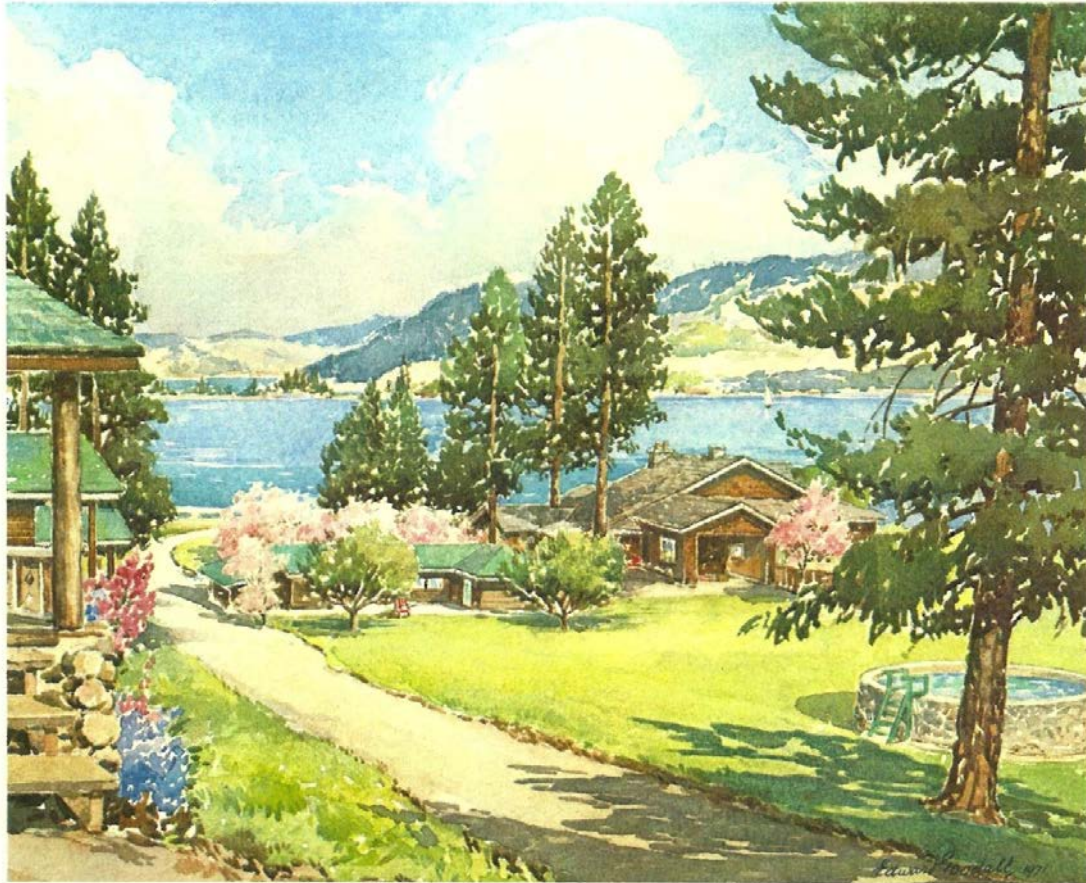


# **THE SWISS VILLAGE RESORT and a biography of its creator**

**GERRY MONOD (1914-1980)**

A pioneer skier in Banff, Sunshine Village and Silver Star Winter Mountain Resort



"Blossomtime" at the Swiss Village Resort, Wood Lake, Oyama, B.C.

Watercolour painting by Edward Goodall

**Written by Alys Monod in July 2008**

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The history of the Swiss Village Resort in Oyama, B.C. and a personal memoir of Gérard Monod, better known as Gerry Monod, whose dream it was to build the resort. I have also included many pictures that might better tell his story. I have added a few local names but have to leave out many of our resort friends' names since they span over fifty years.

After World War II, in May of 1947, a Swiss musician, Gerry Monod, immigrated to Canada. He had been working for three years at his uncle's bank, Credit Suisse, in Geneva and practicing his jazz clarinet in the basement every chance he could! At night, he played in the orchestras of Rene Weiss, Teddy Stauffer and Bob Engel, recording for Radio Genève and Columbia Records. He was the featured singer and also played saxophone and percussion. He eventually formed his own orchestra, touring Europe. After working days and performing nights, he would move on to the jazz club scene, improvising until 4 in the morning! Stephane Grappelli was a friend and his revered heroes were people like Coleman Hawkins and Ella Fitzgerald. He played his clarinet like it was Ella Fitzgerald singing and when driving, he would sing like he was playing his clarinet, running each note up, down and around the scale! Le Jazz Hot was the French name for American jazz that the European musicians dreamed to emulate!

