

Blue Moose Cabins

by Susan Urhausen

History

The Kettle Falls Inn was built in 1954 by Harris W. Coone. When it was built, it was called the Double H Motel. It retained that name until Harry Speropulos bought it in 1995. At that time he changed the name to its present moniker, Kettle Falls Inn. All of the history of this motel is contained on a most unlikely object. It is not in a book, it is on a piece of 2 x 4 scrap from the original construction. Coone wrote the words "This building was built by Harris W. Coone (owner) 1954 + 1954 completed" on a piece of wood and put it in a drawer. When he sold the motel to the Rupert's in 1966, the wood remained. As the motel changed ownership over the years, names and dates of ownership got added to the chunk of wood. When improvements and additions were made, that got noted as well. When I asked Debbie Robinson when the place was built, she ran and got this piece of history to show me. It still has a home in a drawer, but is perhaps the single most historically significant item in this motel. The owner transitions are visible in the pictures shown here with this article.

Motel

The Kettle Falls Inn has twenty-four rooms. Three rooms have kitchenettes, two rooms have three beds, and remaining rooms have one and two beds. All rooms come with a refrigerator, microwave and coffee pot. All rooms have TV's with expanded cable service, and high speed Internet. Every room is easily accessible, all are on ground level. There are three separate building units at the Kettle Falls Inn, and each unit has a BBQ available for use by the guests. There are laundry facilities available as well as a two person hot tub. Outside of the rooms, small tables and chairs are provided for guests to get fresh air. Each table has an ashtray for smokers to use however; six of the rooms are designated for smokers. (At the time of this interview, all six were occupied.)

Robinson states that 'kids under twelve stay free, but pets can for a small fee'. The charge for pets is \$10/day. The Kettle Falls Inn offers discounts to AAA and AARP members as well as weekly discounts for those staying weeks at a time. Cash is accepted as payment as well as major credit cards; VISA, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, and Diner's Club. Parking is a plus according to Robinson; guests can park right outside their rooms. It is the most centrally located motel that Kettle Falls has, bordered on one side by a restaurant (KC's) and the other by the Kettle Falls Liquor Store. This has been a huge bonus to many who have called and asked about the Inn's proximity to other businesses. It is also within easy walking distance of two grocery stores and several other restaurants. In other words, it's a travelers dream.

In recent years, work was done to update the interiors of each room. Attention has been paid to keep things fresh, with new carpets and recently two new heating and AC units. Manager Robinson states that The Kettle Falls Inn might not be fancy, but it is always very clean. The Robinsons are assisted at the Inn by Crystal Pelissier, who steps in when the Robinsons need some time away for a weekend here or there. Harry Speropulos, the owner, visits five times or so in a year. He has a full-time job with BPA.

Conclusion

It is clear when talking to Debbie Robinson that she loves her job. She is clearly a people person and has great fun in greeting newcomers to our area and the Kettle Falls Inn. A favorite of hers is the Walleye Tournaments. Her guests for these two big sporting events are so regular, she said she can basically just flip the same pages between the two months; it's all the same teams. She keeps in touch with some of these teams and mentioned to me that recently she was notified by the family of the passing of one of her regular guests from the Walleye Tourneys. That takes a personal touch.

To contact the Kettle Falls Inn, call 738-6514. It is located at 205 E. 3rd St. (Highway 395). The mailing address is PO Box 398, Kettle Falls, WA 99141, or by website, www.kettlefallsinnmotel.com.

The Blue Moose Cabins have been a fixture on Highway 395 north of Barney's Junction for some time now, but the owners, David and Dani Bull are a more recent addition. They have been the owner/operators since August of 2006. They both came up here from Colorado, but David was originally from Australia. He moved to Colorado in 2002, the couple was married the following year. Like most 'imports' to this area, their tale of relocation makes for an interesting story.

