

# Recalling 50 summers on Panther Pond

**Going from a room and a path to a full-fledged cottage spanned three generations and a lot of happy times.**

**R**ecently, my wife, Justine, and I celebrated a milestone. We moved back to Gorham after spending our 50th straight summer on beautiful Panther Pond.

Our love affair with Panther started in 1960. My father-in-law owned a farm in Raymond that included 2000 plus feet of shore frontage. In the middle of that frontage was an 8-by-16 cabin that had been hauled down there many years before. He told us we could have it and we proceeded to make it livable.

Our No. 1 priority was a rustic two-holer. Then a set of bunk beds and a playpen for Judy, 5, and Karen, 2, to sleep in. We had a sheet on a wire that could be drawn to separate the sleeping area. We were becoming palatial! Access in those days was a walk through the woods or by boat.

In Year 2 we got electricity. CMP wouldn't bring in a transformer but said

it would hook us up if we brought one in.

We got it to the cabin and true to its word, CMP hooked us up.

The third year I built an addition that was 12-by-16 and we had so much room we were overwhelmed!

Then my father-in-law decided to develop the frontage and surveyed off 20 shore lots at 100 by 150 feet. The price was \$2,000 per lot. Some Maine folks told us the price was outrageous, but one Massachusetts lady gave us a check with no deed or title search.

She got the deed, but never searched the title. Said she trusted us. The lots are now valued in the six figures. Justine and I bought two more lots and were given the lot where the cabin stood.

Over the next few years we had three cottages built. We sold two of them and kept the one where we now live each summer. Our kids grew up enjoying each summer. In the fifth year we added a son, Matthew.

The children made friends with kids from all over and some of the friendships have

lasted and they stay in touch. On our road now are residents from 10 different states.

In the '90s we had our grandchildren, Brian and Erin, for four summers. Their parents worked and rather than send them to a baby sitter it was decided that they could summer with us.

Like our children, they learned to swim and water-ski and they recall those summers fondly. Justine and I used to swim and water-ski but now we never ski and only swim infrequently. Nowadays when we venture outdoors, we have to be careful that we don't trip and fall.

Where have 50 years gone? It seems like yesterday that we were in our one-room-and-a-path cabin. When Justine and I reminisce, we think that some of our most joyful times were there, even without all the modern conveniences.

Last week a neighbor, Sherri from Florida, said that when her family got home, they started counting the days until they could return to Panther. So do we, Sherri. So do we!

— Special to the Telegram

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Edwin "Ed" Laverty** is now a resident of Gorham *and* Raymond. ■

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