

# Jean's History and Anecdotes

Welcome to the ABC Hall Crazy Dinner.

Bob Hope often recited this passage:

“Give me a sense of humour, Lord  
Give me the grace to see a joke,  
To get some humour out of life  
And pass it on to other folk.”

So that is what I try to do.

My ancestry is very interesting to me and I want my kids to know where they come from so I will give a short synopsis of it.

## **Buchners/Boughners** (another spelling...my Gramma Boo)

John Buchner was born about 1710 in the Kingdom of Saxony, went to Holland in about 1732 to avoid conscription into the army. Sailed from Rotterdam in 1753 on the “Rowand”. They settled in Sussex County, New Jersey 20 years before colonies were divided between Independence and the Crown. Our family stayed loyal to the Crown. When the War of Independence broke out in 1776, John was too old to fight but his sons did. They moved to Upper Canada. He and his brother were Quakers but loved their horses. They were told to give up either their religion or horses. They gave up religion. The Buchner family is unique in that unlike many other early settlers they made no attempt to remain close to other settlers. Instead they were quite often the first to clear the virgin timbers, entering deep into the wilderness to live off the land with only the Indians for neighbours. This was the case in New Jersey and in the Niagara area in Upper Canada, Crowland Township, Long Point and finally Malahide and Oxford Twps.

## **John's Will**

John was a very good man. When he died in 1791, his will read: “I give to my Dear and Loving wife Catherine Buchner, Her Dict and apparels in as decent a manner as she requires. Likewise, one good and gentle riding beast and side saddle, 2 good milk cows, her bed and agreeable bedding or coverings, to it six pounds of woll (sic) and a good agreeable bedroom in the house on the premises, one iron pot, one large brass kittle (sic), one chest for uses.”

How can you be more generous than that!! The rest was divided between his 10 children.

## **Gallaghers** (Gramma & Grampa Guy)

We believe we came from Spain. We were descendants of the Milesian Kings of Spain who settled in Ireland around 1500 B.C. The 4 lines of Kings were Heremon, Heber, Ir and lthe and they became the ruling class of Ireland for the next 2500 years. One of their sons, Heremon is our ancestor. One of his descendants was Niall, a famous warrior and his son Conall Gulban was the forefather of the O'Gallchobhair (meaning “foreign helper”). O'Gallchobhair, was a King of Ireland from 642 – 654. So, making a long story short, I think that makes me a Princess of some sort. My great, great, great grandfather came to Canada in the early 1800's, long before the potato famine.

My great uncle Sam was a cattle farmer just outside Dundas, Ontario. He was a very proud owner of excellent dairy cows. He had deaf and dumb men working for him, so no one could get answers as to how he looked after his herd. He had a calf which he thought could win a prize at the biggest and best known agricultural fair in the province and in all of Canada. That happened to be the Western Fair in London. He hitched up a wagon with the calf in it and tied the mother cow (for milk) to the back. He proceeded to walk the 120 plus miles on the dirt road to London. He won the top prize for the calf and a cup for best in the show. My sister-in-law has the beautiful cup.

**I was born in 1937** in London, Ontario. I still remember a few things when I was just four.

My mother was downstairs having tea with some of her friends. She had just had my baby sister Katherine.

I really wanted to show her off so I went to the cradle and picked her up and carried her to the top of the stairs. Somehow, I tripped and dropped her down the whole flight.

A few years later while driving in the car the back door suddenly opened and she fell out. I yelled "Stop Daddy, Katy fell out of the car". I think she fell on her head in a pile of leaves. Maybe because of these accidents she learned to keep her head as she became a very successful business woman.

### **Hair**

Another thing I remember is when I was sick. We were allowed to be in our parents' bed when under the weather. I had long blond ringlets that my Mom loved. I found some scissors and proceeded to cut them off and laid them out on the bed in a nice row. When Mom came in, I said, "I can't reach the ones at the back." I have had short hair ever since.

My Mom had long dark hair that she kept in a roll. She would read to us at night – Uncle Rhemus, Brer Rabbit and Christopher Robin were some of our favourites. While she read, I loved to brush or comb her hair. One time I carefully undid the roll, combed out her tresses and rolled them up in the comb. She couldn't untangle the comb and had to cut her hair off. She also had short hair from then on.

### **Gramma Boo**

I really loved my Gramma Boo and when I ran away from home I always went to her house. Mom gave me a quarter to do Xmas shopping. Gramma took me to Woolworths and I bought Mom a serrated spoon which cost 15 cents. I wrapped it up with Gramma's help and included the change as I was an honest kid.

