

# Charlie.....from the bush!

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

FIRST ISSUE August 2011

## FROM THE EDITOR

Yes, it's true. Most things that are too good to be true end up not being true but in this case, we really are bringing back the paper version of Charlie's stories as well as keeping up our website at

[www.voicefromthebush.com](http://www.voicefromthebush.com)

While out of print we have been very busy. The Dispute of Claim from 2006 helped change the Mining Act in 2009 and now, in 2011, we are waiting for the date of our next hearing hoping to help set the definition used to have mining lands removed from the Claim Map. We'll keep you posted.

We have also learned to raise meat rabbits in keeping with our belief that we are what our prey eats.

Among other changes we've become grandparents, on this side of the pond, with the arrival of Chloe Masson just before Christmas last year. The beautiful daughter of Mike and Laura is a source of much joy for me, especially, since i did not expect to have this miracle in my life!

Sadly, we lost our two big dogs last year and replaced them with two crazy mutts, nottie girl and rottie dog from down the road. The wilder type seems to suit us better these days.

We've had some health challenges and have shared some wonderful times as well in the last few years.

Charlie will again be able to share his exploits, herbs and words of wisdom with those of you who appreciate pieces of paper.

Thanks for the encouragement! Ed.

## ~~~~~WATER AND US~~~~~

*"Our quality of water is twice strained.*

*It dropeth as the gentle rain from Heaven*

*upon our roof beneath: it is twice blest"*

*(to misquote Portia in Act 4, Scene 1 of Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice)*

In this Born Again issue of "Charlie... from the bush", I want to tell you where we get our water from; the sky.

When we were thinking about building, I visited the mining museum in Cobalt to look at local minerals. I soon saw that the silver which founded Cobalt was closely associated with a lovely pink variety of arsenic. Then I heard the artesian wells around our proposed home, where the old miners used to quench their thirst, were all being closed down by some ministry or other because they were unsafe. Hmm. So much for our using any ground water. A well was out.

This left only one other source, rainwater. How much would be enough? I was still being an obsessive compulsive engineer at that time, old habits being what they are, and I sat in front of the weather channel for hours, playing with numbers. I counted the millimetres of rain falling on a one thousand-square-foot roof in any given day and changed them into Imperial gallons. Then I dividing that number by the 25 gallons per day per person we expected to use so I could make a guess at how big a tank we'd need for how many days.

In the end, Linda confiscated all my calculators and decreed we would buy a tank of such-and-such a size and that was it.

She was right, of course. We installed a 1550 US gallon heavy duty plastic agricultural storage tank for the water off the roof and a 65 US gallon tank in the rafters to supply our low water flush toilet and the drinking water system. We've been low in water only twice, both times in winter, when I melted snow for the household and we used the balance of the water in the tank for drinking.

Which brings up the quality of our drinking water: at first we purchased steam distilled water in those big jugs. Now, I am a cheap-skate so the thought of paying a fortune for my drinking water bothered me. I slowed down my water intake, which was not good. Then I had the brilliant idea of making a still by modifying an old pressure cooker. Hey! I once professed to be a process control engineer, so I'm used to playing with steam etc. Linda's approach to steam is inherently a lot safer, though. Don't. It's dangerous.

Finally, she rescued our water situation, this time with the Internet. She found the Tiger Purification Systems Inc. ([www.watertiger.net](http://www.watertiger.net)) in B.C. that make sand filters for cottage use. They don't need any power and are gravity-fed. I piped it to the hot-water tap at the kitchen sink and we were in business.

It makes prime quality water and maintenance is easy. When the sand plugs up with microbes from road dust, leaves, etc. the water stops flowing. I go up a ladder, swish the top layer of sand

## Good Nite Sleep Centre

12 Whitewood Avenue East,  
New Liskeard Ontario POJ 1P0

A bed for  
everyone  
at a price  
anyone  
can afford.



705-647-6361

around, wait a minute, then scoop out the dirty water. Within twenty minutes, the tap is working and we can drink our healthy water again.

When we talked about collecting rainwater for our main supply, the nay-sayers all mumbled about acid rain. They could have been right, so I checked. I used an aquarium test kit that measured pH and found out that they were, up to a point. The kit read 6.7, which is as close to perfect as a rainbow is to beauty. Over time, the slight acidity did bother us, so I put a thin layer of calcium chips in the distribution basket that sits above the main sand filter. Problem solved.

Now we can drink as much water as we want, and we know that it's as pure as you can get.

