

# Lumberjack's Lady Finds 'The Simple Life'

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Can a sophisticated blonde who has been a hostess at the White House, written for NBC in Hawaii, rubbed elbows with the Jet Set in Europe and survived the wall-to-wall jungle of Constitution Plaza ever be happy trapped in the woods as wife of Jack the Lumberjack? Ask Connie Burke Galanek - that is if you can find her bouncing on a bulldozer through dense underbrush at a place called Wildwood in Tolland, Mass.

"I really feel for this bulldozer," said Connie pulling up her sweat socks. "After Jack and I met at a cocktail party we had our first date at Wildwood riding the thing for four hours while he plowed roads. I emerged so bruised my citified rump could have passed for Picasso's Blue Period."

The girl had guts. After graduating from bulldozer to snowplow she managed to tear Jack Galanek away from Wildwood for the first Sunday in six years so they could be married.

"We had this very romantic honeymoon touring competitive second-home communities in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. Not to mention meeting swingers like two old ladies living in an old Maine church converted into a cottage. Jack almost bought the place, complete, with cushioned pews in the living room, and a toilet where the parson's pulpit once stood.

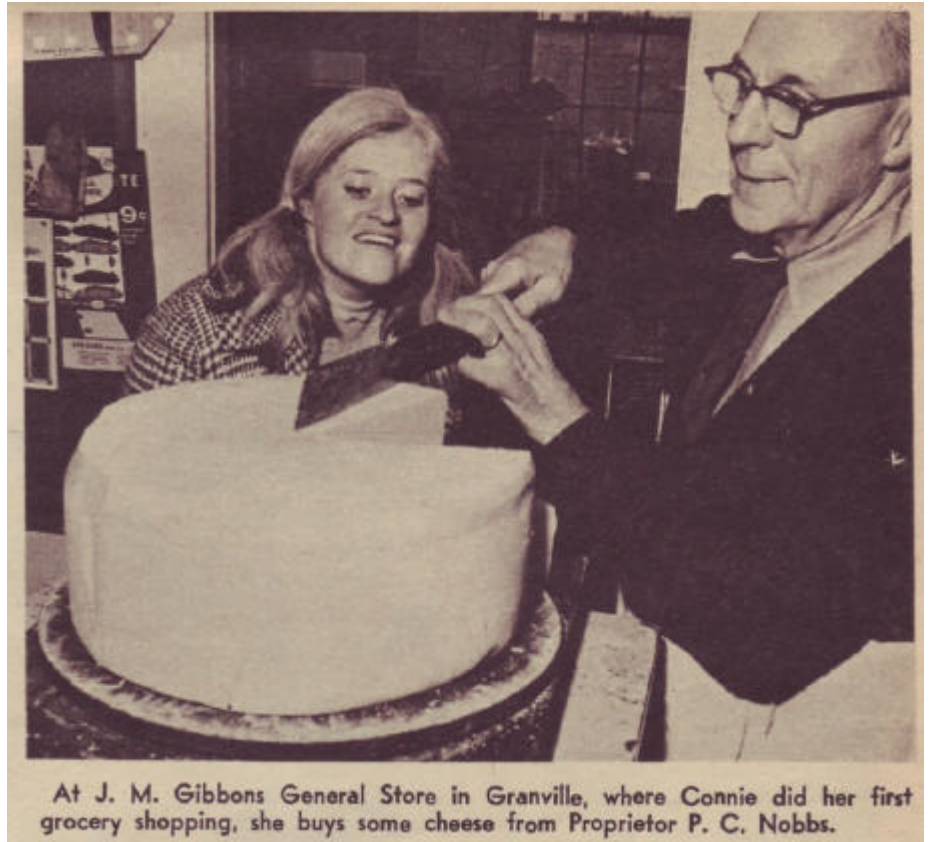
Connie knew more about bulldozers than kitchen equipment when she was dating Jack in the timberland he was developing as a vacation site.

"Jack was the original Peck's Bad Boy before he mellowed," she said. "He attended Williston Academy in Easthampton, Mass., but it didn't help much. Turning down college, he got a job in one of his father's

logging camps in Maine. Then he was drafted. The Army had a strange effect on Jack, who has the distinction of making Pfc. five times,

missing several troop ships, and touring first class on the U.S.S. United States for a long, long time because of mixed up orders.

In 1964, while cruising timber for his father's lumber company, he fell in love with 740 acres of land which became Wildwood. He did a complete turnabout from his wild days and really dug into turning the hills into a fine vacation area. For two years, he worked building a 30-acre beaver pond into a 75-acre stream and spring-fed lake, filling it with fish and blocking pollution by outlawing power boats. He surveyed the land, laid roads around big trees he loved, and planned every inch of the place before he opened it to buyers. Today, there are over 260 families among its year-round vacation residents, and Jack is still plugging along on a shoestring budget that bigshot vacation corporations would call lunch money."



Connie, whose 28 years before marriage were spent in some pretty glamorous places, once passed up a chance to be governess to Eunice Kennedy Shriver's brood. It was right after graduating from Trinity College in Washington, D.C. "I had to audition for the job standing in front of her kids singing 'MacNamara's Band,' at the top of my lungs while they kicked Secret Servicemen's shins in time with the music. The guys took me aside and whispered it was a tough job. I looked at those scarred shins and took the hint." After Europe and Hawaii, she worked for the Connecticut Bank & Trust Co. as press representative, until Jack the Lumberjack swept her off her feet and away from her weekly manicure.

