Lisa Sporleder has been doing a lot of the labor on her new house.

Building A House On A Bathroom Budget

Q & A with Home Builder Lisa Sporleder

Lisa Sporleder, an analyst technician in IT’s Production Services, has spent the summer building a new house for herself in Ester, and On the Move decided to ask her a few questions about the project.

How long did you live in your old place in Ester?

I moved into the little cabin in May of 1990, nine months after I moved to Alaska.

How did you decide to tear down the old place, and build a new one?

After 12 years, I decided I was ready for plumbing, and was going to add a bathroom onto the original cabin. After taking off the arctic entryway, the bottom of the cabin was exposed. It was rotten. After digging out a few other locations around the cabin, I saw that 12 to 18 inches of the bottom of the cabin were rotten all the way around. I figured I was too smart a woman to add a good addition onto a rotting building, especially when that rotting building had sawdust insulation, bees in the walls, and carpenter ants in the roof! I made the decision to tear down and build new on Memorial Day weekend.

Have you had any help from friends?

The whole thing started in May with tearing down the arctic entryway. The month of June was spent packing up all my belongings, getting a new power pole set in the yard so that I’d have electricity during the building phase, and getting people lined up.

One friend with a backhoe did the excavation. He also let me use his Home Architect program to design my house. A (continued on back)
Building a House continued
neighbour with a dirt-working business brought the gravel for under the foundation. One friend, whom I’ve known longer than I’ve lived in Alaska (I visited here three months before I moved here, and met him at that time), is my carpenter, and he’s doing a wonderful job. It’s slow going, but I couldn’t ask for a more plumb, square, or sturdy building. Another friend is a residential electrician. Another friend helped walk the walls when the trusses arrived. Lots of friends helped with packing and moving boxes and furniture. I’m the general contractor and laborer in this merry venture.

How much did you decide you had to have done before the first snow, and are you there?

Well, since the first snow has fallen, and I’m still not in the house, no, I’m not there! All I’m hoping for is to get the house heatable, which means insulation and vapor barrier, and I’ll be moving in. The wiring still needs to be finished before that can happen.

Are you going to be comfortable this winter?

Comfortable is a pretty nebulous term! But I will certainly be satisfied with just getting in the house.

Are you going to finish next summer, or is it a longer-term project?

It is a longer-term project because I choose not to pay a bank for 30 years for the privilege of getting it all done at once. Basically, I’m building the shell of the house on a bathroom budget! It will take several years to complete, and I’m okay with that. After all, it’s the Alaska way!

Are you doing all the work, carpentry, electrical, plumbing yourself?

My friends and me. Actually, the friend I don’t have is a plumber. That’s kind of a big deal, though. The ironic part of this project is that it started in an effort to get running water, and now that I’ve built the building, I can’t afford to run the water line from the well or put in the septic tank this year! But the way I’ve designed the house, all the plumbing is on interior walls, so the lack of plumbing doesn’t keep me from getting the place insulated and moving in. I’ve lived without plumbing for 12 years.....what’s another year or two?

Transitions...

Martin Miller has accepted the Senior IT Trainer position. Martin’s past performance combined with the increase in responsibility will mean great things for ITS and the Help Desk and Training Department.

Joe Trubacz, who has been serving as associate director of the statewide Office of Budget and Institutional Research, has assumed the duties of his new position as Director of Financial Services at UAF. Trubacz also will continue to direct UAF’s office of Planning, Analysis and Institutional Research.

126 Employees Attend Career Planning Sessions

A total of 126 UA employees attended the Professional Development orientation sessions on career planning, and, to date, 60 employees have signed up for the Career Power training. Program director Melissa Hill says she’s now busy with the next steps, evaluating calendars and scheduling training dates.

“With the large employee interest in Career Power, manager preparation is a high priority,” Hill said. “Managers will need to be ready when their employees come to them for career coaching and job enrichment opportunities within the department.”

One UAA employee who attended an orientation session, said, “I have already learned more about who I am as a person as well as an employee. I hope that we can get this program out to everyone.”

For additional information about the Professional Development Program, contact Melissa Hill at x1832 or by email at melissa.hill@alaska.edu.

For Sale or Trade

Send your items for sale or trade by e-mail to: bob.miller@alaska.edu

From Bess Rounds, 474-6691: Do you need a wood stove to keep your cabin warm this winter? Beautiful, antique “Ben Franklin” type of stove for sale. $250. Keep your feathered friends happy: large bird cage on rollers. Will accommodate macaw, cockatoo or amazon, $175 obo. Brand new large accordion-style folding doors, 10’x 20’ oak with rails, 3800 obo, 8’x 15’ mahogany with rails, 2500 obo. Large metal quonset hut frame, approx. 20’x 30’, perfect for chicken coop or cover for horse barn or greenhouse! $400 obo. Beautiful sheepskin coat from Germany, worn only once, women’s size 8, $340 obo.

From Adela Batin, 455-6691: Are you doing all the work, carpentry, electrical, plumbing, or do you need a woodstove to keep your cabin warm this winter? Beautiful, antique “Ben Franklin” type of stove for sale. $250. Keep your feathered friends happy: large bird cage on rollers. Will accommodate macaw, cockatoo or amazon, $175 obo. Brand new large accordion-style folding doors, 10’x 20’ oak with rails, 3800 obo, 8’x 15’ mahogany with rails, 2500 obo. Large metal quonset hut frame, approx. 20’x 30’, perfect for chicken coop or cover for horse barn or greenhouse! $400 obo. Beautiful sheepskin coat from Germany, worn only once, women’s size 8, $340 obo.

From Mike Brase, at 474-7989
1994 Nissan Pathfinder SUV. 4WD, 4 DR, AT/PW/PD, cruise, AM/FM cassette, extra studs on rims, fully loaded. Even heated mirrors! Great family rig and sporty enough for college student. 67K miles, asking $5850 obo.

From Mike Gardner, at 590-9343:
Yamaha P-200 Professional Electronic Keyboard 88-weight, touch sensitive keys; MIDI; piano instruction software; and more, $1,000.

From Kristin Harshman 479-6668; 590-0877: Looking to house sit. Do you need or know of anyone who needs a housesitter? Reliable, great references. Available anytime but preferably after the month of December.

On the Move is Online

Go to: www.alaska.edu/opa/onthemove

Deadline for the next issue is Monday, November 5th by the end of the day.

Spotlight will resume with the next issue.