

# Cathedral Grove

"You don't know what you've got . . . till it's gone"

your own. My job is to make people realize that. You are not powerless before the government, or the courts. But you have to be willing to pay the price of your convictions. And that demands sacrifice.

**Q** What would you say to those who refer to these protests as just another example of the Not In My Backyard syndrome?

**A** In the future, I think the most important environmental struggles will come from neighbourhoods, like this one—people who live around the places being destroyed. That sparks an uprising. And what's wrong with that? If people aren't concerned about what's happening in their own backyard, they won't be concerned about anybody's backyard.

My first awakening to the enormity of the ecological destruction was in my backyard. It was a landslide that almost carried me and my cabin down into the sea. So yes, backyards are wonderful places to wake up and extrapolate on out into the wider world.

“Your duty as a citizen is to take part in the decisions being made, not to just pick someone else to do it for you.”

**Q** How do you feel about your fame/notoriety?

**A** Fame? I don't feel anything about it. It is an extremely fleeting thing. My notoriety? I use it a bit in a situation I'm trying to defend. It's helpful if people fear you—just a little bit.

**Q** After all these battles, are you cynical or optimistic?

**A** I remain optimistic. I know a lot of young people get turned off and cynical if they spend some months on a project and it doesn't work out. It's an ego thing. You think that because you have

done this, then the universe should reward you. But the universe doesn't work that way. If people can get their ego out of it, it's a lot easier because then you don't sweat the small stuff.

I do what I think I should do to the best of my ability, and that's all I owe the universe. My mother taught me that.

**Q** Were you ever frightened in your work as an activist?

**A** That's a hard one. I guess I'm not frightened. I just take one day at a time.

My biggest worry is for the safety of the people out on isolated blockades. We were in the Walbran for over three weeks. It was very isolated and there had been some bad violence. Young protesters were attacked and it has not been brought to court. I keep in touch with the press and the RCMP; it's the press that keeps violence down.

**Q** Why can't you work within the system?

**A** Primarily, because there is too much money involved.

Corporations buy off the democratic process. They have influence and raw power. So it is very difficult, even in a system like ours, a system that is supposed to be democratic. It's not just our environment that's lost if we don't act decisively—democracy is lost.

So many people think that if they go vote every four years, their duty as a citizen is done. Your duty as a citizen is not done. Your duty as a citizen is to take part in the decisions being made, not to just pick someone else to do it for you. . . . Only we as citizens can make changes. We mustn't depend on government to do it for us. Because they won't.

**Q** Any regrets?

**A** Absolutely none. My only regrets have been of omission, not of commission.

**Q** Are you looking forward to a quiet retirement?

**A** No! I'll only retire from this work when I retire from life! ☺