As these jazz greats toured, they advertised America as the birthplace of jazz. The music I remember best was his singing of "Wien, Wien, Nur Du Allein", not jazz, not salon but slow, heartfelt, beautiful music. Some of the salon songs Gerry sang and recorded, making a strong impression on him, were, "Give Me Land, Lots of Land" and "I've got Spurs that Jingle, Jangle, Jingle!" Together with his love of skiing, he was dreaming of just that – the wide open spaces with happy cowboys and Canada beckoned with its mountains for both. But, when he arrived in the Laurentians, he wondered where were the mountains? He had done all of his skiing in the high Alps, Davos and Chamonix, a very famous ski area close to Geneva where he and his brother John raced and had a ski shop with Fred Iselin, who also immigrated the next year, instead, to Aspen, Colorado.

In 1948, the first North American Federation of International Skiing event, known as the FIS, was held at Aspen, Colorado, attracting the top skiers from around the world. Because I was there to film it, I took a week of ski lessons with Fred's wife, Ely Iselin! I had not yet met the Monod's. She was a devil of a teacher and taught us to expect the unexpected. It was "survival" for us but probably very tame for her. Skiing at Chamonix was on a high, fast, open mountain. Gerry said

that when the skiers disembarked at the summit, they had to clatter down a slick, wind glazed icy stretch and negotiate a perilous turn or they could skid and plunge over a sheer precipice! Ski edges could be very dull in those days. I can vouch for the precariousness 20 years later in 1952. Gerry would station himself like a human net just below the lip to catch these unfortunates. They would feel they owed their lives to him! They probably did. The rescued skiers would gratefully shower Gerry with money. Gerry “had it quite good”, as, the audience at the jazz clubs would also stuff his saxophone with large bills! He would take his newly acquired wealth and invite his buddies to dine afterward like kings to a feast of expensive wine and food up on the mountain!

In Canada, the Immigration Department decided Gerry should go into logging because Canada needed loggers. “Show us your hands!” Despite his musician’s hands, he did log and found that he loved it. He soon discovered the Canadian Rockies in Banff where he cut the North American Run, living in a tent on the mountain and dodging bears! This skill later became useful when he logged his own forest to build log cabins and docks for the resort.

In Banff, Gerry met the Brewsters and taught skiing at Mount Norquay, becoming the Ski School Director and coach for the Banff Red Devils racing team. Gerry with his brother John and Bruno Engler, formalized the ski instruction so that all the teachers were teaching the same method and certified. Gerry was named head instructor of the Canadian Alpine Ski Association for the Rocky Mountain ski zone. He found his niche at Sunshine Village as Ski School Director for Fern Brewster where there was high mountain touring. He obtained his license to guide in 1950 with “unlimited access”. Sunshine was a true mountain ski lodge and in those days was small and intimate, which fostered wonderful friendships. One winter, it was bitter cold at 60 below Fahrenheit. The whiskey froze in the bedrooms and squirrels stashed their nuts in the ski boots. Skiing ended because, if one fell and were hurt, one could freeze before being brought down. Bombardiers were used rather than ski tows at Sunshine. Ski pants and jackets were of gabardine. Eiderdown did not exist nor did safety bindings and helmets. Avalanches blocked the road to Banff and Gerry volunteered to ski down and telegraph worried families. One telegram was to Jack Fraser’s family. His father quickly replied, “If this can get out, so can you!”

During the summer, Gerry wrote articles on Canada and the Far West for Swiss and French magazines. He bicycled everywhere, up and down mountains. Since the grizzlies would chase him during the day, he cycled mostly at night. One very late night, he saw tiny lights in the distance and discovered a long lost friend in Rainy Wassman, who was running the Lodge at Radium Hot Springs! Gerry played golf seriously, hoping to become a golf pro, to fill out his year. He stayed in Calgary with ski friends like Max and Sue Bell. This life changed when Fern Brewster married Harry Dooley of the Grey Line and moved to Chicago, selling Sunshine to a new owner who commercialized Sunshine, even to charging for the matches! John stayed on but Gerry was discouraged and decided to return to

his chalet at Crêt d'y Bau, Caux, Switzerland. The chalet, "Le Pinsonnet", still stands, perched high on the rim of a massive gorge, the old sign still intact, the chalet hand painted inside by his father, an artist. Across the other side, steep, narrow couloirs descend down which he loved to race.