The Transition

A number of events brought the Bulls to their little slice of peace and quiet on the border of Ferry and Stevens Counties. Dani's son had married a young woman who's family was from this area. He had shared with the Bull's that one day he and his wife planned on returning to the northeastern corner of Washington. As any parent who has seen one of their children move away from home recognizes, that started the thought process. It wasn't long before they were considering scoping this area out for possibilities. Another event painted their decisions. On a Friday, their 1st anniversary, David was diagnosed with cancer. At that time, they had both been working in or for government and felt like a big change was just the ticket. Peace and quiet and a more relaxed life style were at the top of their list. From that time, a move to rural Washington seemed like the right thing to do.

In March of 2006, they both travelled to Colville and stayed with their daughter-in-law's Grandmother, Lois Rhodes, as they searched for a piece of property to call their own. The original plan was to find the land and build a log home followed eventually by several rental cabins. The Blue Moose Cabins were listed for sale and once they saw them figured they would be ahead of the game. The process was begun, with them slated to arrive and take possession around August of 2006. After the paperwork was signed and the deal was nearly done, the Bull's received another round of bad news; Dani was diagnosed with cancer. For a short time, they considered cancelling, but decided to move. The commitment was even greater to change their life style after the dual diagnoses. Life was different, their outlook was different. So, one week after Dani's cancer surgery, they were en route to Washington and residency at the Blue Moose Cabins.

Initially, David was up by himself as Dani returned to Colorado while her youngest son finished his senior year in high school. Eventually, seven of the Bull's extended families moved to this general area from Colorado.

A Philosophy of Hospitality

David's background from his work in Australia was in what he refers to as the 'hospitality' industry; motels, hotels, bars and restaurants. He had worked for the Sheraton, a five star operation in Australia for most of his working life before he moved to the United States. His philosophy of management with the Cabins and really anything within the tourism/travel industry is to give a guest what they expect plus five percent.

Getting feedback from early guests is exactly how the Bull's looked to improve the Blue Moose Cabins. As each guest came and went, they would ask what they liked, what they didn't like, and how they would like to see things change and improve. One of their first guests when asked about his night's sleep responded, "It was like sleeping in a taco." The mattress had folded up on either side surrounding the guest leaving him with a less than good night's sleep. One of the first orders of business was to replace the mattresses. Another challenge from a guest was to try sitting on one of the couches. Improvements like replacing the couch were made and that is something that they are committed to, making sure that the cabins are comfortable and inviting. They feel that most people have a difficult time sleeping in a strange bed, so the Bull's make a special effort in keeping the beds in prime shape.

Blueford and Other Wildlife

Blueford is the resident Blue Moose. Blueford came years after the name. The Bull's aren't sure how the name came about, but once the decision was made to buy the property, David happened upon a cast aluminum statue of a moose while

touring Wyoming. Dani was still in Colorado at that time. Upon returning from Wyoming, he saw the statue again in Deer Park where the man who was selling metal statuary was located. He purchased the statue, brought him home and by the end of the day had him painted blue. Blueford is quite popular with guests. Many a visitor has gone home with pictures posed next to the life-sized moose. The Bull's say that once, even a bovine bull who had escaped his pen was seen checking Blueford out. Blueford is always dressed for the holidays with a big red ribbon.

In addition to Blueford, real moose have been seen around the cabins, as have turkeys, deer and even a bear. While they haven't actually seen a cougar, they have found tracks on the property. Finding Blueford's statue changed a plan the Bull's had for décor in the cabins. Initially, due to David's homeland, the cabins were to have Australian themes. Blueford cemented the Blue Moose Cabins' name, and the interior décor.

