

Dreams to Reality

by Sandi Allen

For some people there is a lot of dreaming before they get to the reality. For us it was 21 years from the time we bought our property before the building process started, and it took another 2 years for permits, construction, and finally occupancy in 2013!

When we found our lot in 1990 retirement seemed so far in the future, but we wanted to lock up this 70' x 120' piece of heaven. Camping was going to be our starting point. That would be easy, right? Well, no, it wasn't, not with all our children at those marrying ages. We managed a few campouts, just the two of us, but never enough. By 1998 all three kids were married, and five of the grandchildren were here. Time was precious. Still, our vision of Carlyon Beach was in our minds' eye. We would come by boat or drive down, look at our empty lot, and sigh. Dreaming of what would be.

One sunny summer day in 2006 our daughter-in-law's parents were visiting from South Africa and we decided to take them all to Mount Saint Helens, since they don't have volcanoes near their home. It was a fun time at the Johnston Ridge Observatory, and when we loaded up to head home, I took over the driving. We headed north on I-5, nearing Olympia, when I asked if everyone would all like a little detour to see our Some Day home. "Sure!" they all said.

As we came down Steamboat Island Road and the waters of Totten Inlet came into view our son took notice. We slowed to point out our undeveloped lot, then continued to the Clubhouse parking lot. There was a ski boat pulling a skier, a couple jet skis zipping around, a party in the Wanigan, kids playing on the beach, someone carrying their kayak to the water, all with the sun so bright the water sparkled like jewels. Hollywood could not have staged it better!

This was our oldest son's first time down here, and he was in awe. He'd been busy with his own life, and thought we'd bought a lot in some boring residential area in town, never giving it any thought beyond that. Once he saw what was here, he couldn't get over how amazing it was at Carlyon Beach! He sounded surprised that we had planned for the future in such a great way. Parents get it right sometimes, kid.

Now that we are living here, we have at least one family picnic in that Wanigan every summer, with the boat in a slip in the marina, ready to go when they want a ride. Of course, it has to wait until after the barbeque, basketball, volleyball, kayaking, or whatever the generations come up with each year!

One year, when our youngest grandson was 14, he came down for a few days to go kayaking and spend time with his Papa and Meemaw. He loved kayaking over to Hope Island and walking the trails, then paddling back around Steamboat Island and under the bridge to our launch. And he loved exploring in Totten Inlet by boat, too. But one night after dark I asked if he wanted to go for a walk with the dogs. He looked shocked, and said "In the dark?" "Yep." I replied. He was doubtful, but came anyway.

Wearing reflector vests with reflector leashes, off we went! Even at his skeptical age he realized how safe and peaceful it was to be able to walk in the dark with hardly any traffic. And then he saw how the deer eyes glowed when his headlamp caught them laying in the trees. Lots of eyes. Lots of deer! He still talks about those deer eyes after dark, even as more important teen pursuits fill his time.

As we've volunteered, made friends, and become part of the community it just keeps getting better and better! We have never looked back. We absolutely love living here, and plan to stay forever.