However, one of his Sunshine clients was the Minister of Parks and he suggested that, before leaving, Gerry take a little trip to visit the Okanagan, so much "like Switzerland". He did and camped where the Beach Chalet now stands. Coming to the Okanagan was a revelation to him. Fighting off bears in the Rockies gave way to a land of lakes, sunshine and orchards. The dark forest green was replaced by pastel hues of blue and lavender. He found the sparkling lakes clear and pristine. He was euphoric! He looked up and saw a "For Sale" sign! He asked to purchase it. The caretaker was not the owner and not very happy that someone wanted to buy it. The property actually consisted of two pieces: a quarter of a quarter section above plus pie shaped pieces below to the lake. It was bought from Crown Land by Sydney Herbert Plummer on January 22, 1908 who sold the upper 160 acres the 18th August 1911 to Alfred Adams and thus to Mr. J.A.L. Beasley in 1913. Beasley was an architect, surveyor and engineer from Leicestershire and later, Devon. He came first with his eldest son, John, who drowned skating. The rest of the family came the following year consisting of six more children, sadly two of them died. He stayed until 1923, when he returned to England, leaving his family, which had moved in 1920 to the 14 acres of beach property, "Wildmere", at the south end of Wood Lake. Alec became a well know farmer, deeding his property to become Beasley Park. Douglas became a banker in Bakersfield, CA and enjoyed visiting summers with his family. Connie and Molly lived with Alec and their mother. The property, "Pine Grove" that became The Swiss Village Resort, Mr. Beasley sold in 1945 but he had not received compensation and he personally returned in 1948 to force the payment. Gerry bought it in 1950 from William Coffey and Frederick Schaller. Mr. Beasley wrote to Gerry in 1953 at the age of 86. He described a bog at the bottom of the hill with reeds five feet high that they drained by building a windmill. (see Beasley letter) Wild animals had historically used the shore as a drinking area and deer, bears, coyotes, cougars, raccoons and porcupines, etc., had well marked trails down to the shore that are still used. But, it was not until Wood Lake was connected to Kalamalka Lake by a canal, that the lake lowered and there was room for a two-lane road along the shore. Beasley planted fruit trees on the side of the hill that still bear fruit, except, for his snow apple trees that yielded a crisp, juicy variety. The codling moth SIR program did away with them, after surviving all these years! Our children preferred these to any we had in the orchard proper.

The fall of 1953, Gerry drove his mother, who had been visiting him in the Okanagan, to New York City to visit her sister, Suzanne Straesslé. Her sister's husband represented Switzerland with the World Bank for twenty years. Upon Gerry's return to the West, he stopped off in Michigan to see his old Sunshine friend, Jack Fraser, the one whose father had answered the telegram. He asked

Gerry to stay for the winter and teach at the private ski club (Ford owned) called Otsego in Gaylord, Michigan. It was a very unique resort also called, "Hidden Valley", because a large valley abruptly dropped below the lodge's high picture windows. One could ski far down into the valley to a little gathering place called, "White Sands", but take a bombardier back following steaks around the circular fireplace, music and dancing. People brought their own instruments and Gerry was usually lent the drums.

I had met Gerry that first winter at Otsego and we married in the spring of 1954, Jack Fraser being our Best Man, of course. We had a wonderful honeymoon skiing with our fellow ski instructors who also had comprised our wedding party. We returned to Canada by way of Aspen (skiing with Gerry's old friend, Fred Iselin, who started the chair lift to ski with us), Vail, Alta, Whitefish (where one of the Wurtele sisters had settled) and Banff/Sunshine. This gave us a winter and a summer season.

The clientele at Otsego was wonderful and we stayed there until having children moved us closer to my parents. Gerry then took the ski schools outside Detroit at Grampian, Dryden, Mount Holly and Pine Knob. In the spring, Gerry took ski tours to the Alps. It also gave him a chance to visit his family, old music haunts and friends like the Husy Brothers who played for us at the Davos Palace and skied with us.

When we arrived from our honeymoon into the Okanagan, the highway was under construction high above Okanagan Lake from Penticton. Gerry passed the Swiss Village saying nothing and introduced me by going up Old Mission Road past the pink shale pit and descending a steep dirt road, stopping at a Lookout. The view was breathtakingly beautiful and the resort came into view below. I felt so fortunate because I had no idea where Gerry was taking me! Once in the house, I felt something on my neck. A tick! I had expected grizzly bears! (Worse!)

The Okanagan was a wonderful surprise, like Michigan with lakes and orchards, open and sunny. I felt immediately "at home". The fishing extended our summer season to include spring and fall so that we were open from March though mid November. On top of the ridge across the lake is the Beaver Dee chain of fishing lakes. It is volcanic and there are caves left from mining. One even has an underground lake.

Our guests enjoyed the privacy of their own housekeeping chalets, covered porches overlooking the lake and its ever-changing colours. One is never lonely with a lake because it is so alive. The other side of orchards was interspersed by white cottages with red roofs. They lent a picturesque Olde English charm to the area. We could hear dogs bark, cattle maww and it was civilized, yet, we had that beautiful expanse of water giving us privacy. The sun rose from the east early each morning yet we had shade by the time the hot afternoon sun beat down because of the mountain behind. A cool breeze of air would descend from the

forest. The moon was reflected in the lake not only in summer but also on the ice in the winter like a bright mirror. I never felt lonely or isolated living on this west side of the lake.

The road, at that time, wound lazily in and out along the lake. The hill rose from the highway where Gerry planted an orchard consisting of every kind of fruit: cherries, apricots, nectarines, peaches, plums, apples, Thompson Seedless grapes, almonds and walnuts. Gerry always felt that the Hunzas of Tibet were so healthy because they ate apricots and walnuts. Gerry made a Swiss dish of Bircher muesli every morning for breakfast of fruit, nuts and oatmeal. Raspberries lined the driveway up the hill.

