

Craig and Krispi Staude: carving out a living

Not everybody in the San Juans is retired and wealthy. Young families on limited incomes who love the islands must be ingenious in their lifestyles to make ends meet, for island living can be expensive.

Craig and Krispi Staude came to San Juan in September, 1976, when they both had jobs at the University of Washington Labs in Friday Harbor. He was in grad school and was a research assistant to Prof. Carl Nyblade in the college of Oceans and

Fisheries studying amphipods (shrimp-like animals we call beach hoppers). Krispi, a graduate in clothing, textiles and art, was hired by the labs as a marine technologist.

Like so many others, they fell in love with the islands and bought five acres at Three Meadows, an area of forest and marsh northwest of Friday Harbor. "We bought the property for less than most people are now paying in rent," Craig says over a fresh cup of hot coffee. They own their five

acres plus shares in 220 acres of common land which is available for all the residents of Three Meadows to use.

Then they began to build their log cabin. It's not finished yet, but it is livable and the plans for finishing are beautiful. Craig and Krispi cut down the trees for their cabin from their land and from the common land. They winched the logs out from the forest and dragged them behind their VW van to their building site. Then they peeled the bark from them by hand. They work quickly as a pair, Krispi handling the "spud" and Craig holding the log steady with a peavey as she does the "spudding." Every log for the cabin has been done this way—and the cabin is only half-finished. There's plenty left to keep them busy.

On daughter Sarah's second birthday the family moved into the unfinished home. "We didn't even have a door," says 4½-year-old Sarah proudly.

The energetic couple keeps busy, just trying to maintain themselves.

He is now a full-time student at the labs with a part-time job for support. His job includes giving tours to summer visitors at the labs, serving as a diving buddy in scuba research, maintaining boats and aquaria, creating a museum of marine plants, plus writing his dissertation.

"And building a house and raising a child," Krispi adds with a laugh.

Kristi does her share. She helped found the Wee Care Day Care Center in town a little over a year ago. "I'm a

founding mother," she chuckles. She serves as treasurer of the day care center and right now she is president of the Three Meadows Corporation.

But she also works as the winter librarian at the Friday Harbor labs, one hour a day. She's been reupholstering furniture there and she maintains tanks at the labs. She also serves as a lab helper, helping researchers by doing routine work to free them for more critical things. She does typing, too. She even teaches quilting classes now and then.

And even at that, Craig says there are some months they can barely squeak by on his research assistantship, especially when the ever-increasing tuition bill arrives. "We just can't cover everything and must borrow from relatives," he says.

It's not easy, but the Staudes, both in their early 30s, don't complain.

"I can't imagine raising a child somewhere else than here," Krispi says. "There are some cultural drawbacks, and this isn't the paradise some people think it is, but it's certainly better than other places."

Craig is glad they bought their property when they did. "We simply couldn't afford it now and we couldn't afford to build a standard type of house," he adds. "People with lower incomes have been priced out of the housing market in the San Juans. We have managed to cut building costs significantly by doing nearly all the work ourselves—clearing, concrete work, tree felling and log preparation,

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Charlie Nash, postmaster

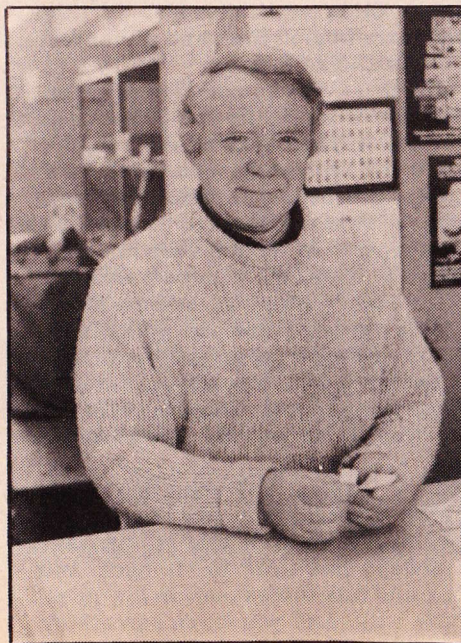
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hadn't rescued them. This happens sometimes." He borrowed the Appersons' boat and untangled the exhausted birds.

Charlie says he has seen eagles teach their young, and has watched them at play—sometimes chasing seagulls, sometimes teasing otters. "But I don't get to watch them as much as I'd like," he added.

There are more than 40 active nests in the county "that I know of," and there were more than 300 eagles spotted during the winter count this year.

"There are more nests and hard-to-find golden eagle nests in the woods. Actually, they're not so hard to find. They just take time," Charlie concludes. And being port commissioner, postmaster, fisherman and everything else leaves him very little of that precious commodity.





Krispi and Craig Staude tackle one of the big logs for their San Juan Island home as daughter Sarah holds down her end.

Jo Bailey photo

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wiring, plumbing, etc. Of course, many of our friends helped along the way at log-peeling parties, log raisings and so forth. Krispi's parents have been particularly helpful, coming to stay for weeks at a time."

"This is by no means the easy way," Craig continues. "What you save in money is certainly paid for in

emotions. You no longer have any leisure time. There's always something you should be doing. I think it's fair to say that when we do try to juggle as many things as we do, something must suffer. Progress on our house proceeds at an abysmally slow rate. There have been times when my research has also been shorted. It can be very discouraging.

"Yet we take consolation in know-

ing we are doing the best that we can, and that someday we will have a lot to show for it.

"Five years down the road when I have my Ph.D., when our garden and orchard are producing, and we finally have a real bedroom of our own, I think we will say with conviction that, yes, it's all been worth it."

The Staudes have power and water in their log cabin, but they are using

wood heat and have an attached greenhouse which gives them some heat gain to help cut down ever-escalating energy costs.

They grow some of their vegetables and economize whenever and however they can. They have a composting toilet as both a water-saving device and to gain compost. Right now it serves as an elegant throne, curtained off behind the refrigerator.

A handsome, heavy Dutch door they built themselves contains an elegant stained glass window by Maggie Van Camp.

The Staudes are rich in resources, humor and love. They are bright young people who feel that what they are going through to live in the islands is definitely "worth it, simply for the privilege of living and working surrounded by such natural beauty."

Mac Greeley, schoolmaster

Visitors on Stuart are likely to encounter a gangly, redheaded friendly young man in a plaid shirt and boots, most likely with a gaggle of kids tagging along. He's Mac Greeley, the island schoolteacher.

Mac is the first to say "Welcome" to Stuart Island, but he also adds strings: have a good time on Stuart, but watch your wake as you enter the harbors—"If you don't, you risk an attack from frenzied locals."

Mac has lived on Stuart for over four years with his wife Lee and son Tofer and he loves it. "We're

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