Gramma Boo would visit us at the cottage and I would take this chance to sleep with her. I loved to play with the warts on her back. They were long, rubbery and soft. I would put one between my finger & thumb and twist it round and round and play with it. One night I guess I twisted too much and pulled it right off. Gramma told me I should go to my own bed now.

### **Butterfly**

My brother had his tooth knocked out while kicking a ball around. The dentist made him a plate with a tooth attached to it. We called it his "butterfly". Bob loved to play with it by flicking it up and down. It was time to go to the cottage. (My Dad just came on weekends.) Mom had a red convertible roadster. My two younger sisters would sit in the front with the dog. On the back seat would be 2 cages with our pet rabbits and cats, as well as food, clothing, etc. My older brother, sister and I would sit on the folded-down roof. We loved this. On the way to the cottage the wind caught my brother's tooth and it flew off. "Mom, Bob lost his butterfly". Mom stopped the car and we all got out and started to look for it along the side of the road. A man stopped and asked if he could help. Mom was not quite 5 feet and looked like a teenager. She said my son had lost his butterfly and we were looking for it. I don't know if she explained what a butterfly was but after looking at the five kids and dog he didn't stay around very long. We found his butterfly.

### **Our home**

#### **Mom**

Our house in London, Ont. was on a corner with a huge sunken lot next to it. The front porch had a walkway around it to a back door. Along this walkway was a rock garden going the length of the house with cobblestone steps going down to the side lawn. Our place was often on the house and garden tour. One year when Mom was getting the house ready, my brother and I got our dinky toys and made roads and tunnels and bridges through this rockery. When the tour came my Mom looked at the garden in surprise but said something like "all beautiful mountains should have scenic drives." Mom was like that.

My Mom loved 'wobbles' (olives) and when I was about five and Mother's Day came I took (stole) a nickel or dime from a jar in the kitchen where Mom kept change for the breadman, etc. I walked the three blocks to Mr. Gate's store and told him I wanted a bottle of 'wobbles' for Mom. He took my hand and we went around the store until we found the 'wobbles' with the red centers. He took the olives, put them in a bag, thanked me for the money and took me back across the busy street and told me to go straight home with them. Mom thought they were wonderful. I bet Mr. Gates phoned her as soon as I left to tell her where I was.

#### **Dad**

One thing we all loved was every winter Dad would flood the side lawn for the whole neighbourhood to use. We had to change into our skates in the house. Go down the two steps at the door, cross the walkway and then try to get down the set of flagstone stairs to the rink. My brother had a great solution. We got the hose out and flooded from the back door right down to the rink. It worked really well. Bumpy, but we were good skaters and had no trouble doing it. Off to school we went Monday morning. The milkman was the first to come to the back door. With his basket of bottles, around the porch he came and whoops – down the steps to the rink. Fortunately, neither he nor the milk bottles broke. Next it was either the mailman or breadman who had a ride. When we got home it was all sanded and it was even harder to get to the rink.

Dad could make and fix anything. He made us all radios and made a record player and wired most rooms in the house so you could listen to music everywhere. For him it was Spike Jones on Mon., dance music Tues., Big Name Bands on Wed., Broadway shows on Thurs. and by Sun., opera. He built bedrooms in the attic, photographed us and other things and developed the prints and even hand-coloured them. He built an electric organ when he retired and then took lessons to learn how to play it.

### **Dad's Nursery Rhymes**

When Dad was home and put us to bed he recited nursery rhymes. His were wonderful.

*Hey diddle, diddle, the cat did a piddle behind the kitchen door.*

*The little dog laughed to see such fun so the cat did a little bit more.*

*There was an old lady who lived in a shoe, she had so many children she didn't know what to do*

*So she spanked them all soundly and put them to bed and went out that night with another red head.*

*Mary had a little lamb, her father shot it dead*

*Now it goes to school each day between two hunks of bread.*

*Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard to get her poor daughter a dress.*

*When she got there the cupboard was bare and so was her daughter I guess.*

### **Baking**

I always loved to bake. I used to make bread and cakes, etc. We just got a new electric stove. We had gas until then. It was Saturday and I thought I would make some brownies. We also had season tickets for Western football games. By the time I had the brownies mixed, it was getting late but no problem. This oven had a timer on it. I set it for the correct minutes and went to the game. I came home and looked in the oven but no brownies. I couldn't find them anywhere. My brother and his friends were throwing a ball on the side lawn. The tosses were awful. Then I realized they were playing with my wonderful baking. Did you know that if you leave anything in a hot oven long enough it will completely dry out and become hard as a rock and is only good for playing football?

