

RICHARD SEVIGNY

1992 - 2002

Five Towers: Big Sandy, Nisbet, Holbein and still active North Cabin Tower.

"Big Sandy Tower" June, 1992 was my first time up in a tower, I received my training from a very good towerman by the name of Alvin Tatlow. On my third day of training, I spotted my first smoke so he instructed me to report it, after shooting the bearing azimuth and plotting it on the map I called it in. Alvin informed me that after three days training I was ready to man the tower alone. My first day on my own I could not climb up my tower, because of a thunder storm. I did not know what to do, so I fell asleep on the sofa, then I heard a loud banging on the cabin door. I opened the door, to discover a three hundred pound bear walking around the yard. One smoke I recall reporting was at the same angle and distance for three years, this smoke continued to baffle the fire cache at Fishing Lakes. The third year, the loaded patrol helicopter had luck and very clear visibility. The smoke turned out to be the Flin Flon smelter smoke stack at one hundred and twenty miles, putting an end to that puzzle. On my last day at Big Sandy in June of 1996, I was up when a thunderstorm popped up and it was too late to go down. They had put up a new fiberglass cupola on the tower and it was not properly grounded yet. When I tried to call Clarke Tower on the P.T 300 radio, the handset jumped right out of my hand in a lightning strike on the tower. I saw a lot of sparks all around the metal flange ringing the inside of the cupola just below the windows. This was at 10:30 after the daily alerts came off the radio. I was wearing a battery operated wrist watch and it was dead. I checked the tower ladder to see if was grounded and it was, so I went down to the cabin to retrieve my other watch. It read 12:00 noon, so I made lunch and headed back up, bringing up a length of wire to ground the antenna with the storm gone. That Afternoon my boss at Lower Fishing Lakes came by and told me that I have a new tower; this is the end of my ten day shift.

"Holbein Tower" July 1996 Kelly Sawchuck showed me the way and the first day in this tower I spotted a smoke near Holbein, so I called North Cabin for Tammy's cross shot. Al Carswell in the loaded patrol helicopter informed me it was a car burning in a sewage lagoon. That evening after the alerts were over, I went home leaving the radio and binoculars in cupola. Upon returning in the morning the cupola was broken into with the use of an axe, the radio and binoculars were gone.

"North Cabin Tower" In 1999 I was informed that North Cabin was being torn down replaced with a new one. In 1989 a fire burned through the Mcdowall Block and the tower site which at the time was manned by Lee Adams. Later replaced with a new tower design - single pedestal. I applied for it for the 2000 fire season and I won the competition.

August 24th, 2001 at 1500 hrs I did not know what was happening when I heard I was the last towerman of 2001. Local news reported that Richard Sevigny of North Cabin Tower located 25 miles southwest of Prince Albert remained open to complete the season. A new tower design saved it from the recent shut down. Richard had a big responsibility, he must have had a hard time watching over the entire province and a harder time getting a cross shot! My boss informed me that all the other towers were condemned by order of Occupational Health and Safety. Safety violations on tower structures were liability concerns.

Aerial and Tower Observer Detection Specialist : In the spring of 2002 I took the Aerial Detection Course with several other observers and went on patrols when the fire danger was less.