

## COFFEE WITH JOYCE O'HARA AND WENDY UPTON

August 14, 2024

Joyce: What we're going to do is, if there are people who have stories, once I do my thing and Wendy does her thing, we'd like people who have stories about how they came here to either stand up where you are or come up here, depending on how everybody can hear you. We have lots of pictures in photo albums going around. And Diane Boyd has all kinds of information, Wendy has pictures, too, and we have all kinds of stories about the people who lived here and what they did. We'd like to share a brief history with you, because we aren't the homesteaders who settled here originally. But I'd like for everybody, at some point, if and when you're going to talk, to at least introduce yourselves and give the year that you came here. And the newcomers, please introduce yourselves, too, as we go along.

I'm going to start with how John and I got here. The photo album that my daughter and her sons have right now tells the history of how we got here. Everything is labeled. Everyone who lived here that we could remember. Right up to the last couple of pages that cover when we rebought the Saloon in 2009. I have an original menu from 1977 when we started the saloon and café with Karen Feather, the owner, and her husband John Gray. That was when a piece of pie was 40 cents. A sandwich was a dollar. And there are articles of clothing that I will talk about.

The people who lived up here year-round had lots of crafts that they did. Jammy Ross was one of them. She and her husband and little boy lived on Trail Creek. She hand made everything with a treadle sewing machine and hand stitching. Wendy and I will talk about the dresses that we have hanging up here, and in that album there's a picture of me wearing mine.

John and I drove through the Park in 1975 on a coast-to-coast trip. We camped at Fish Creek and loved it, but it was early and nothing was open yet. There was a lot of snow. But once we got into Montana, we started seeing the biggest ravens I'd seen in my life, we saw black bears climbing cedar trees over toward Thompson Falls, we saw a wolverine crossing Route 2, and we knew this was where we wanted to be. It just took us another year to get here.

We had jobs in New York, believe it or not. We backtracked to Moscow, Idaho, and then made our way back up here in April of 1976. I was 22; John was 26. What we ended up doing, when we pulled into the valley, was camp at the bottom of the North Fork Road, unbeknownst to us that Polebridge was here and that we would end up here.

We camped at Great Northern Flats in our truck and camper with my two cats, two dogs, all my house plants, and a U-Haul trailer. We were there for about a month. We started thinking, "We need to figure out what we're going to do here." We started driving around and ended up making it down to Lake Drive on Spoon Lake, just south of the Blankenship bridge road. We drove up there, and there was nothing there. It's now filled with houses. On the left was a little cabin. Our goal was to build a log cabin. I'd lived in one in Alaska when I was 18 turning 19, and that was all I wanted to do in life—live in the middle of nowhere in a log house with horses.

We drove in there, and the cabin had been trashed. Somebody had broken into it. We went to the Plat Room in Kalispell, found out who owned it, and it turned out that it was a realtor we were working with to try to find property here. How weird is that? We said to her, "If we can move in,

we'll fix the whole thing up." It needed a door, windows, etc. I said, "We have a wood cookstove in our U-Haul. We will leave that, for your kindness for letting us stay there until we can figure out what we're doing." She said, "By all means. Have at it."

It was on a pond, with a bridge. In that photo album there are pictures of that cabin and the bridge and the pond. There was a neighbor there who knew a person who lived in Polebridge and owned property, named Ben Bowerman. Ben had purchased a log cabin from the McFarland Ranch for a dollar, and he needed it put back together. John had been studying how to do log work, for as long as he'd known me, and we met in 1973. So, he had at least three years of knowledge under his belt.

John O'Hara: Yes. I had a big belt.

Joyce: There's the comic relief, right there. The neighbor put us in touch with Ben, and that day Ben and Hazel Bowerman crammed us all into their pick-up truck and drove us up the North Fork Road. The minute that we rounded south of Camas Road and saw the mountains, we both let out an incredible OMG. It was a moment of "This is it!" Ben and Hazel said, "We don't know if you're going to like it. There's nothing but a bunch of hippies and tepees up there. We were like, "Well, like, hey! I think we can figure this out."

They showed us a little one-room shack that we lived in for at least two, almost three years. We bought the acre next to us. John started working putting our cabin together, which is also in the photo album. We were in heaven. I woke up in the morning crying because I was in my nirvana. I was in heaven. That year I was 22. In August, I turned 23.

The only time we'd ever met any locals, so far, was when our dogs killed some of John and Karen Gray's chickens. But we decided that it was my birthday, and we were going to splurge. So we went to the Northern Lights Saloon that had opened in July of 1976. Karen and John were there, and Roy Cooper was in the bar, I believe. I don't think Gus Sonnenberg was there. Those are old-timers who are also in that photo album. Karen asked, "What are you doing here? How did you get here?" I said we had thought about opening a health food restaurant in Whitefish. We thought that would be cool. But we couldn't afford it. There was a building on Main Street in Whitefish for \$60,000, but we couldn't afford it. We would never have gotten a loan. And Karen said to me, "Put your restaurant right here in my building," meaning the saloon. I was like, "I'm there! I'm great with that!"