The resort was laid out with a duplex facing the scenic view north over the orchard toward Oyama and Kalamalka Lake. The individual chalets ran linearly above Wood Lake with an equally scenic view of the benches of poplars and patchwork quilt of orchards on the other side. The dock extended straight out toward the shallow rock in the lake, a swimmer's destination point. The lake is less than a mile across and many swam it. With the heavy traffic of motorboats now, one would hesitate to be so foolhardy. The small size of Wood Lake made it warm enough to swim from April through October.

To finance building the summer resort, Gerry took as partners his brother John, Benno Knoll (a cousin by marriage), plus, one Canadian, Ernie Roy. None had any experience in actual construction and only Gerry had the deep desire to work at it. The land title was in his name and he owned the land. He hired a Swedish carpenter, Mr. Carlson, who designed the roof beams to run down the sides of the roof, whereas, in Switzerland, the beams face out. As a result, the resort looks more Swedish than Swiss except for the log chalets that Gerry built later. The logs were chuted down the mountain from the 2nd lookout. For the Beach Chalet and docks, they were slid off the cliff from the first lookout and dragged across to the beach. Benno hoped to open a nice restaurant in the living room lodge with the fireplace but his tastes were gourmet, the best wine and the best steaks. He soon discovered that visitors only wanted a hamburger and Coca-Cola. He left to work on the paddle wheelers' dining rooms plying Okanagan Lake, and later, opened a restaurant in Vernon, settling in Prince George. John wanted to build sports shops in Banff and Lake Louise that exist to this day. His three sons: Phillip, Peter and Nick run Monod Sports Ltd. very successfully. All three were on the alpine Canadian Ski Team, as was their sister, Stephanie Townsend. The lone Canadian, Ernie Roy, worked at a meat packing business. I decided to buy him out, as he was the only partner left when I arrived.

Golf suffered because we became too busy to enjoy the Kelowna Golf Club that Gerry had joined. Were he alive today, he would not believe the many golf courses that now dot the Okanagan, or the vineyards that proliferate, replacing orchards. Benno would find excellent restaurants and wine to meet his high

standards and the clientele to match. Each town has its own ski mountain and ski shop!

Being three Swiss lads, Gerry, Johnny and Benno added porches on three sides to the house that we later enclosed to have more space. The roofline had to descend, of course. This gave us a roll top ceiling in our bedroom! Steps down solved the problem elsewhere. But, tall people beware!

Many ski friends dropped by to see Gerry. Sid McDonald bought Fintry and wanted to make it year round by offering skiing. He asked Gerry to develop a ski hill further up the gorge. Indeed, it was a lovely area with a waterfall, the beautiful home and octagonal barn. The beach, however, was of black sand. It seemed very isolated and we were happy to return to friendly Wood Lake. Sid built a beautiful home with a swimming pool on Hobson Rd. in Kelowna Mission. I remember when we had an earthquake and his pool tipped, spilling out the water! One forgets that these lakes are actually fjords and we are on a fault line! Besides Sid, other Sunshine friends often stopped by Wilder Ripley, Jock Smith in his gray limousine, Jack Churchill who had married Holly Middleton. Jack was a regular guest Armistice weekends. Fern Brewster stopped one day all alone in her chauffeur driven limousine to come in and chat with Gerry. Thea Koerner visited just before she died. Cynthia McDonald. Bob and Dave Freeze who had been on Gerry's Red Devils Ski Team. Bob remained a very close friend of our family. He would arrive, the top of his car laden with kayaks. They were perfect for gliding in the midst of the geese and ducks.

When our eldest daughter began school, we decided to move permanently to the Okanagan. Skiing was developing and Gerry was instrumental in obtaining permission from Victoria to build Silver Star on parkland. Before Silver Star, Mike Lattey would take us up to the old Fire Lookout cabin. One would have to leave the car and hike up. The cabin's roof, loaded with snow, was falling in and packrats scampered over our sleeping bags at night. It was all worth it because the skiing was excellent. Underground spring rivulets would form pools and the early morning sugar snow would last until noon. Mike wanted Gerry to teach for their ski club and offered Gerry \$25 a week to stay the winter.

Noel and Gliddie Gardner would visit with their dogs. Noel was badly injured when chased up a tree and clawed by a grizzly. His dogs saved his life. He was working on avalanche control for the new Rogers Pass.

Ted Goodall came annually and painted many scenes of the Okanagan. Ted was an "Old World gentleman" and became one of the family. Our youngest daughter Tina adored him and he taught her to sketch and paint in water colours. He was very influential later in her choosing to study in the visual arts program at U Vic.

The opening of Roger's Pass brought Albertans and Prairie people west the summer of 1962. Coast people drove east creating a sudden influx of business,

as we were half way. This all occurred the same time that Tina was born. There had been no business all summer and overnight, we had 60 muslin sheets a day to wash and iron with a complete turnover of all the chalets! My mother, who had come to help with the baby, found herself swamped with work.

