

## Mike Lynch Talks about Viking Village

Sometime between before 1965, Hugh F. (Mike) Lynch became the third person to buy a lot in what was named the Viking Village subdivision in the Sunday River Skiway property. By 1965, there were 10 new vacation homes in Viking Village

Mike calls his initial connection with Sunday River sort of an accident. In the early 1960's Mike was a Sugarloaf skier who lived in Portland. On ski weekends he would meet five others at the A&P parking lot on Forest Avenue very early in the morning. From the parking lot they would head for Sugarloaf. After a number of trips, Mike said that he was getting a little tired of the long trips. He started investigating the possibility of buying a lot in the Sugarloaf vicinity. He soon discovered that buying a lot was almost impossible because only lease arrangements were available.

In the meantime Sunday River Skiway had gotten going and had added a chair lift to its skiing facilities. Mike made a few ski trip visits to Sunday River with another friend. They found that at that time, around 1963, Sunday River's ski trails did not hold the same challenge as Sugarloaf's but it was much closer to Portland and lots were available to purchase in the new Viking Village.

Mike said one weekend while he was at Sunday River skiing he walked out of the base lodge to the Sunri Ski Shop about 50 yards away and talked to shop owner, Paul Kailey. Mike said he sounded out Kailey about buying property here and was told that, "Sure you can do that – just beyond the parking lot there are plenty of lots for sale." Soon Mike connected with Norm Greig who was the real estate agent for the Viking lots at that time and a sale was closed. For a quarter acre lot the mid 1960's Mike paid \$650; in 2005 the town of Newry revalued all real estate in the town and this one quarter acre lot was valued at \$118,700.

Next summer, Mike began what would be the third house built in the village. He built a floor platform and pitched a tent over it for his weekend accommodations while he worked on the excavation, clearing and foundation. He said one weekend after driving from Portland he turned the corner to the road to his lot and found the road blocked in front of his tent house with a large stack of concrete blocks. During the week, unknown to him, a semi had delivered his blocks. He spent all weekend lugging the blocks to his foundation site.

In the fall before his house was closed in he rented a bunk in the bunk room at the Sunday River Inn. At that time, Ed and Julie Daye owned the inn which Ed had built after the Skiway opened. (Ed is still (2005) doing finished cabinet and carpenter work for Mike.)

In the early years of Sunday River Skiway, a number of interested observers considered the corporation's financial picture somewhere between shaky or desperate. In exchange for buying 100 shares of Sunday River stock, he got a lifetime skiing pass, which he says turned out to be a very good investment. He recalls that the next year someone was almost going door to door pushing 20 year ski passes that were transferable.

## The Bethel Journals—Bethel Maine History—Mike Lynch at Sunday River

In the late 1970's Mike retired from his job in Portland. He moved to his house in Viking Village, became an dedicated golfer, played often at the Bethel Inn's golf course, and decorated his front lawn with the village's only golf pin and flag.

As Viking Village grew, the skiway officials found dealing with all the owners as individuals somewhat difficult and time consuming so a village homeowners association was formed. Mike thinks that this association was a benefit to all. Water supply was one of the main problems that came up as the ski area built condos and created many new water users. At first village water came from a well drilled at a site above the elevation of the village. The village water system consisted of a gravity feed system that used pipes of increasingly smaller diameter. At the top of the village there was inch and one half pipe and at the bottom elevation it was only three quarters inch. Mike said that he had good water pressure but as more users connected to the well in the same aquifer and more wells for the condos were added, supply and pressure dropped to that point that a new well was demanded. The new well was drilled at a site and elevation lower than the village. It had plenty of water, more than the first well, but the pipe system had to be replaced due to the flow restrictions resulting from the original layout.

In the 1980's or early 1990's, another issue came up due to the lots sizes in the village being considered under sized lots according to state and town real estate standards. After prolonged study and negotiation, the decision was made to "grandfather" the lots as is. The roads in the village are still private roads. The village's biggest yearly expense is snow plowing and sanding. Village roads are not plowed by the town as the roads, dating back to the early years of the skiway, do not meet town specifications. Actually, the only town service that covers the village is fire protection by the town's fire department. The general feeling of the village residents, as expressed by Mike, seems to be that the town incurs very little service expense for the town's real estate tax income.

In 2005, Viking Village has a town land value of \$4.6 millions and building value of \$6.4 millions that added \$91,800 to the town's real estate tax income coming from 44 property lots. Of the 44 tax producing lots in Viking Village, Mike Lynch is the only taxpayer who is resident of Newry.