

Meet our new Mackie Lake House Manager!

With spring on its way, new beginnings still happen for a lot of people. It is with great pleasure that I get to introduce myself to those of you who know and love Mackie Lake House.



My name is **Valerie Cherwoniak** and I have begun my position as the new manager for Mackie Lake House. I'm very excited to begin this new challenge and all the possibilities that it offers. It's a more difficult time in our world for sure, but that does not dampen the excitement (or bit of nervousness) I feel as I take on my responsibility in taking care of this treasured Heritage Home and grounds.

Working at Mackie Lake House takes me back to my roots. I'm not "historically old" yet but I grew up in rural northern Alberta and until I was seven we did not have power or running water. I remember hating to go out to the outhouse, having to run out to get my own water out of the well for washing (sheesh... Mackie House had running water.... how progressive of them) gathering eggs and watching my mom cook. She had a glorious black and white wood stove and to this day the memory smell of the bread baking, mingled with wood smoke, makes my mouth water.



We were a totally self-sufficient family farm and had a lot of chores to do no matter what our age group. Cows were milked, eggs gathered, butter churned, huge gardens of fresh vegetables and berries but the best of all was the homemade ice cream. Yummmmmmm...

I come to Mackie House with a strong business background, mostly in marketing and sales. My most recent position was as General Manager of a larger company in Edmonton. My husband and I have owned a small house in Vernon for 10 years now and have spent as much time as we possibly could in the Okanagan Valley. Our goal was to get here and enjoy another phase of our lives as soon as we could. How wonderful that those dreams are happening. My husband was a senior music producer/recording engineer at CBC Radio in Edmonton for many years. We immersed ourselves in the music, arts, and culture scene very early and loved everything Edmonton had to offer. The companies I worked for over the years were very supportive both financially and time wise with non-profit organizations. As a part of their management team I co-ordinated events and was very interactive with these organizations. One of our sons was in Irish dance, competing in local feis', working hard to reach national and world competition level (bringing us into the world of dance). What a busy and fun life we've led so far!

I have big shoes to fill here at Mackie Lake House. Christine Kashuba made the decision to begin the next phase of her life and will be retiring soon. I am sure it will take me a while to match her knowledge and capabilities, of all things, at Mackie Lake House. I am so glad our board members have



allowed us time to work together till the end of May. And although we've closed the house and grounds to the public, Christine, Ruth and I spend time talking remotely every day and/ or only one of us actually working at the house on any given day. I also feel very fortunate that Ruth will be staying on with Mackie Lake House and I am sure that she will be keeping me on the right track!

With Covid-19 and the extraordinary measures we are all dealing with at the moment I feel sadness and some frustration that we have had to cancel school tours and other events at Mackie House, but I have lots to do in the meantime..... Immersing myself in the history of Coldstream, the history of Mackie Lake House's three families..... reading and learning. I love the stories, how things are being preserved at Mackie Lake House, and cannot wait to open up and get our events going again!

There has not been the opportunity to get to know all of our volunteers yet, but I certainly do understand your importance and the contributions you make. Thank you so much for all you do and I hope to meet every one of you soon. If any of you have friends or family that would be willing to help out once we get back to normal please ask them to come see me.

It has been a tough start to our year but as Mackie House has persevered, so will our Foundation. We will be keeping you updated as to our opening status thru this newsletter and our website. Stay tuned!

My husband and I are looking forward to being part of this wonderful community. New beginnings..... Once we're open to the public again, please drop in to meet me. Until then, do all you can do to stay healthy.



All the best,

Valerie