Thinking, back then, was for roads and railroads to follow the easiest path along the watercourses but this scarred the shorelines. Blasting the bluffs to straighten the highway resulted in frequent falling rock and shale, causing many bad accidents. The new highway was also raised four feet, creating a cul-de-sac drainage problem by forgetting to install a culvert. Several times, until rectified, our 4-unit motel flooded with the spring run-off. When, Queen Elizabeth's motorcade passed, the peasants (us) were in ankle deep water sloshing about with worms and frogs trying to squeeze long, ponderous, wet carpets out the narrow doors of the motel! (Amazingly, they dried in three days, spread out in the orchard.) The children waved joyfully to the royal guests, anyway, in their lederhosen and dirndl! I hope they waved back.

Gerry's first puppy, Co-Co, was hit on the road the summer before I came. She was only a few months old but Gerry spotted the tip of her black nose in a ditch. She had a broken back, jaw, and a mangled front leg that had to be amputated, spending many months at the vet. She survived miraculously and always swam far ahead of us. We had to whistle at her to turn around and not keep going! She ran with Gerry when he leaped down the steep, loose shale slides to strengthen his ankles for skiing. She would sail over his head and land like a tripod! She was amazing and dearly loved by Gerry. He would put her to bed at night on an old car seat and lower her eyelids. She loved this and would not peek!

Fine pink shale attracted spawning Kokanee, a landlocked salmon. We enjoyed the sight of the salmon spawning each fall. Only the Okanagan Indian bands were allowed to fish them at that stage and they would line the shore with their long poles with hooks. We would find old poles stashed high in the brush above. (I still use one hook to connect my clothesline!)

The oblique sun in the early morning warmed the shallows and was ideal, not only for hatching salmon but also for an early morning swim. We would swim from our point to the next one south and back four times a day, before meals and before bed. I would put supper on the stove and we would return a half an hour later with it ready to eat! A simple sign, "Gone Swimming", sufficed. We never locked our doors.

With the straightening of the highway, all our lovely points of land a quarter of a mile north were lobbed off and the bays were filled with massive rock, obliterating the pristine, naturally shaped shore of our property. Gerry worked in the fall on the blasted cliffs. Because he was Swiss and a rock climber, he was given the job of scaling them! When through, he descended upright, facing out, skittering and dancing straight down on his heels, more in the air than on the rock face! It



was a daily show for the other workmen! We always knew he was more than “half mountain goat”!

Quite simply, our land was expropriated and there was no recompense - if one could even measure the environmental loss. A meager cabin rental from a highway engineer did little to alleviate the summer’s financial loss. The road was closed on our side of the lake. Once blasting started in the fall, we had to hike over the rubble to Oyama for groceries, our mail and back, again. Only one reservation made it through during the summer, a Persian doctor and his Swiss wife. They simply drove around the roadblock from the south and we had a wonderful time for several weeks with them. Their specialty was fried grasshoppers, however! Our road had been a horse path at the beginning and a rider passing was greeted with, “Where are you heading?” “Oh, to Toronto!” This time, where did you come from and how did you get here? “Oh, from Persia and we just drove around the roadblock!” The historic, original road was up above and this “Old Mission Road” is where the newest highway will go. Too bad it didn’t go there to begin with! But, we would never have known that a Swiss Mountain goat lived on the rock bluffs above Wood Lake!

Gerry always swam on his back. He had survived a fall while rock climbing in Switzerland and swimming helped to relax his back. One day an eagle must have been attracted to the rhythmical splash of his arms or his nose (like a fin) because the eagle dive-bombed him and he just had time to thrash his arms forward to fend it off! By swimming backward, he never saw what was actually ahead. Once, his hand landed on an object that turned out to be a wallet with everything intact! The owner had driven into the lake and was overjoyed to have it back. Another time, the object was much larger and a big smoked ham that had been flung into the lake when the Oyama Sausage smokehouse blew up!

Eventually, the highway cut gave us more land at the beach and the old road was gazetted back to us. The new space allowed for one Beach Chalet with its own dock and privacy. The far south end was kept for waterfowl; the north end was kept for the resort beach. The dock had to be replaced and Gerry found help with Swiss lads cycling across Canada and wanting to stop to visit for a week or two, lending a hand with the heavy logs. Invariably, they were not only cycling across Canada, but down the West Coast and Central America to South America and around that large continent! One lad did it twice, canoeing the Amazon. That is something Gerry did not attempt! He had had enough just cycling through the Rockies.