Somehow, housekeeping and cooking never entered into Connie's single life, and she suddenly found herself living in an unfinished shack in the middle of nowhere. "My first experience grocery shopping had me panic stricken until I walked into the Granville general store. Shoppers, clerks and the owner burst into a rousing chorus of 'Here Comes the Bride' and pointed to my newspaper wedding photo on the store's bulletin board." Living in the house that Jack built is like living in "The House that Jack Built," according to Connie, who really didn't mind not having any floors but couldn't get used to the crooked planks that let her roll an egg from one end of the room to the other, downhill.

"Jack suspected my seasickness was caused by lopsided walls, so he leveled the place one day," she remembered. "Twice, I got knocked out of the shower when the whole house tilted."

Don't get the wrong idea about Wildwood, Connie said. The houses surrounding the lake are beautiful rustic or contemporary structures, but her house just never seems to get finished because everybody is too busy working on the overall area. "We do have indoor plumbing," she said proudly. "Of course, when we first moved in, the plumber made a few mistakes during his days of wine and roses because the toilet only flushed hot water. Even though we thought it would be nice on frosty days, it had to be fixed. So he came back and redid the whole job. Now, you flush the toilet and the shower turns on. The plumber doesn't work here any more."

Connie is a candid girl. "I'm not getting any





younger, you know, and I want a family right away, but it's difficult to get one started when you slink into bed beside your husband, and two dogs."

The two neurotic dogs are afraid to sleep alone. "Shadow is my favorite," said Connie. "A somewhat exuberant cross between a German Shepherd and a Labrador Retriever, she spent her first dismal year chained as a watchdog in a bar. Jack took pity on her and brought her here, a paradise for the dog, who sailed through four screened windows and half of our screened-in porch the first week she went unchained.

**Jack Galanek and his wife, Connie, walk through the 740 acres of wilderness that was his first love before he met her.**

"The first kielbasa I ever cooked for my partPolish bridegroom was eaten in one gulp by Shadow, who carefully removed it from the pan, ate it, and returned the cover. All this was done while she was sitting in the kitchen sink."

Cooking became less of a problem after the city girl made friends with Ab Bogdan, a handyman. Ab can do just about anything from trapping animals to cooking, learned on canoeing trips from the Canadian border to Old Saybrook. "Ab shares some of his special recipes with me. Have you ever tried fried raccoon tail? Melts like butter in your mouth and has a consistency like salt pork."

The first time Connie entertained for dinner, there was a slight mixup among the workmen who mistakenly dumped a 10-foot high pile of gravel fill across the driveway, making passage to the house impossible except for mountain goats. Dinner guests arrived while Connie was digging a path through gravel. This really impressed the date of her dearest friend who wanted to make a



At their lake, Jack and Connie can see their land being developed. He planned roads to go around favorite trees and outlawed power boats from the scene.

good start with this fellow, extremely cosmopolitan and sophisticated. "I don't think he enjoyed spending the afternoon on the front porch watching the workmen spread gravel, listening to conversation screamed above the roar of a truck. Dinner would have saved the day, but my friend's date, who suffered from hay fever, discovered the flowers I had arranged for the table were goldenrod. I put him to bed with a bottle of Bufferin. He has never visited us since."

The countryside around the Galaneks' recreation area is quiet and not overpopulated. Even the Tolland one-room schoolhouse had to close because there were no children. At night, it's peaceful, but once in a while, things get exciting. "One morning at two-thirty, my husband jumped out of bed, grabbed the loaded rifle he keeps beside us, and headed outdoors to check on a suspicious-looking truckload of guys driving toward a new A-framed unoccupied summer home owned by a Philadelphia banker."

With visions of acid heads freaked out and stealing TV sets dancing in his head, Jack phoned the State Police and headed for the group, rifle ready. Connie pulled a sweater over her black seethrough baby-doll night gown, grabbed her handy pocket-sized squirt pen guaranteed to fend off assailants and rapists alike, and crept out behind her husband. Flashing a floodlight on the home the gang entered, Jack said something brave like, "The place is surrounded," and out popped the banker and 12 Explorer Scouts. "Except for the State Police, who had some pretty strong words for being called out in the middle of the night, we had a good time over coffee at three-thirty," she said.





You can't turn a city girl into a country girl in a few short months of marriage, so Connie is keeping herself from turning the color of chlorophyll by doing publicity and advertising for her husband's business. A far cry from the slick look of Constitution Plaza, her office is in a plywood-floored little building laughingly called corporate headquarters. Her desk is a typewriter stand and she shares her room with Marge, the bookkeeper; the bookkeeper's dog, Timber; and a family of field mice born in Connie's typewriter. Two weeks ago, Timber complicated matters by having a slight accident necessitating surgery. Since the dog can't be left alone at home, Timber sits in Connie's office in a playpen.

"Listen," said Connie with a bright smile, "if you see the girls at Constitution Plaza, tell them that ol' Connie has found Utopia, and is crazy, simply crrrraazy about the simple life."

Don't tell the girls at the Plaza, but in Connie's laugh was a slight hint of hysteria.

Connie adds some touches of paint while her husband watches.