

Lookout Memories- Randy Krause's story (*as told to Dusty King, October 7, 2025*)



Randy and Tom Krause met at Lookout #4 in 1966. Tom had been living with his parents on their farm in South Dakota when he was drafted into the US Coast Guard. After boot camp, he was stationed at Lookout #4. Randy's parents had a cabin on Charlotte Beach when she met Tom. There were no public or private phones on Neebish Island at that time, so to contact friends one had to use the connecting phones at the Lookout Stations. Tom was on duty at #4 when Randy needed to make one of those calls. This was their first meeting. They were married a year later.

The following are some stories he shared with Randy that happened during his time at the lookout station:

There were four guys stationed at the Lookout at all times. Three of them worked 8 hour shifts and one had the day off.

One foggy night Tom was on duty when the fog horn was required. A neighbor that lived nearby the lookout had been bothered by the noise of the very loud horn, and yelled out a few times. However, Tom didn't have permission to turn it off. A few minutes later, she took a shotgun and shot at the lookout blasting through the window. Tom dove to the floor. He remembers beebees falling around him. He immediately called Base Sault and reported "Lookout 4 is under fire, I need permission to turn off the foghorn". He got it.

One day one of the "Coasties", Big Otto, was on duty when the lake freighter Phillip Minch lost its steering and was headed straight at the Lookout. This must have been terrifying because Big Otto called the ship shouting "look out, look out for Lookout 4". He then called Base Sault to report "I'm abandoning my post!" The ship ran aground without damage to the lookout.

There was a family stationed at the range light house on the north end of Neebish Island. The wife was pregnant and attended prenatal classes with Randy at Kincheloe Air Force Base. Randy remembers the nurse giving her a booklet on how to deliver the baby at home. It was often impossible to get off the island and to the mainland in the winter months.

Tom retired from the Coast Guard in 1969. He and Randy moved to South Dakota to attend South Dakota State University. After graduating they returned to the area. Tom found employment at Kincheloe Air Force Base. and they made Barbeau their home. They were married 52 years until Tom died of Covid 19 in 2021. Randy still lives at the house they built and has built a business of short term rentals of a number of cabins she and Tom renovated through the years called "Sunny Shores Cabins LLC."