

A Dugout at Dead Fish Lake
Duane & Rena Ose

We have several life memories of Oliver. Before I get into them, I must first say something of Oliver himself, after coming to know his ways, his thinking, and habits.

Oliver, no pun intended, was one strange, unique individual. Few could ever follow in his footsteps. He was a personal sort, but few could live with him. He had his ways and beliefs that were very much out of the ordinary. No way could I or would I want to follow his footsteps in life, other than not being the norm, following the crowd but living life his way. That I can agree with. Most of us are but sheep. Oliver was not a sheep.

In the evenings, Oliver and us (Rena & I) would visit on the citizens band radio, from his dugout at Deadfish Lake to us in our dugout on Ose Mountain.

Oliver had a hearing problem, and we could chat better on the CB, as he would have an earphone in this ear. Face to face he would cup his ear and look at your lips. There were few words, and what there was, were well chosen.

Oliver had several dogs. One at a time, never more. A dog was his helper and was well trained for commands. Used for packing, pulling loads, but most of all an alarm to let him know danger was near or lurking about. Oliver one year had to shoot two grizzly bears outside his dwelling, and several black bears.

Oliver never became attached to any of his dogs but one. That dog was his last, and was called "Pack".

To Oliver, dogs were put on this earth to serve Man, and there was no place in Heaven for a dog. Dogs had no spirit, no soul, and there was no place in heaven for a dog. He himself told me that. So when he had to fly off to town or do some traveling, he simply shot them and came back with a new dog on his return.

That was only one of the things I disagreed with. One more thing on his beliefs was that he wished to have less than anyone else—never to be better than the poorest in an area, a village or a town, and for sure not on Deadfish Lake.

According to the Federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Oliver was known as a "professional Federal Homesteader", since he had homesteaded in a few parts of Alaska by the time he came here.

It is a long ways from his place to here—a one day's journey on foot through the jungles of Alaska. Oliver came up to us several times, and would stay a day or two before he and whatever dog he had at the time would trudge on back, the dog toting the gear in the rear. One time our dog had pups and Oliver spent time picking the right one for his dog-to-be.

Then at some time Rena & I got fancy and got a cell phone. I had to build a tower for the antenna to get a signal from the tower, some 80 miles away. Those were the days of analog, when signals reached far. Now 30 miles is the limited range for a digital cell phone, so we had to get a satellite dish and Internet to keep in touch with the world.

It was during the time when a working cell phone cost us \$145.00 per month on average, to use only two or three times on a weekend. During those times, we worked out a strange system of relaying calls from Dorene to her Dad Oliver at Deadfish Lake via cell phone to CB radio relay. This is how we did it:

At a set time, Oliver would be standing by at his end, Rena at the dugout on her CB. I would be up on top of our high hill and tower, with the cell phone and a CB too. I would call Rena to see that Oliver was ready. Then I would call Dorene, if she had not already been on the line with me.

Dorene and I would talk first, and again just after Oliver's talk.

"Okay. Ready? Hello, Dad! Hello, Dorene."

Mind you, during this time I was listing in. I had to, in order to know who was talking and when I had to hold the CB earpiece to the cell, or the speaker to the cell. It got downright interesting, keeping track of the positioning of the speaker to mic, or vice versa.

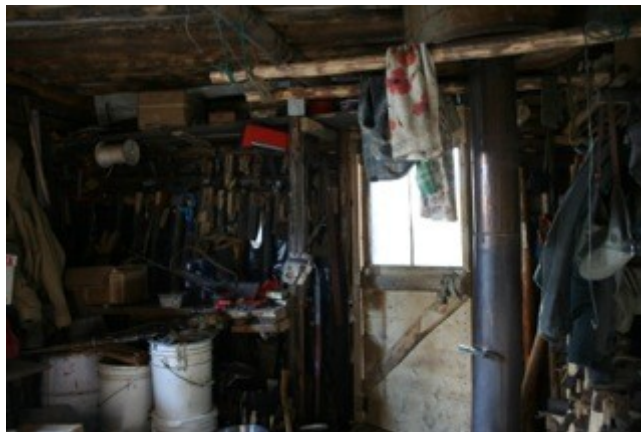
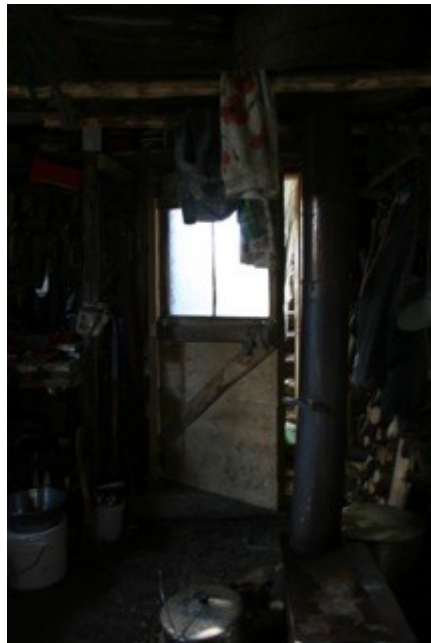
After the phone-to-CB was over, Rena would be talking with Oliver on the CB, and Dorene always wanted to rubberneck to hear what they were saying.

Oliver and Dorene both so enjoyed those calls, and we were happy to be the middle of the calling. So you should know that Dorene was a long-distance rubbernecker of the strangest calling service ever on this Earth.

I sure miss the Analog system, but if we still had it we would not now have the Internet and the world at our fingertips. Oliver could be conversing yet to Dorene, on relay through Skype.

Oliver was his own man, and went where no other dared to follow.







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