

Hi to Everyone: from Cherry Inglis, BC Notary Student, August 5, 2003

When we escaped our home in McLure, I pulled the plug on my computer, grabbed my tower, my books, and my assignment schedule. Today, a friend loaned me a mouse, monitor, and keyboard and lo and behold, I am up and running, at the Best Western in Kamloops.

We are still evacuated but as of this morning, our house remains standing. We don't know what damage (smoke or heat) there is. We are definitely not out of danger. All we need is a change in the winds and we're in trouble. All we have in this world for sure right now is in our truck and camping trailer. You sure realize in a hurry what is important in your life when you have to make a split-second decision about what to take with you.

I have never been so terrified in my life. The fire was so close, roaring down the forested hill on the back of our acre of land; my husband and I could hardly stand the heat on our patio at the back door as we raced out to our trucks to flee. I remembered about halfway to Barriere that I forgot to lock the door...but I had made my bed!!! Strange, the things a person



does in a time of crisis!!! I still look at the TV and want to send in a donation to "those poor people," then realize they are talking about us.

The first few days we were numb. We were actually evacuated twice; we escaped from McLure to Barriere then were evacuated from there the next day. We have been hearing "good rumours" regarding my husband Rob's employer, Tolko. Sounds like they plan on rebuilding the mill at Louis Creek. It will likely take eight months to a year; because he is part of the management team, he may be employed supervising the "cleanup crews" or as security.

We feel so blessed and grateful. So many people have lost so much! Thank you, Kate Manvell, for trying to find us a place to stay in Kamloops. Actually, the hotel is the best place for us. It is convenient for Rob to be in touch with his men. The hotel staff has been phenomenal, as has our local radio station and all the businesses and residents of this great city!

The outpouring of support, donations, and volunteers from the whole province has been overwhelming.

I want you all to know that even though at times I find it difficult to concentrate, I will try very hard not to hold up the return of the marked assignments; I plan to have my assignments in on time as long as everything continues to remain stable in my life. I want to tell you all "thank you" for all the support we have received. It means a lot to us knowing that people are concerned for our welfare and want to help us through this very difficult time.

Back Home . . .

August 14: We are still on evacuation alert and today the fires in our area decided to flare up again. So far, I am at home. Rob is working at the sawmill site temporarily, doing security, 12-hour shifts, 7 pm to 7 am, four on and four off. Tonight is his 4th shift. I must admit I am a little nervous here by myself as the threat of fire continues. Every time I see new smoke, I'm outside checking the wind direction . . . I'm getting paranoid!!

We were so fortunate; all we lost were some vegetables, fruit, and dressings in our fridges, due to the power outage. Barriere was out for days. We only lost power for hours and then off and on several times. There is the constant smell of smoke in the house right now, but the restoration company told us they will be around when the air clears in the valley.

We have much to be thankful for. I hope that the other members [of The Society] in our area are as fortunate and that their lives will return to normal soon. ▲