Pierre, the third brother, followed in 1959 to Canada. He had been the manager for Spain of CIBA, a German chemical firm. This time, Immigration decided that Canada needed teachers! He and his wife went back to school to obtain Canadian credentials to teach and further obtained their Doctorates in Psycholinguistics at Grenoble, France. They taught the new teachers at the U of Alberta in Edmonton. Summers and holidays, they shared with us our

appreciation of the Okanagan and love for the resort. They never came but that they left it better. Both received Alberta Cultural Awards. Pierre received the Order of Canada, the Queens' 25 Silver Anniversary medal and was named Swiss Consul. Upon retirement, they left a Foundation to help aspiring French teachers travel. Madeleine learned the Ukrainian language to better teach her students.

The first couple of years, we only ran the resort summers, returning to Michigan winters, where my family lived. Gerry had a job waiting for him at the Sportsman, a very fancy sport shop run by C.E. Wilson, Jr. in Birmingham, 3-4 miles from our house. Gerry loved to walk home at night through the falling snow. It was Christmas and he admired all the houses warmly lit so festively. It was magical. Turning into the driveway, he could smell the pot roast and he soon gave up being a vegetarian! Returning to the Okanagan, he resumed being a vegetarian. He and his mother could each consume large platters of peaches for lunch followed by NOCA strawberry ice cream, their preferred teatime treat! I would sometimes spot her in the orchard after dark still eating cherries. Europeans adored cherries and would purchase several pails of them daily.

The guests enjoyed the privacy of their own chalets. The same families would come back each summer and stay an average of three weeks. The open porches were free of mosquitoes because of the dry climate. The wives had fun shaking their rugs in the morning and many would put a pot of apricots over the stove pilot light before bed to enjoy fresh jam in the morning! Windowsills were lined with cherry preserves! The orchard was a bonus and no one complained about the walk down to the beach. It included eating cherries along the way, and then, again, on the way back up! The beach chalet family could always go for a walk up the hill to eat their fill. Reverse osmosis?

The resort was family oriented. They could watch the soccer games in the evening or join in, as soccer was for everyone, ages 2 to 70! It was also educational, as, the boys had to learn to stop shoving and to let the 2-year-olds have the fun of scoring, too. They would play until dark. Gerry was light on his feet and when the game became too rough or serious; he would dance with the ball and no one could get it. It would become hilarious and they would collapse from laughter. The clientele were largely French, German, Austrian and Italian. By day, they were cliquish at the beach but they mixed when teams were formed for soccer. Gerry would call it quits when there was a tie and they would all head for a late swim, the moon rising. The clean children would fall into bed exhausted and the parents sit on their porches to gaze at the stars until the moon disappeared, having a drink of wine or coffee and chatting with neighbors before bed. It was a way of life.

Our two daughters, Antoinette and Tina, ran the activities for the children and they would spend hours and days before the end of each week to present an entertainment following the weekend big hot dog and marshmallow roast. A

Swiss returned this past summer with his wife and children and waxed eloquent saying how much he had loved those scrumptious, hot, crispy toasted marshmallows with their soft insides roasted over the fire! He is now a conductor of orchestras and operas. We would set up a portable movie screen and show movies of our resort, our ski tours and Grace Kelly's wedding to our "captive audience!" Following this, the children would give us a marionette performance of The Sound of Music and work the marionettes and sing the songs. Tina at 3 was always the yodeler and Antoinette at 8, loved "going on 16"! Their voices were so guileless and pure in the quiet night air and it touched everyone. Something so simple, yet, it filled our hearts!

When one visits campgrounds now, the music blares and some screech owl is always bleating his or her lungs out! One can't hear oneself talk, less, read a book in peace. What became of listening? On the other hand, at Christmas, a group of us would put on a Christmas party and marionette show for the Oyama children. We would do Hansel and Gretel and Sheila Hayward would be the big, bad witch and cackle and scream down the aisle, scaring the children to death! There was even a wolf and the children enjoyed screaming for Little Red Riding Hood! Today, we would call it "inter-active". However, Santa Claus followed and there was a huge gingerbread house to demolish! Food fixes everything!

We kept the duplex open until New Year's, as many wanted to cross county ski the hills and enjoy a "snowy Christmas" rather than a wet one on the coast. One year, the thermometer dipped to minus forty degrees Fahrenheit and everyone was stranded. Groceries were delivered from the highway below but the milk froze walking back up the hill! We survived happily on Raclette in the fireplaces, games of chess and singing by the fire.

Due to the extensive terrain and wonderful road like paths, cool days were good for hiking to the top of Sunnywold Mountain where one could view Okanagan Lake on the other side. The view on this side from the top revealed Kalamalka Lake, the isthmus of Oyama and Wood Lake. The last bit of climbing was all in the open and one could not see the next hill beyond. One felt one had had a satisfying climb and the lake never felt so good as afterward when one could collapse into the coolness of the water to recuperate!

