



Rozina Buker

(1918 -)

I hope people will finally come to realize that there is only one "race" – the human race – and that we are all members of it. Margaret Atwood - Canadian author Source: quotedb.com

A gifted storyteller and memory keeper, Zena was born on June 20th, 1918 in Mission, BC.

Zena is a respected Elder, of Sto:lo and Babine heritage, who fulfills the role of storyteller, reconnecting every generation with their past. The detailed nature and consistent accuracy of her stories demonstrates the obvious value she places upon the idea of "community", maintaining its existence through being involved and sharing memories. She understands the importance of learning about where one comes from, and where the connections are.

In 1942, Zena left her home in Dewdney to work at Boeing Plant Number Three in Vancouver, as a riveter on the PBY sea planes. "I started at 40 cents an hour which to me was a fortune; after three years I was earning a dollar an hour, but much to our shock and amazement, one day the whistle blew, the power was turned off and it was announced the war was over. We were told to go home, come back in the morning, turn in our tools, pick up our pay cheque and that was it."

After the war, Zena married Lyle Buker, creating an important tie between two of Dewdney's pioneer families. They had two daughters, and Zena now has four grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

Zena's parents were always there to volunteer wherever the need arose, so she never thought to analyze volunteering for what it was. "It was just part of living."

Her first volunteer experience was with the Dewdney Girls Club. She later became a board member for the Dewdney Hall, which was "a lot of work because the whole social life of the community revolved around the hall."

She joined the PTA and was on the executive for a while, but she most enjoyed the hot-lunch program. She helped with the preparation and they would have a meeting while peeling vegetables and getting them ready to make soup. They took turns assisting with serving the meals. When her kids were small, she also canvassed for the Cancer Society.

After Lyle passed away, Zena was invited to join Widows Helping Others (WHO), which was predominately a support group but they adopted the women's shelter as a project, providing personal care items, paper products, bed linens or other specific requests. They didn't do any fundraising; this was all done through donations from WHO members.

Zena was a faithful member and volunteer with Life Time Learning, and found their programs to be interesting and stimulating. She liked the idea of an organization for seniors to keep on learning.

Zena believes in the saying, It takes a village to raise a family; "In our community, we depended on each other for so many things. Neighbours looked out after other peoples' children...it proves that you don't raise your children in isolation; and then there are the teachers and the church; all these other influences."

by Lisa Kenney, Eagle Eye Editing
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