just to pick up the chairs and table, and to retrieve this diary. The cabin is in good shape and the temperature is 34 degrees.

--John

May 26, 1984

John and I came to the cabin yesterday morning for two days (Friday and Saturday). The weather has been warm; yesterday was sunny. Today we awoke to rain, then overcast and finally sunny again. We went into Andover to a gift shop and bought some "tops" for Christmas and saw the Library is getting an extension. We also went to Linesville for dinner at the Driftwood, a nice neat little restaurant with antiques on the walls and to a drive-in double feature - "Splash" (a mermaid) and "The Man Who Loved Women" with Bert Reynolds. Two crazy movies! Today we went to The

Waterfowl Museum, to Meadville's Market and to a Winery in Conneaut Lake.

The pine trees by the cabin are twelve feet plus; I can hardly believe it. There are a few pink blooms on the Thorn apples and some white ones on the trees by the porch - but most have come and gone already. The pond is ringed with bulrushes and a granddaddy bullfrog croaks with a big voice.

The Goodhearts stopped in to talk about the land (John's For Sale sign has been up a couple of years now). We'd like to sell since we come so seldom and there is so much to do here. Still, if it doesn't sell, I'd like to live here a half year or so when we sell the motel. It's so peaceful. We can see only our own greenery from all sides of the cabin. No bells interfering and lovely uninterrupted naps and nights.

I did a jig saw puzzle and studied a little German. Didn't even get to working on a paper (for Edinboro - my courses are all finished except for this Summer).

--Mary

Sept. 29 - 30, 1984

We spent our last weekend at the cabin this Saturday and Sunday, as we have found a very nice buyer, and the deal is in process. It was cool and gray with scattered Sun, in the mid 50's. Everything is overgrown.

The pine trees near the cabin (which I planted 7 or 8 years ago are now ten to fifteen feet high. We went out for all our meals. Saturday lunch in Kinsman after browsing through the Mini-Mall, and in the evening in Conneaut Lake at the Conneaut Cellars Wine Store and Silver Shores Restaurant right on the lake. Then Sunday; breakfast at Li'l Bit on the east end of the causeway and lunch in Linesville and browsing through the Waterfowl Festival. Also stopped at the Waterfowl State Park Museum and a church flea market.

We stopped in to say hello and goodbye to the Conners. Gene is no longer working since he tore his arm muscles, and Helen is just out of the hospital again. We talked to Holly on the phone. She has two children. Bob and Charlene (already have one, I think) and are expecting twins in November. Marty was fixing the roof for Gene and he talked to us from up there. Their baby is due Dec. fifth. Later on Brian and his girlfriend (Theresa?) stopped over to see us. He has grown up and is very pleasant..

Steve Swezey, our buyer, is a close friend of Dave Kohta and they stopped in on Saturday. Dave was just married two weeks ago, and they live in a trailer on California Road. On Sunday Steve came over with his girlfriend, Shelly, and we arranged to leave the key for him.

John took down our "BOENKE'S" sign and packed up the car and trailer. We took a few pictures and left.

John said it well, "I feel a little sad and relieved and satisfied."

Me too. We've had a wonderful fun experience with the land and cabin that John built. But we don't have time to enjoy it, let alone keep it up or improve it and it has become a worry with three break-ins over the years. Steve works for a tree trimming company. He knows and likes trees and seems eager to enjoy the place.

We're ready to move on to the next phase, whatever that will be.

--Mary