On cloudy days, everyone would drive up to Silver Star to pick blueberries and we would have an evening of blueberry pies. Gerry would provide the Kokanee catch. He was always out on the lake very early in the morning, often with Jack Simpson, and would return with as many as 18! He would grill them and anyone who wanted could come down with their mugs of coffee to eat. I would toast a long loaf of bread and disappear to take ' for her 8 AM ballet lessons at the Paddock. As a 4-year-old, she had a private lesson each morning with Joy Camden, a senior RAD examiner, for her first lessons in... hopping! Evie and Doug Middleton ran this wonderful summer art camp for years. Frances Hatfield, Frank Poll, Joy Camden, Norbert Vesak taught and she provided the best

teachers. I made a little movie of "Peter at the Paddock", featuring their youngest son. Their children were Beth, Bruce, Andrew, Robbie and Peter. The Paddock was one of Lake Country's best-kept secrets!

Sigrid-Ann Thors called a meeting at George Elliot Secondary where she was teaching to ask us if we wanted to form an arts council since the Government was going to provide 10 cents per person/head for communities having one. At the meeting were Doug and Evy Middleton, Reverend Loren and Gwen Smith, Frances Hatfield, Vaughan Grayson Mann, Audrey Marshall, myself and others. Thus began the Oceola Arts Council that became very active for its size. There were annual Sunflower Teas with home made fresh whipped cream puffs made by Penny Pollard Gamble and her mother, drawing huge crowds to St. Mary's, the little Anglican Church on the hillside. The field was filled with sunflowers overlooking Wood Lake in Oyama. It had no running water, however. People had to trek down a dusty path to the rector's house! Dick Dudlyk provided artesian well water for tea from his home on the south shore of Wood Lake.

Barry Patterson produced a radio series on Haiku with plays by Bill Bennett, etc. Barry had a beautiful tenor voice. We had the first "Showcase of the Arts" encompassing the performing, written and visual arts. Okanagan Image followed this in which all of the art and music was commissioned from Okanagan artists on an Okanagan theme. Jean Coulthard, the internationally known composer from Vancouver, was a guest at our resort summers. This was a catalyst to the festival as she was composing, "Kalamalka, Lake of Many Colours". Her protege, Michael Conway Baker, composed, "Landscapes", becoming the music choreographed for a ballet by Gweneth Lloyd for the Canadian School of Ballet, with sets and costumes by Holly Middleton. There was a play written for the festival by George Ryga. An art van assembled by Robert Dow Reid accompanied the concerts and later toured the province. Composers Ernst Schneider and Art Lewis added to the orchestral and choral works played by the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra and Choir, led by Captain Leonard Camplin. Mike Roberts of CHBC-TV produced a two part special on Okanagan Image with interviews using Baker's romantic, rolling lake music in the background. The event was a great success but was never repeated.

OMRAC, the sponsor, was the first regional arts council in BC, made up of 11 arts councils in the Okanagan-Mainline Region. "Image" was instrumental by not only having them see "themselves" as participants in one regional body; it also blessed them when they then saw "each other" in it. It unified a disperse group of councils. The Okanagan Music Festival for Composers grew out of Image, providing musical continuity and drawing composers to the Okanagan. I used the resort to house the visiting composers the early years, such as Jean Coulthard, Michael Baker, Chan Ka Nin, David Duke, Roger Knox, Fred Schipizky and guest adjudicators, such as, Allan Bell and Gilles Tremblay. The latter came a week early and did their adjudication work on the windy porch of the Beach Chalet. Ernst Schneider of Penticton composed a delightful, The Five Moods of Ogo-pogo

that became a set festival piece. It was transposed for The Ogopogo Brass Quintet with commentary by Eddie Haug of Winfield in "first person" Ogopogo. The Easter Seal Camp was the first venue and later, CBC came to tape and broadcast the concerts.

While I graduated from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in sculpture; music dominated my life in the Okanagan and while Gerry's life was largely music before coming to Canada, just the opposite happened and skiing and the resort business dominated his. He was known for his graceful, smooth skiing and one might say that it was his innate sense of music that singled him out as he carved down the mountain. He was also very philosophical and people sought his advice and encouragement, hanging on his words.

Gerry passed on in 1980 and eventually, Antoinette took over the running of the resort. She improved the chalets for year round rental and only kept the Beach Chalet for weekly summer rentals. After graduating from Vancouver Community College in music performance, she worked at Britton Jewelry in Vancouver for many years. Her partner, Rick Lake, takes care of the property, defining boundaries, logging to thin out any pine beetle infested trees, attending to the fine pink shale for which the Swiss Village is known. Bruce (caretaker) and his family have made the motel into a home with spectacular light displays at Christmas. Tina obtained a B.F.A. and diploma in Advanced Internet Development and Design. She creates art and web design for a living. She married William Field who works in healthcare with diagnostic imaging and radiology.

This is still very much a village and the friendly place it always was. The same people come back to the Beach Chalet every year, reserving years in advance. Its uniqueness in offering privacy with its own dock right on the lake is unbeatable. The garage became a bunkhouse for children, connected to the chalet by a deck. Large families come and even bring their own trampolines. When I look down from my window above, I see little bodies flying in the air beyond the highway fence at 6 AM. With the new highway going above along the Old Mission Road, this will involve more change for the Swiss Village! The highway has become so busy with diesel traffic spewing fumes and noise that the new highway will be very welcome and help return the lake area to its former beauty and quality of life.

