



Jennifer Buchanan / The Herald

A new home at camp

1954 house travels to Camp Killoqua to become a staff residence

By Gale Fiege, Herald Writer

Story tools

TULALIP — Were it not so beloved, this 56-year-old beach house might have ended up in a burn pile.

The house on Tulare Beach has a new home this week — 6 miles away at Camp Killoqua, which is owned by the Snohomish County Camp Fire USA council.

Moved in two parts, on Sunday and then on Wednesday, the house has many ties to Camp Fire, which began 100 years ago as a national organization for girls who were eager to experience the outdoors. Camp Fire started allowing boys to join the youth group in the 1970s.

An early owner of the beach house was Neva Stuchell, who was instrumental in securing property on Crabapple Lake. In 1941, the site became Camp Killoqua, considered the jewel of the Camp Fire program in northwest Washington. Thousands of kids use it year round.

So it is fitting that the beach house would be brought to the camp to be used as a home for year-round staff, said local Camp Fire officials Michael Deal and Dave Surface.

“The cabin has retired to Camp Killoqua,” Deal said. “And that's where it should be.”

It wasn't an easy move, however.

Steve and Donna Faulkner, the third-generation owners of Faulkner House Moving of Stanwood, used winches and a lot of patience Sunday to move the largest part of the house up the hairpin turns of Tulare Way.

That morning, neighbors along the beach gathered together for coffee and Sheryl Bjerk's pecan sticky buns while they watched the move.

On Wednesday, the house's living room made the trip without a hitch, up Marine Drive, down Kayak Point Road and out E. Lake Goodwin Road to Killoqua.

Snohomish County Camp Fire USA saved about \$100,000 on the project, Surface said. That's because Terry and Cheryle Earnheart donated the beach house. **Allied Construction of Everett also offered a good deal for building a new foundation.**

The beach house has had a near constant Camp Fire connection, Surface said.

It was built in 1954, and bought several years later by Ed and Neva Stuchell. She served for years on the county's Camp Fire board of directors.

The Stuchells' son, Harry, 86, and his wife, Carol, of Everett have fond memories of family gatherings at the house at Tulare Beach on the northwest corner of the Tulalip Reservation.

“And Carol was a Camp Fire leader for our five daughters,” Harry Stuchell said. “We still support Camp Fire and are very pleased that the cabin is going to Camp Killoqua.”

In 1971, Betty Blessing, who also was active in Camp Fire, and her husband bought the house from the Stuchell family.

After her first husband died, Betty married Alvin Brown, son of the man who founded the Brown & Haley candy company in Tacoma. Brown & Haley continues to make Camp Fire Mints, which are sold each year as a fundraiser for the youth organization.

Now 92, Betty Brown said there is meaning in the move of her former house to Camp Killoqua.

“It was strictly a summer house for us, but I loved it,” Brown said. “Perhaps someday I will make the trip to camp to see it again.”

The Browns sold the beach house earlier this year to Terry and Cheryle Earnheart. The Earnhearts, too, have been active in Camp Fire for many years. In fact, Cheryle Lewis Earnheart, now 63, was a camper at Killoqua the year the beach house was built.

The Earnhearts plan to build a new home on the property where the beach house once sat.

“We lived in it this past summer. We felt the cabin still had life to give, so we decided to donate it to Camp Fire,” Cheryle Earnheart said. “It would have been heart-wrenching had it gone for firewood.”

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