All the best from the bush, Charlie

#### PUBLIC APOLOGY TO CHARLIE

For about a year now we have been hooked up to the internet via a satellite connection. Charlie arranged for the whole thing. He sold one of our favourite paintings of his done 15 years ago; "buttercup", to our friend and dentist, to pay for the start up fees and i was unhappy about the expense. Since then I have had to apologise for my comments. The internet has allowed me to see our new grandgirl and to make calls via Skype to family and friends. I have been able to learn a more advanced program to create our website and to manage emailed requests for our herbal information and recipes etc. An online following is starting to gather and we hope the news and stories encourage others to take more control of their own lives.

As part of our communication mandate i have also been able to help others get online. My friends with home businesses, not for profit organizations I work with, merchant friends with stores in the area and folks I know who have hobbies they'd like to share, have all been able to get websites as a direct result of Charlie's investment and my interest in this other form of creating beautiful things. Check 'sites to see' at [www.voicefromthebush.com](http://www.voicefromthebush.com) for samples of my efforts. Thanks to Charlie and our wide circle of friends i have found another thing i enjoy.

I was wrong and you were right....

Thanks Charlie ♥



#### WILD MUSHROOMS

It is the height of summer and the season for wild mushrooms is on. They are all through the woods right now, oyster mushrooms on the dead poplars, some sort of poisonous amanita and even some nominally delicious coral mushrooms. The large patch of whacky chanterelles by the North Rock is showing signs of life, although the morels are over. Not that I have seen any in our woods, I haven't.

One year, the season after I was given a good mushroom identification book complete with photographs, chanterelles covered the ground. There were thousands of them, so many that I became weary of picking 'em. We ate them fresh. We canned them. We dried them. The first and last of these experiments worked. They are delicious fresh and they keep their flavour well when dried. Canning caused a loss in texture and *La Chef* was not impressed. Hey. As that Meatloaf song from years ago said: "Two out of three ain't bad."

Optimist me, I looked for them the next year and the next, but they only come on every four or five years and the weather conditions must be exactly right. They tried showing up last year, but it was too dry and the few that did appear didn't thrive. There are more this year, but they're very scattered. I never realised how lucky we were that first year when the ground was orange with them.

Subsequent browsing through the mushroom book showed me how lucky I had been in another way. I'd misidentified the variety of chanterelle we'd been eating and the book said it was of "Unknown edibility" and advised the reader not to try it. Ah well, another bullet dodged and now we eat them whenever they show up in number.

One does have to be careful though. If you eat the wrong one, there may be no second chance. One day I was wandering through the woods with our dogs and feeling suicidal. Maybe my pills were out of whack or perhaps I'd received one rejection letter too many that month. Whatever the reason, I was feeling really down. Then I saw an unfamiliar mushroom. I looked around for more and saw a couple of them, so picking one for identification was OK. Well. It was a really poisonous one. The book said that after eating it, vomiting and severe stomach pains would follow, then a short recovery period followed by coma and complete failure of the renal system. The ultimate bye-bye. Thank you forest, but let me think about this for a moment.

I have felt suicidal before, maybe twenty years ago as I was starting to recover from my troubles, but I've never tried, as I believe in life after death. I know my first words in the spirit world would be: "Idiot! Why did you do that?" The proof of this theory is my life today. Who could have imagined the life i have now, twenty years later?

Then, of course, there's Linda. She's told me many times that if I leave her here alone, she will chase me around the stars for eternity and not with a happy smile on her face. Ouch.

I'll wait until my time comes thank you very much and face the music then. As an aside, once I'd reached this decision, the deadly mushrooms disappeared. I couldn't find any where they'd been.

But back to today. Earlier this year, the oyster mushrooms were numerous and Linda was brave enough to sample one. She loved its meaty taste. "This has a real mushroom flavour to it, stronger and more delicious than the store-bought ones." Chalk one up for the good guys and we have a jar full of them dried.

Clumps of coral mushrooms have started to appear in the woods and one of my wild food books, *Stalking The Wild Asparagus* by Euell Gibbons, claims that they are delicious in soups etc. I have yet to find the courage to try them out, although they look beautiful, exactly like their namesake. Maybe this year I'll check them out in my identification book and see what it says, as I prefer to have two separate sources of information on important matters.

Now-a-days, I'm checking out the chanterelle field to see if they want to show themselves in sufficient numbers to harvest again. Optimism springs eternal and I have no desire to sample a deadly amanita today. Who knows? What will I be doing in another twenty years?

For now, though, I love my life in the bush and cannot think of a better place to be.

All the best from the bush, Charlie