### **Meeting My Husband**

Derek and his friend Tim were medical students at Cambridge. They bought tickets on a chartered flight from England to New York. They were going to spend their vacation in Canada. They got a bus from New York to Toronto and found a room at the Y.M.C.A. They heard music and found there was a dance going on. Great! They could meet a Canadian girl. Instead they met a nice Irish girl who was working in Toronto. She asked them back to her place, but she had just bought a car and couldn't get into the garage. As I lived in the same apartment, she phoned me and asked if I would let her in. I said sure if I could bum a cigarette. It was a hot night in Toronto, so I had on some baby doll pajamas. I looked out my door – no one. Ran down the hall into the elevator – no one in this hall. Ran to her place and barged in only to find the two boys sitting there. I grabbed the first thing I saw to cover myself up. The boys seemed nice, so I told them I was going home to London for the weekend and if they wanted to come I would take them via Niagara Falls. Phoned Mom and said I was bringing two guys home with me.

When we got to the Falls Derek had to cash a traveler's cheque. We went into a building and the man said he would be right there. "Is this the woman you want to marry and is this man your witness?" he asked Derek. My gosh!!! I hadn't even known Derek 24 hours.

The next weekend we were going to drive to Montreal to visit with one of their friends. We started off and then stopped at some cabins (no 401 or motels in those days). The man said Derek & I could share the double bed and our friend could have the single. I put a stop to that pretty fast. The two boys can share. This kept happening for two months. They were going to leave and travel across Canada. I said before they went they should go to the Toronto Ex. We went and saw the chickens and cows etc. and then as we were leaving Derek saw a jeweler. Wait, he wanted to look at watches. The man asked if we were here to look at engagement rings. Tim just rolled his eyes and said here we go again. Derek said he liked one diamond and I said I like that ring all in good fun. The jeweler said he would have that diamond put in that ring and we could pick it up at his store on Monday.

Monday came and Derek phoned and asked if I wanted to go out for coffee. Sure. Tim and Derek had been using my car to get to work as I took the subway. He pulled up in front of my place and I said where is Tim? Oh, he has other things to do. When we got inside the coffee shop Derek pulls out the ring and said I bought it. "Will you marry me?" I said, "I guess so." I phoned

Mom and told her I was engaged, and she asked to whom. I told her one of the English guys. She wanted to know if it was the tall one or the short one.

Derek phoned the air charter people and they said they had an extra seat on the plane. So, I am off to England to get married. As I said it was a charter and the passengers were all Cambridge boys. One boy came in with big horns and said 'Look what I got in Texas'. Another came on board with a huge sombrero and said 'Look what I got in Mexico'. Derek raised my arm and said 'Look what I got in Canada.' I was just a souvenir.

I got him back when we returned to Canada five years later. The immigration people were on strike, so they brought some officers on board near Newfoundland and for the next three days they processed everyone on board. All immigrants had to stay on one side of the ship and returning Canadians on the other. That meant Derek had to look after the 3 kids while I spent the days in the swimming pool. 90% of the people on board were immigrating. When it came time for me, the customs official asked me if I had anything to declare. "Yes," I said, "3 kids and a husband and they aren't worth a dime."

### **Cambridge**

Cambridge is not like our universities. It is made up of many colleges--Kings, Queens, Jesus, Christs and many more. My husband went to Clare. Students had to live in college or in one of the houses run by the college.

Rules:

- 1) You had to sleep in Cambridge 365 nights before graduating. (That was to talk to learned men for many days.) To complete a 3-year course, you had to spend at least one summer vacation at the university.
- 2) You had to wear your gown to classes and after dark.
- 3) You had to eat in the main dining room (Hall) at least once a week.
- 4) All girlfriends had to be out of the rooms by 10, and mothers out by 11. They didn't have a rule for wives, but they kicked me out anyways. While visiting me in my digs (apt) he was often late leaving. College gates were locked at 10. Derek would then have to climb over the back wall, which was embedded with glass and then through an open window.

