

Log home book hits top

by JOHN POPE
Citizen Staff Reporter

Mary Mackie became a success by breaking all the rules of Canadian publishing.

By publishing The Canadian Log Home without benefit of loans, grants or advertising, she did without financial help that is almost a prerequisite for successful publishing in Canada.

And since she edited, designed and sometimes wrote part of the log building magazine, she deserves all the credit for catapulting it into the top-selling subscription publication this year out of 170 in the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association.

The award was based on the sale of CPPA magazines in bookstores that have promotional displays of the association's publications.

Which means she has done better than the armies of staff involved in publishing such well-known magazines as Saturday Night and Outdoor Canada.

"We were true to the subject, assumed people would understand this and they did," said Mackie, in explaining the reason for the success of her magazine and a related 76-page collection of text and sketches by her husband Allan.

"All we did was follow our instincts and never allowed gimmickry to enter into it."

The Mackies have made Prince George the log building capital of North America through their creation of a log home building course and material to publicize it.

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The Citizen

Prince George — Wednesday, November 17, 1976



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In fact, the successful publication of Allan's textual drawings, which is catalogued as a book in many libraries, led to the creation of the magazine.

Thousands of enquiring letters were received after its publication and the magazine developed as a means of answering the questions and providing more material on the subject.

The book was originally issued as a collection of 30 textual drawings for students in her husband's log home building course, and was commercially published after a student showed it to a Vancouver publisher.

"He said tell these Mackies they have got a long-term seller here, that we have always been asked for this kind of material and want 40 copies right away."

More than 30,000 copies later, Building With Logs has gone through five editions and created the market for about 35,000 copies of



Citizen photo by Doug Weller

Mary Mackie checks mailing list for her log building magazine.

now annual publication will come out this spring along with two more books on log construction.

Working out of a small office on Quebec Street, Mary is also able to indulge her interest in Canadian history as she answers letters and receives visitors.

A bookcase of Canadian literature rests along one wall and a visitor may augment his interest in log building by buying a related book on logging, such as Lumberjack — a collection of paintings by William Kurelek of the bush in

with pictures of the better log homes that have been constructed, the back issues of the Canadian Log Home also provide the proper "concept" for building a log home.

At the heart of this is the attitude of never thinking of a log building as a "cabin".

"This is a Yankee term. As Allan says, it comes from Uncle Tom (Uncle Tom's Cabin)."

"And he believes any student who thinks a log building is a cabin has destroyed most of his opportunity to create the superior

in the south and early Irish settlers were the only ones who ever lived in the "wretched, ugly little shacks."

And she adds that the Webster's New International Dictionary makes this derogatory reference clear in its definition.

They define cabin, when used as a noun, as a "small house, especially one crudely constructed." Used as a transitive verb it means "to lodge or confine."

The next issue of The