

**Wildwood as Seen Through the Eyes of Children and Grandchildren**

This is the concluding chapter of Wildwood Living from an Old Timer. The articles up to this point have been our personal memories and reflections of wildwood that have spanned a period of 28 years from 1981 to 2009. Often times we view history through our own eyes and tend to forget the viewpoint of the younger generations during the same time frame.

Faye and I celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary in 2007. Our children and grand children presented us with a collection of letters that reflected their individual memories of grandma and grandpa. All of those letters reflected some memories of our Wildwood home and vacations as seen through their eyes and was told in their own words. It brought to mind how influential and entwined a summer home and vacations can be in young people's lives and memories. It is amazing how our Wildwood setting and activities influenced not only their memories, but helped instill purposeful lifelong pursuits. Hence, I thought that it would be appropriate to share with you a glimpse of their impressions and memories of our Wildwood home.

From daughter Karla in Colorado Springs: "...My favorite place to go is to our family cabin. For me, the cabin is a place of refuge from the world. It is there that I can relax, reflect, and rejuvenate. I love the clean crisp air and the beautiful scenery. Whether we are watching the birds while drinking hot chocolate, walking the acres on a bluebird trail, picnicking on the deck, or just chatting, there is always something to do. The crackle of a roaring fire entertains, while the invitation of s'mores, or homemade doughnuts tempts us with just a little more to eat. More than anything, however, I love the family togetherness and the foundation for unforgettable memories. All of this is possible because two people had a dream to build a cabin. The rest, as they say, is history..."

From granddaughter Katie in Tulsa, OK: THE CABIN "I remember going to the cabin since I was able to remember. It was always a happy memory. My cousins and I would go romping in the woods behind it to see if we could find any buried treasure or mythical creatures.

It was always great fun whenever we returned from our journey into the deep woods and have lunch on the big back porch while watching rabbits bound around and hummingbirds flit to and fro. Once lunch was done and the plates all put away we would go up to the amphitheater and put on skits in front of each other or wait for the older kids to tell ghost stories.

Then, when dark began to settle, we would run back to the cabin because of the goblins and grizzly bears that would come crawling out of the woods. Grandma and grandpa would have a fire blazing in the fire pit; the parents would wrap us up in blankets while we waited for our marshmallows to roast.

When all was said and done and the stars began to shine, mom and dad would take us inside where we would play games. They would drink their coffee and talk about grown up

things while we enjoyed the late evening. I always enjoyed sitting on the steer hide rug in front of the TV.

Finally we would be sent off to bed, and just as we fell asleep from all of the excitement, the sun would shine through the windows in the top of the roof. We would get up and pile into the bathroom to brush our teeth, fight over who had the first shower, or who needed to go to the bathroom more. Those that got up early enough were already finished and having apple cider. We would be seated around the little leaf table or else spinning round and round in the two chairs in front of the bay window making shadow puppets on the wall.

And then, the adventures would begin all over again. "

From son Jeff (Eagle Scout) in Arizona: "...You helped me get started playing the piano and organ. You built a cabin and allowed me to have many fond memories there. You often sat and talked to me and gave me good advice. You were a scout leader for me, taught me how to carve, how to tie knots, camp, hike and enjoy the out-of-doors so that I could grow up and become a scout Master and help many young men become Eagle Scouts..."

From daughter-in-law Jennie in Arizona: "...I also enjoyed the banjo music shared by Delbert. It was quite fun..."

From grandson Spencer (7) in Arizona: "... drew a picture of Grandpa and Grandma's Truck..."

From grandson Daniel (Cub Scout) in Arizona: "...In addition, thanks for inviting us to come to the cabin in Colorado. I always had a blast when I got to go to your cabin."

From granddaughter Elaina in Arizona: "...Listed below are some of the good times we had with you at the cabin. #1. Remember when I was sick at the cabin? Grandma gave me tea to help me feel better. Thanks for doing that for me. #2. Thanks for all the dinners you made. They were always so good. #3. Remember the time when I wrote you a letter and you wrote me back. It was fun to get mail for once. #4. I think that it is wonderful that you inspired me to play the violin and that you encourage me to continue practicing. In addition, it was fun and exciting to receive the violin you gave me. I love to play it. Thanks!! #5. Also I enjoyed hearing grandpa play the mandolin and the many other instruments..."

From grandson Andy (Eagle Scout) in Arizona: "...What I really like and appreciate about you is how you helped me get started playing the violin. I never would have started playing the violin without the good influence you were to Dad and I. I also liked all of the food you gave us at your cabin. I was always full of food after we finished an evening. It was very delicious. Thanks. Again thanks for the good times we had playing our instruments and eating ice cream! Speed is my game, Andy is my name!..."

From Son-in-law Frank in Colorado Springs: "...We have had so many special times together...the times at the cabin, singing and playing music... I had never helped anyone use a transom before I helped build the bunkhouse. It was truly a family project, from pouring the

pylons to support the floor, to texturing and painting the walls, to making covers for the bunks. You both have such incredible talent to make and build things from quilts to cabins..."

From grandson Steve (Eagle Scout) in Colorado Springs: "...I really enjoy going to the cabin with you guys and also going on all the vacations with you..."

From granddaughter Kristi in Colorado Springs: "...You have taught me so many lifelong skills. Like grandma teaching me how to make muffins and grandpa teaching me to play the guitar. A lot of my childhood memories as a child were with you. I enjoyed going to the cabin and on vacations all over the country with you..."

From grandson Scott (Eagle Scout) in Colorado Springs: "...I love learning from grandpa by discussing any and everything science and technology with him. To add to that, he has given me love for bird watching, music of all types, and even throwing knives. His example of dedication and hard work and his example of how he treats his wife will be one I will be able to look up to forever. Grandma bills will always have a special place in my heart. First of all she will always be the first to make sure that I never have an empty place in my stomach any time that I am around her. She is always eager for me to have seconds and thirds at every meal, and although this may seem menial to some, her generosity toward my ever growing appetite will forever be appreciated. Grandma has taught me over the years a thing or two about cooking, how to work hard, to make sure everyone is happy and even a thing or two about shooting a pistol, something in which you should never underestimate her. Beginning in my early years one of my favorite ways of spending time with Grandma and Grandpa has always been going up to the mountains with them and spending time at the cabin. I will always remember being so eager to arise early just to spend a few early morning hours with two people I love so much..."

From granddaughter Mandy in Colorado Springs: "...I appreciate all of the work that you guys do to make things special. For example, all of your work up at the cabin; with the great meals, the many campfires with S'mores, or picnics at the amphitheater..."

From granddaughter Becky and Rob in Denver: "...we look back and remember all the fun memories we had together. We cherish every moment from the trips to the cabin...your gifts are priceless treasures including the quilt made by grandma, hand embroidered tea-towels, the beaver hat from your cabin and more..."

These were all unsolicited comments from our children and grandchildren in their own words.

Del Bills is a 28 year Wildwood resident; past Board President; retired electrical engineer; long time Boy Scout leader; a rural farming/ranching boyhood heritage; with an intense interest in nature. You can contact him at [www.delbertrbills@msn.com](mailto:delbertrbills@msn.com)

# Scott @ Age 8 Show and Tell Poster

## GRANDMA and GRANDPA BILLS

My Grandma and Grandpa Bills live in Littleton, CO. My Grandpa is 60 years old. He likes to play the banjo and the harmonica. Grandma is 57 years old. She likes to sew and play the auto harp. They have a cabin up in the mountains. I love to go to the cabin with them. I like to make "smores" by the campfire. I also like to play on the playground that my Grandpa made.