Every student had a tutor which he had to visit regularly. Derek's was Dr. Wright who finally gave permission for Derek to move in with me. Whoopee!! I did have a language problem, as English movies were not popular in Canada back in those days to help educate me. One evening, Derek came running into our flat and yelled: "Where's my torch, where's my torch? I'm late for Hall." I pretended to look under the bed and the chairs and table. (What the hell is a torch?) I finally sat on the bed and broke out in tears laughing. All I could envision was he on his bike with his tattered gown flying behind him with an Olympic torch in his hand. He was getting madder and madder as I laughed harder. He finally found his flashlight and ran out.

At the end of term, I received a letter from Clare asking me to fill out the enclosed form confirming the number of nights spent in Cambridge and if all other rules had been obeyed. Oh my gosh, I was completely responsible for him. I could flunk Derek in two minutes, but thought better of it. I went to the calendar, counted up the nights needed, and lied about going out to a show one night without his gown and so on. I must have done it right, as he did graduate.

### **A Good Wife**

I tried to be a good wife. I opened his rugby sports bag and almost passed out from the stench. Apparently, you never wash your rugger stuff from one year to the next. Sweat and dirt covered all. Trying to be a good wife, I soaked all his stuff as best I could and then took it all to the laundromat. Everything was clean, but I must have put something red in with the washing because the rest of the season he went to his games with a pink towel and pick jock strap. To top it off, I had ironed his pants with a crease down the front. A real no no. His black and white socks were full of holes from cleats getting caught in them. I bought some white nylon wool that would not break and knitted him nice black and white hockey-type socks with no heels or toes. And I did them in cable stitch! They were gorgeous and iridescent! You could see these white fluorescent socks on the field a mile away. He was a good sport and wore them all the time.

### **Language was a problem**

Clothes have different names, domes were press studs, ball points a biro. Food also--corn starch was corn flour. They had crackers only at Christmas as they were water biscuits. It took me a long time to learn this language. All baby things were different too. When I gave up breastfeeding, I went to Boots the chemist (another name for drugstore) to get supplies. I found the bottles, but not the nipples. I went up to the counter and said to the girl "Do you have nipples with large holes?" "What do you want?" she whispered back. "Nipples with large holes" holding up the bottle. "Oh, you mean teats with large holes." Oh dear. Another word to remember.

### **Trip to Wolverhampton**

We wanted to go to Wolverhampton where Derek's parents lived to pick up a few things for our flat. We didn't have a car, but a friend said we could borrow his Sunbeam Talbot convertible. Two problems though – no windscreen and the passenger door wouldn't open from the inside. We bought some goggles and, as it was mid-November, we dressed warmly. People stared at us, but we just waved through the windshield at them. On the outskirts of Cambridge, the roof flew straight up. Not having a windshield was a problem. Derek tied it down and we drove a little slower. About an hour later, we heard this loud clunk. We stopped again, and Derek folded back the bonnet (hood) and said one of the blades had broken off the fan. We went to a garage, but they couldn't help. The mechanic took the fan right out and said to drive fast enough so that the rad wouldn't heat up and of course slow enough so that the roof would stay on. Time wise, we were still doing all right. Then when we hit the dual carriageway (4 lane highway) around Coventry as the fog rolled in. We couldn't see a thing, so Derek had to slow down and of course the rad started steaming. He pulled over and undid the cap and water spewed into the air and onto me in the front seat. I couldn't escape because that door didn't work. We heard someone walking nearby and they said there was a pub (that we could not see) just across the path where we could get water. We had a warm drink, filled the rad and started on our way. By the time we got to Wolverhampton, the fog was so bad Derek said he was going to get out and walk and I could drive behind him. He walked ahead, and I crept after him. I speeded up as I couldn't see him. A minute later Derek was yelling at the window and asked me if I was trying to kill him. I was going to run him over. Sorry, but I couldn't see the front of the car let alone him. Somehow, we got to his home--black from the smog but happy. Our return trip was uneventful.

### **Putting me in my place.**

I shopped every day at our local street market. I would take the pram and load it up with groceries on top of the babies. One day I got really excited because I saw corn on the cob. Corn was not eaten in England at that time and I couldn't wait to have some. I immediately grabbed a cob and started to shuck it as I really didn't know how good it would be. "What are you doing?" asked the vendor. "Just checking to see if the corn is good." says I. "Where are you from?" "Canada." He says "You are as bad as the Jamaicans buying bananas. That will be 6 pence per cob." Highway robbery that was. Like paying a dollar a cob. But at least we had a cob each with no meat that night.

