

January Storm 2008.....Interview with Cher Rydberg.....Written by Karen Davis

Cher sat listening to the sounds of the high winds and storm for over 1 hour after her husband Paul had left and gone off to work. It was during the snapping and popping of trees during the gusts of high winds that she decided to get up, get dressed and put on her shoes. She realized these were different winds than we'd had before. She then went and woke up their son Alex (Reed), who was sleeping. Alex got up and they went into the living room and began to pray together. By this time the electricity had gone off and the sounds of the trees snapping off near-by was a reality.

For years Paul had suggested cutting the large tree located outside their home, but Cher would never allow it. But come every wind storm they'd bring up the thought, then forget about it. NOT this time. With a crash and bang, down came that tree. Awestruck....later Cher would measure the tree and it would have a diameter of 34" and be more than 100' foot long.

In the darkness, with only a small flashlight, Alex went into the Fireman's mode. (He is a volunteer with the Butte Falls Volunteer Fire Dept) As he and his mother took the tiny flashlight and peered out into the darkness, what they saw was the tree outside their home had fallen. What they did not know was where it had landed. As they looked out they began to realize the path the tree had taken. It had fallen on Paul's mother's house, which is located behind their home. Without thinking of his own safety, Alex hurried out the door to find a way into his grandmother's house. Because they only had a small flashlight it was nearly impossible to see anything during those early morning hours. As Alex found a way to enter into his grandmother's house, he called out, "Grandma, Grandma...are you dead?"

Alex found his grandmother Peggy and her old dog, alive and well. Peggy has a Life Alert system, which she quickly set off. She told them that a tree had just fell through her home and she needed help. What Alex and Cher found that day was the 34' x 100' tree had landed just 8' feet from Peggy. Cher explained how weird it was to think that in the year 2008, just 8' away, GOD had spared her 80 year old mother-in-law. (Karen wrote), the truth is, GOD had spared a very wonderful family that morning. I am very good friends with the Rydberg family and they don't get any better when it come to friends. The tree had landed on Peggy's house, totally ruining the bathroom and bedroom. It also destroyed Paul's shop. Even as the storm raged on that morning, Alex knew he had one more mission to do. Dressed in his yellow fireman's coat/hat he set out to check on their neighbor Patty Lawrence. Patty is disabled and lives with her dog Happy. Now, I want to mention that Happy is very protective of Patty, so it's extra special to me, (Karen) as Alex knew about the dog and the storm and yet he trudged on. He is a TRUE HERO. It just so happens that Patty is my cousin and when I heard this story, knowing Alex as I do, I wanted everyone to know what a wonderful, kind and caring young man he is. Paul and Cher have raised three wonderful young men, which they should be very proud of.

Later that day after Alex had returned and he told his mom that Patty was ok, Cher was at her wits end. The power was off, numerous trees littered their land, a tree had fallen and nearly killed her mother-in-law, and suddenly she was thinking about Paul and his safety. Thankfully, later that day Paul was safe and returned home. Their two older sons came home to help out.

Five days later...The power was still out. All alone, for about an hour, Cher prayed and read the Bible for encouragement. She decided to take a walk out their driveway and as she walked and prayed, she was deep in thought when she became aware of vehicles approaching her. As she look up she noticed it was the Pacific Power crews. As they came near to her they stopped and asked if she was ok. No, she answered, and she began to tell them of their events. She said one of the men said to her, "The Lord is watching out for you and I'm going to help to get your power back on." Then the first PP&L truck drove off and a second one came up. A man leaned out the window and said, "GOD was here and he protected you." Cher said that these wonderful men had been a answer to her prayers that day. Truly sent to her by GOD, there when she needed them most. She said a calmness came to her that day, a feeling she will cherish forever.

