

ROSEMARIE MITCHELL

1997 - 2002 In 5 Towers

My first experience in being a Tower Observer was in 1997, it was very exciting for me. I had previously worked as a Post Office clerk at the C & S in Candle Lake. I received a phone call one day, to inquire if I would relieve a regular observer at **Stuart Tower**. ! I said YES! on the spur of the moment. I went home after work and announce, ! Guess what Mom!s going to do this weekend? ! My three sons were quite amazed when I told them what I was going to do. Vince said nothing. Steve said, ! Mom did you loose it ? ! And Jeff said, ! Good for you Mom. Try it if you can do it, fine, if you can!t at least you tried.!

Clyde wasn!t home cause he was gone to a fire. The boys knew how petrified I was of heights. I packed my food, clothes and water and off I went to Stuart Tower. I didn!t pack any gloves! I climbed the tower and literally had welts on my hands from holding on so tight. Owen Price came from Fishing Lakes Fire Cache, he showed me how to operate the fire finder and the PT 300 radio. He left 15 minutes later, I was on my own.

Later on that same day, Vince went over to Quinn!s and said, !Maybe Mom climbed the tower, but you!ll probably have to get a helicopter to get her down.! Well, he wasn!t too far out of line cause when 8:00 PM arrived I had to go down. When I opened the cupola door it looked like I was looking into a blender. I closed the door, sat down and had two cigarettes, thinking !Rose Marie you!ve got to do it, cause I had no more water or lunch left.! I didn!t even take a sweater up with me cause it was a beautiful warm day. The next time I opened the door I did not look down. I anchored myself on the step and told myself, !every step I take is one step closer to the ground.! I was so thrilled I made it, I kissed the ground and said, !Thank you Lord, I did it.!

That same summer, being a casual, I had the opportunity to work at **Big Sandy, Narrow Hills, Ridge, Stuart and Round Hill**. Each and every site is so unique and you can!t help but be amazed at Mother Nature!s beauty. Round Hill Tower was my first permanent site and still is my favorite. The year I was up at round hill and on July 6th. I got caught up in the tower by an electrical storm. Not being afraid of thunder or lightning ,I sat it out through all the storms. This one storm started at 16:30 hrs {4:30 PM} and lasted until 08:00 hrs { 8:00 AM} the next morning. It was like being on a ! Roller Coaster Ridelat the exhibition. I put my winter parka on and sat on the floor at one point. I thought for sure the roof or even the whole cupola would go flying in the strong winds that came with the storm.

The radio!s were down and the only one I could communicate with was Narrow Hills Tower. Sheryl was kind enough to stay up with me until 9:30 PM. Finally at 10:00 PM I counted 37 seconds between strikes and ventured to go down. Hoping to Get Down To The Tree Line before the next strike. I made it all the way and was ready to leave the yard when I saw lights coming. Not being home by 9:30 PM Clyde and Quinn came out to rescue me. It was a good thing they came because there were 2 trees that had fallen across the road. They brought a chain saw with them, so we all made it home safe.

!Since that storm, I have learned to respect Thunder and Lightning !. While up in the tower there is plenty of time to collect your thoughts. I love rocks, so I have brought some into the tower yard and planted a few Lilacs along with a few flower beds. I love what I!m doing and thank Mr Gerald Fremont for giving me the opportunity to do it. When I look out the cupola window and see billions of

trees, I compare them to human beings- there's billions of us too and we are all so unique and different. *The Wonders of Mother Nature* are so beautiful. I call my Tower ! *My Heavenly Haven!* where I enjoy *Total Peace & Serenity*. I love having company stop in and to pass the time. I do a little knitting up in the tower. For every lady that can climb the tower I give her a dish towel. I've had people from as far away as Mexico stop in for a visit. Some of my visitors included the gentlemen who have helped build the towers, some who used to be observers. I find their stories so interesting I could listen for hours and hours. I have had the preschool play ground come out, and I watch them romp around in the yard. I hand out rulers, pencils, and garbage bags along with Smokey The Bear pamphlets courtesy of S.E.R.M. **SASKATCHEWAN ENVIRONMENT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.**

In closing I have met some of the observers and even to the ones I haven't met, *Thank You for being so polite and courteous.* It's also nice hearing from the helicopters, I'm still looking forward to a helicopter ride.

Happy Days Everyone!, Ridge Tower Rose.

Submitted By: Rose Marie Mitchell Candle Lake, Sask.