### **Out of the mouth of babes**

We were living in a flat called Basterfield House in London, England. Derek had put down his sports bag in the living room to get something from the kitchen and almost immediately, Justyna, 2 years old, started taking his things out. "Shit" Derek says under his breath. "Shit" repeats Justyna as his squash racket came out. "Damn" says Derek and Justyna immediately says "damn". "Oh hell" says Derek in frustration. "Hell" says Justyna. I said "shut up" and Justyna says "shut up". What do you do but forget that Derek is late and just laugh.

We moved back to London, Ontario, and then out to Vancouver just after the twins were born. Everything we owned was in a U-Haul trailer behind the station wagon and the five kids were in the back on the folded down seats with their toys. When we came to the Glacier near Banff we just had to go up that mountain. Coming down, I had the brake pedal to the floor and we were still moving. I guess the trailer was too heavy. By the time we went through the Rockies and arrived in Vancouver our brakes were completely gone.

I was trying to potty train Little Derek (one of the twins) so had him sitting on the toilet while making the beds. I did not teach him this terminology. "Mommy, I have an alley on my wee wee." I said, "Yes" "What is that for?" asked Little Derek. You must always try and tell children the truth, so I answered, "To help make babies," I said. A few minutes later. "Mommy, I have two alleys on my wee wee. Does that mean I'll have twins?" Guess what. Not only was he a twin but many years later he had twin girls. I guess my information was helpful and his logic was correct.

This same wonderful kid, when around 3 years old, made another wonderful observation. We were returning to Ontario and he was sitting on the step of the camper. He had found a Playboy magazine and was studying the center fold from all angles. He finally came out and said, "She looks just like you Mommy, but she doesn't have glasses." I am not only a Princess but a beautiful centerfold model.

### **It is easy to leave something behind**

A year after returning to Ontario we moved to Dallas, Texas and after another year we were moving back to Hamilton, Ontario. We moved like turtles. Derek with a U-Haul with our belongings and me with a tent trailer for camping and the kids going from one vehicle to another. On our return to Canada we decided to stop at a store on the side of the freeway for some groceries. They had everything we needed and very quickly, we were headed off down the road. I asked the kids if Michael was in the other car. They didn't know. I blinked my headlights for Derek to stop. Guess what? No Michael. We finally came to a clover leaf and turned around. Then we had to drive for miles to the next clover leaf and finally back to the store. We couldn't see him. Then someone asked if we were looking for a little white boy. He was in the back room watching the guys playing pool and never even missed us. How easy it is to leave someone behind and how lucky we were that the folks were so good to him.

### **Camping with the Wells**

From Hamilton, we moved to Kingston. We finally bought a house and right next door were the Wells, a family from New Zealand, with five kids almost the same ages as ours. We became very close friends. We decided to take a trip up north with two tent trailers, two canoes and two tents. On our way back, we camped in Killarney where there was a beautiful lake. We thought it would be nice to picnic on the other side. We could all make the trip in two canoe trips, as long as our two boys paddled the canoes back between trips. Dennis and Derek took the kids down to the lake front and kept trying out different kids to find out how much weight each canoe would hold. That evening, with a whole bottle of scotch and all the weights known, they figured out a plan: who would go in each boat also making sure there was an adult on each side of the lake at all times.

The next morning the guys were very hung-over, so we just went down to the lake, got in a boat and left. After Mike and Mark took off for the rest of the gang I asked Elaine if she knew which boat we were supposed to be in.

Haven't a clue. But we managed to picnic there and get back quite safely.

### **Becoming an O.R. nurse in 3 easy lessons**

When we were living in England, Derek, a medical student at St. Bartholomew's (Barts) Hospital took me to see an operation. I stood in the gallery of the operating room, dressed in a lab coat watching a famous surgeon doing an operation. It was great but then I noticed that Derek and the other boys had all left and I was all alone. I was really concerned that this surgeon, while lecturing to me, would ask me a question. Finally, Derek came back, and we went home.

About five years later, while in Vancouver, Derek came home and announced he had a babysitter and did I want to go out. We went to the morgue where we commenced to cut open knees, examine how they worked and took lots of photos. When finished he said, "close up". I couldn't do it, but he found a broomstick and we used that to put the leg together.

When we were in Kingston, Queen's University was responsible for orthopaedics up north in Moose Factory. On this one trip, the nurses were on strike. He had surgery to do. He asked the head of the hospital if I could stand in. No problem. He showed me how to scrub, then prep a leg. It was so heavy I finally put his leg onto my shoulder to scrub it. He told me to get some instrument from the cabinet and when I brought it back I walked between the tray and the patient. He said it was no longer sterile and to start again. We took a screw and plate out of his leg and then I had to wash them off to give to the patient later. Then we did a below-the-knee amputation.