When one thinks that the railway took one side of the lake and the highway the other, one might surmise that the two ruined it but, actually, they saved the lake from over development. Now that thinking has evolved to saving the shoreline, all is working out. The lovely view of the benches and orchards across the lake has remained because it is in the ALR. (Agricultural Land Reserve) It also is unique and like a green strip that we hope will be preserved- "A Heritage Green Strip"? The proliferation of vineyards is also preserving vast tracts from being chopped up but the mega developments are not so welcome, blocking views! Traffic is

ruining the nice quiet roads that before only saw the orchardists trucking their fruit to the packinghouse and cyclists. The Okanagan has been “discovered” but we can be grateful that we lived here while it was still unspoiled. It was also the perfect place to raise our two daughters.

The sparkling, clear water of Wood Lake is still a dream come true and is as enjoyable as when Gerry first camped along its shore and splashed into the lake with his dog for an early morning swim. The spot was even appreciated by the Prince of Wales when he had his chauffeur stop to admire the view. One early morning, I went to the beach to clean the docks and found a girl seated in the morning sun on the chalet porch strumming her guitar. Even transients can't resist stopping a few minutes to appreciate such a lovely moment.

J.A.L. Beasley expressed surprise at what became of his former little isolated home on Wood Lake. Ghosts you ask? Is that he 10 feet above the road looking for his bog and 5 foot reeds? Are a few pears missing from those scraggly little trees on the hillside? Is that Gerry Monod gliding backward down the moonlit lake at night, reaching for moonbeams in the water? Hawaiian music coming from what used to be the Grass Shack and a tiny pink ghost in a hula skirt living it up by the light of the torches? And, the Beach Chalet? A morning/mourning transient seated on the porch, strumming a guitar in the first early rays of the sun? And in the spring when the ice breaks up, is that yodeling or the loons lifting their hilarious laughter to a lake all theirs, again? Will a ghost writer ever write his or her experiences of the Swiss Village? It could only be a privilege!

## Ode to Monod

Gerry Monod & Family, April 1971

A fine young man, ex eastern state  
Came to the west to seek his fate,  
And with him came his lovely wife  
To share his "good" and "bad" for life.

Her family was of high renown  
A leading one in her hometown.  
She knew she would not wed in vain,  
She left with him, left Michigan

And to the Okanagan came,  
Oyama is the place's name,  
And there on acreage broad and wide  
He settled with his charming bride.

The both did love the great outdoors  
Where oft it snows, or shines or pours,  
And sometimes from their private lake  
A catch of fish sometimes they'd take,

And bring them to their Swiss Chalet  
And cook them till they'd taste O.K.  
The call their girls to come from play,  
Eleven and thirteen, they say.

Because he was that kind of man,  
When winter came he made a plan  
To teach beginners how to ski  
'Till they could ski as well as he.

So, on the slopes of Silver Star  
He taught the folks from near and far.  
Some came by plane, some came by car.  
They came to ski at Silver Star.

There each was graded in a class.  
Improving slowly he would pass  
Into a more proficient grade  
Pleased with the progress he had made.

He taught them how to make their turns  
Releasing energy which burns,  
Explodes, uncoils, projects, and guides,  
And from the mice and men divides.

He does all this, which means, of course,  
He works each day just like a horse.  
He must keep in the best of shape,  
So swims across and back – his lake.

One and a half miles 'tis each way  
Swimming three miles every day.  
And though this may prompt many smiles  
He also jogs each day two miles.

His students come from 'round the world  
Some with crew-cuts, some long and curled  
But all of those who stand the test  
Aver that as a "pro" he's best.

Some students have admired him so  
TO save his eyes from Sun on Snow  
Smith Super Goggles they have sent  
Together with best wishes meant.

This present gift from KRIS and SCOTT  
And JONE and HALL comes with the  
thought  
That he will use it a whole lot.  
They're grateful for all they've been taught.

We're writing of GERRY MONOD,  
At Silver Star, he packs the load.  
'Tis rumoured that he's fifty-eight  
Though some might add 'praps four or  
eight.

What age he is we do not care  
When we return he'll still be there  
Advising, helping, coaching still  
On Silver Star's exciting hill

THE BRODIE'S

Alys Monod (1926-2012) began writing this book in 2005.  
Her first draft was completed in April 14, 2007.



In reading these memoirs much is left to the imagination.  
To view the full version of this eBook PDF (93 pages) visit [Lake Country Museum](#).



Full version shares a complete history with photographs of jazz musician, ski instructor and resort owner Gérard (Gerry) Monod.  
Digital versions of press releases, brochures, letters and badges are included.  
Many of the photos taken by the Monod family provide beautiful and historic views of Lake Country, B.C. from the early days and days gone by.