Three Cabins and A House

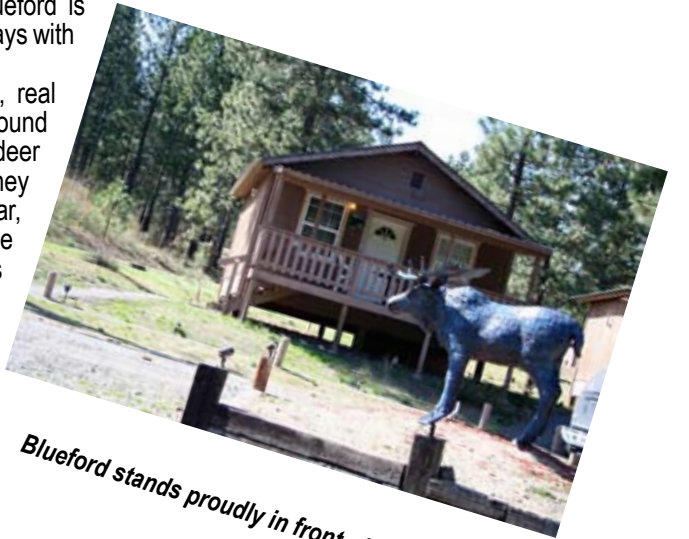
Blue Moose Cabins consists of one house, three cabins and the office, which has living quarters that houses the Bull's. When the Bull's first moved to their property, they lived in the house. More recently they moved into the living quarters in the office, and have, in the past rented the house. Soon the house will be available as a rental like the cabins and can house up to 9-10 people. One cabin has a queen bed with a couch with a double pull-out bed. The other two cabins have a queen bed, twin bed and a couche that house a twin pull-out bed. All cabins have Direct TV in the summer, full baths, Wi-Fi Internet, DVD players and fully furnished kitchenettes. The décor in all three cabins is moose themed, not necessarily blue moose though. They are located next to one another, but have no common wall, a benefit above a typical motel. All cabins have a front porch area furnished with table and chairs for enjoying the weather and view. Lake Roosevelt is visible from the porches of the cabins and from other areas on and adjacent to the Blue Moose property. The biggest misconception, state the Bull's, is that the cabins are rustic. They are fully modern, but located away from the city center. Kettle Falls is only a short drive away, about five miles. For those wanting a quiet out of the way place to stay, Blue Moose Cabins might just be the ticket.

Mooring on Lake Roosevelt is available to guests at the Blue Moose Cabins. Many staying with the Bull's have checked in, gone to Kettle Falls Marina to launch their boat, and then moored it for convenience below the cabins. It is a short hike from the cabins to the beach area. In the winter, there is ample room for sledding, cross-country skiing and snow-shoeing (this past winter notwithstanding). The Bull's have many hunters and huckleberry pickers that return to them year after year.

The Blue Moose Cabins have become quite popular with family reunions. They are already booked for a few this summer. There is ample room for these gathering families to set up tables, tents, chairs and whatever they need to have a great time. For the hunters, the back porch off the office has become a convenient, sheltered place for bagged deer to be hung. Bull hopes to have a better hanging shed built soon that would be completely enclosed.



The Blue Moose Cabins



Blueford stands proudly in front of Cabin One



Daily challenge is to meet a guests expectations plus 10%

Contact and Details

The Blue Moose Cabins don't have firm hours of operation, but in general work around a check-in after 3 PM, check-out by 11 AM guideline. Payment methods are cash, MasterCard or VISA, and checks. Pets are welcome for a fee of \$10 per stay, whether that is one day or more. Senior and government discounts are available. Group special rates are negotiable. Blue Moose Cabins is located at 24387 Hwy 395 N. and can be contacted at 738-6950, or by visiting their website www.bluemoosecabins.com.

Conclusion

The Blue Moose Cabins is a lovely, quiet, out of the way place to stay when visiting this area. The Bull's are friendly and engaging; many of their guests return year after year to stay at the cabins with Blueford. The relationships they have built have resulted in friendships, occasional gifts of moose-themed items for the cabins and Fosters beer (Australian beer) for David. Regular guests from the west side of the state have been known to bring the Bull's fresh crab and other seafood. They have couples coming from Colville quite often who just want to 'get away'.

In addition to the Cabins, Dani works full time in Colville. They also operate Blue Moose Design Services, which encompasses a number of talents they have. Dani offers professional photography for portraits, graduations, weddings, etc. David designs websites and is well versed in all things graphic as the graphics in the Kettle Falls Focus can testify. To see the work they offer through Blue Moose Design Services, simply go to www.bluemoosecabins.com and follow the links to their other website.