



## Shuswap Lake Estates History

It all began back in 1969 when Shuswap Lake Estates came into being. Jack and Irene Barker originally from Saskatchewan, purchased shares in Shuswap Lake Estates in 1970 and then moved the entire family to the Shuswap in January 1971. With 5 children in tow they left -38 weather and never looked back!

When Jack made the decision to invest in Shuswap Lake Estates, it was with the understanding that since he had the experience and background, he would have free reign to run the company as he saw fit. As the existing shareholders were desperate for someone who could take over to complete the project and market it, the agreement was made.

There were a few things that Jack could see required modifications, the main one being that the company was under financed and held huge debt and with a different choice of banks, they were able to refinance and make the required changes. It was also obvious that a lot of the shareholders were in for the short haul and wanted a quick return on their investment. A development the size of Shuswap Lake Estates is anything but short term and Jack was confident that over time, they could eventually buy out the other shareholders and so the story unfolds.

Irene, who had kept their companies books for years while in business on the prairies became the bookkeeper for Shuswap Lake Estates and the family settled into their new life in the Shuswap. Jack immediately went to work completing the log lodge and office, building reservoirs and attempting to make the roads passable so that the first subdivision of 176 lots could be approved and registered. This is what we now know as "Leisure and Marine Place" and the lots were ready to market on the May long weekend of 1971!

By the end of 1971, in excess of 100 lots had been marketed and sold with prices ranged from \$4,950.00 to \$7,950.00! Then in 1972 the remainder of the lots sold.

Shortly thereafter, another 100 lot subdivision was added, the marina was built, and the original roads were paved. Later the airstrip was added and the upper water reservoir was completed, which gave them a reliable water service. The beach area was stripped of vegetation and sand was added. A third floor was added to the lodge by jacking up the two story log structure to build a concrete basement below. Clearing and rough shaping of the proposed 9 hole golf course commenced, resulting in what Shuswap Lake Estates is known for today as "the community around the Golf Course. "

Sales continued at the same pace during 1973 thru to 1974. This allowed considerable debt to be paid off, for shareholders to cash in on their investments and for Jack and Irene to purchase additional shares in the company.

Application for preliminary approval for another 3 subdivisions consisting of 585 lots was submitted. Lucky for Shuswap Lake Estates, well over half of the 585 lots had received final approval prior to the land freeze coming into effect in BC that stopped all future subdivisions. Land prices rose for those fortunate enough to have product. Unfortunately the subdivision from the gravel pit to and around the first nine hole golf course which was part of the 585 lots, did not quite make it to final approval.

During 1975 Jack completed the purchase of the remaining outstanding shares. Work continued, and on July 1st, 1977, the first 9 holes of the golf course opened. Two sheds with a deck became the first pro-shop. Bud Loftus became the golf professional and with his wife Pidge they operated the pro-shop. It has been rumoured that Pidge did a little bootlegging from this rustic and make-shift pro-shop. In April of 1979, the restaurant and pro-shop opened in its present location and a driving range was added.

1981 turned out to be the biggest selling year up to this point. It was panic buying for about a five week window and then sales shut off like a water tap. For the next seven years promotion, advertising and sales did not indicate a pattern. No matter how hard they tried during those seven years, they ended up with four sales a year, except for one year in which they were actually skunked!

During the years of reduced sales, the golf course continued to grow. More land was bought and another nine holes was added, opening in the latter part of March 1993. Norm Woods, a builder of over 250 courses throughout the world, was hired for the final touches of our first 9 holes and Warren Radomsky, who did much of the designing and finishing touches for Les Furber, was hired to build the second nine. Shuswap Lake Estates now had a Championship 18 hole Golf Course.

Just before the second nine opened there was an unfortunate fire in the restaurant. It was believed to have been caused by a discarded cigarette into a garbage can smoldering for hours that caused the garbage to break into flames. The fire spread to the floor above and eventually to the kitchen. Gratefully the volunteer fire department did an excellent job of preventing the fire from spreading to the pro-shop and the lounge. Thankfully, several years earlier, Jack had the insight and kindness to donate the land and to build a fire station for the local Fire Department right on the Estates. It was in use until the new one was built just across the highway in 2000. This was an unexpected setback, but thankfully, after surviving the interest rates which were at an all-time high of 23%, lots started to sell again.

In the early 90's, Terry Barker (Jack and Irene's Son) purchased from the banks what is now known as Lakeview Place. He contributed the two tennis courts that are still present on the Estates. During the 90's, the sales picture improved. A state of the art sewer treatment plant was installed. It was to serve the Villa's, the commercial area, Fairway Greens' subdivision, the Highlands' subdivision and all future subdivisions will tie to this system.

Sadly, tragedy struck again in early January 1998 and the log lodge was lost to a fire that started on the top floor in the computer room. Again the Fire Dept. did their best. However the dried out logs that were covered with many coats of oil and varnish just burned too rapidly for them to control. A few years previous Jack had built a cement vault in the office, so some of the records were saved but many were lost as well as all of the memorabilia. Rebuilding started immediately and by July 1998 it was business as usual in the new building. Although the old lodge had charm and many, many good memories, the new building was better suited for community functions and offices.

A few years later the commercial area started to develop. The car wash opened in 2001, Nicos Garden centre followed and the current 20 store strip mall was built in 3 phases over the next few years.

2006 will go down on record as being the most successful year for lot sales. A recent review indicates that SLE now encompasses 1300 acres and with over 1100 lots developed! The latest development is "The Highlands". This subdivision is often referred to as the "British Properties of the Shuswap" which offers amazing lake and golf course views.

As you drive around the Estates, it is clear to see the hard work that has gone into creating this area. The mission "to continue to grow with the community" is as strong today as it was back in 1969. They hope to see medical services, a waterfront park and so much more, in the coming years.

Shuswap Lake Estates is well aware that the developer may be able to build a development, but it's the participation of the residents that builds the community!