I passed with flying colours. See how easy it is to become an O.R. nurse?

I was married to Derek for many years and he kept doing these 'baloney' amputations. I finally asked him what a 'baloney' amputation was. He said it is not 'baloney' but rather 'below knee'. OK, so I'm not perfect.

### **Surprises come from freezers**

We were travelling up the Hudson Bay coast to Sanikiluaq (an Inuit settlement in the Belcher Islands) to see some patients there. Derek decided that one patient had to go back to Kingston. The ambulance is a truck with boards in the back (without boards, it picks up jerry cans and garbage) and it took us to a hut near the tundra airport. The weather was nasty, so we were listening for the plane. One gentleman, an accountant waiting for the plane, got up and went over to the refrigerator, opened the freezer part and took out an object a good ten inches long and about three or four inches in diameter. He gave it to me and said "Do you know what this is? Smell it." "It is frozen so doesn't smell." I said. "Well lick it." "I still don't know what it is." "A walrus's penis!!" This really made my day. When the plane came, (a Twin Otter), the pilot made the priest and a couple of passengers get out and then threw the mail and some of the seats out onto the tundra. "You and this stuff will have to wait for the next plane (whenever that would be) as we have a patient to transport." Luckily Derek and I were there to accompany the patient and could fly out.

### **Life begins at forty**

I was 39 and my life was going to start. I should prepare for this I thought. But what could I do? Two of the kids were in high school and the other three still in public school. I went to Mr. Joyce (high school principal) and said I wanted to take wood shop. If Mr. Bell says it is okay, then that is fine. I signed up. Then Derek saw in the paper a course to learn about nature at St. Lawrence. I signed up for that too and then a house construction course at a different high school. I am all set. The course at St. Lawrence turned out to be a survival course. We learned how to dress for all weathers and started to go winter camping on weekends; how to find food (weeds, roots, bark, needles, etc.) and how to make bear traps, squirrel traps and how to make a lean-to. With this knowledge, we could also make benches, reflector walls for fires and how to find dry wood in rain or snow storms. The kids didn't enjoy me experimenting with food from the fields or lawn. We learned how to rappel and then I thought I should sign up for a St. Johns' ambulance course as I was going to wreck myself. I was getting very good with an axe and signed up for a log house course. We camped during the winter and saw an underground pine needle fire start and travel

quite a longways from our camp. I really enjoyed this outdoor experience and the kids seemed to be managing at home with or without Dad.

Spring came and the ice had come off the water. It is time for our final exam. There were over 40 of us to start but there were only 14 of us there to try the exam. We made a base camp on Crotch Lake. The instructor took us one by one and dropped us off a good distance away and told us to come back in a week's time. I had the clothes on my back, a swede saw, an axe and a fanny pack with waterproof matches, fishing line and hook, candle, pencil and paper and basically a survival kit. Because it was raining, I was wearing a poncho.

I started a fire with a tin of water warming over it. Every time I left camp I would gather anything edible and put it in the can and then drink it. This way I was getting food and liquid.

I built my lean-to and made a calendar as I was already forgetting the time I was out there. I then built a reflector wall with (fallen) silver birch and gathered lots of fire wood and lined my lean-to floor with boughs. My lean-to was so warm that I took my coat off at night and used it for a pillow. I was going to fish, but it was too cold for them to bite. I was going to wash my hair, but a huge turtle stuck his head out just as I bent over and when I tried again it was instant headache.

I felt so good I stood on a rock and sang The Lord's My Shepherd right out loud and I can't even keep a tune.

The only fear I had was another human being, but I never saw one.

It rained every day and my jeans and long johns were getting quite wet. I took a leg from the long johns and pulled it out of my fly and held it over the fire to warm and dry them. They certainly got scorched but I found I could partially dry my jeans in my lean-to at night.

When my week was coming to an end I started to get panicky. I hadn't carved my bowl and spoon and my bench was only half made. Pressure. Then I laughed and told myself it didn't matter. When I started to walk back to base camp I kept saying 'what is that terrible smell?' Then I realized it was me.

When I got back to camp they told me that only two people didn't take a sleeping bag. I was one. I didn't need it anyways. I was the only female that finished the week and only four other boys.

When I got home, nobody was there. I stripped and put everything in the wash and took a long badly-needed shower. I missed the wilds already.