I had no idea what to do or how to do it. But she had faith in me, even though she yelled at me constantly for not knowing how to do it her way. I have a little certificate up here on the table that I hope you find, about Karen's personality. Because it is true! It's a certificate saying that she was the biggest you-know-what around. She was tough to work with, but she set the standards high and all of us who worked here or knew her or worked for her had to buck it up, or you were out of here. You couldn't come back next year.

So, we went in as a partner with her. It was Karen's restaurant—she set the menu. She just said, "Do it," and I said okay. We did that for the first summer. John started building the cabin. His parents came out to visit. There are pictures of his parents, born and bred in Boston, and educated in Boston. They stayed in Cabin #1 at the Merc with an outhouse. At that time it was pretty primitive. The second night, they moved into the modern cabin here behind the Saloon. It

was the only place up here that had running water and an indoor bathroom, like a real house, so they were a little happier. Timothy, my brother-in-law who's here today, was with them in 1977.

That winter, we didn't think we could survive in that little shack. We went down to Whitefish to make a little more money, and we found another house to caretake on Colorado Avenue. It's still there, surrounded by huge condos and apartments and homes. We just drove there two days ago and saw it. We got married in that house, and there are pictures in Lois Walker's album that's going around of our wedding day, in a dress that I made in about 24 hours out of a tapestry. I should have brought that dress, too. Because I was about this big [thin] and thought I was fat.

We spent that winter there, and I worked at the Whitefish Lake Lodge. The lodge was nothing but an A-frame. John had to put a bathroom in the house we lived in, because it didn't have a bathroom. It was an original homestead house.

The next spring John moved back up before I did, as soon as the snow was gone. I moved up sometime in April to start the restaurant with Karen. Her in-laws were here helping. We made it through that summer. It was a lot of fun. We ended up living year-round in that little shack for a couple of years. That year, in 1976, we bought our first acre down in the meadow right next to the shack of the Bowermans. There were no other houses in the meadow, except at the far end.

Not long after that, after we got into the house, we bought the lot toward Polebridge Lane and put a barn there, and I got my horses. I was really in heaven.

Local reaction to the newcomers by the old-timers? They were pretty skeptical about us, because we looked like hippies. None of us came here with jobs. But after we got to know them and they came in the restaurant, they became our really good friends. They're all notated in the album, with their names.

Tom Ladenburg became a very close friend of ours, and John ended up turning his life's work into being a log home builder. He built the second log home of his life, and it was for Tom Ladenburg.

Let's talk about the road for just a minute. The road was one lane. It had turnouts at about every mile marker. The logging trucks and all the locals had CB radios, and we were all on the same channel. We'd hear them talking to each other. They'd say, "I'm at mile marker 27" or mile marker 30. We knew to pull over and wait for them to go by, because it was dangerous. But they kept the road in great shape. They oiled it with diesel or something similar to that. We felt safe on the road, even though it avalanched and the section between Hay Creek and Coal Creek was axle-deep mud. You couldn't get through it half of the time. But the truckers would always pull you out if you needed it.

Having the children up here created its own issues, as the Wernicks can attest. Their daughter, Rachele, was born in 1980, and our daughter Capella was the first one locally to be born in 1979. So, they knew what it was like having babies up here and dealing with all of that, and the road, and the long trip to a doctor if you needed it.

Jane Collett (who used to be married to Bill Brown): Our daughter Jennifer was born in 1975 in Chicago.

Joyce: Yes, and Moquey Ross was born up here. He might have been a year older than Capella. He was born on Trail Creek in their cabin. He was born March 10, and Capella was born March

9. But Trail Creek was never plowed. Nobody lived there in the winter except Mark and Jammy. Mark was a painter, an incredible artist, and Jammy made dresses like this and sold them. In that photo album there are pictures of a fashion show that she used to put on. There are old-timers and myself modeling some of her clothing.

Jane Collett, who was Jane Brown at the time, had Jennifer and Kimmy and Jessie. She says she came out in 1974 to visit and moved here full-time when Kimmy was six months old, so in March of 1979. Kimmy and Capella became good friends, because we all had horses. We used to ride the horses everywhere, and we formed the first all-girl round-up crew for Tom Ladenburg, who ran free-range cattle up here. We found free-range cows *everywhere*, and Tom would know if we missed a cow and a calf. “There’s a bald-faced calf—they’re up there somewhere. Get back up there, girls.” We’d go up Hay Creek and all over the place looking for those two cows. But we loved it. We loved the work and we loved the excitement of all that. We were crazy. We rode our horses all year round, up and down Vance Hill on the ice.

Speaking of Vance Hill and ice, John O’Hara and Ron Wilhelm ice skated down Vance Hill, and there are pictures of them in that album skating down a very icy Vance Hill.

There were other families who lived up here about the same time.

John O’Hara: I have to add one thing about the cabin that came from the McFarlands that Ben Bowerman bought for one buck. That was the cabin that Reverend Bo Tanner burned down.

Capella Albrecht: And the kids you’ve mention and myself are still really good friends, and our kids and their kids are really good friends. It’s like three generations of friends. We travel together, and the kids are all friends. And we still talk about Bo Tanner, and the *Unsolved Mysteries* episode.

Joyce: If anyone isn’t familiar with the name Bo Tanner, he came up here and got involved with the Wally and Margery Donaldson daughter Debbie, who lived down by the big hay field at Hay Creek, the old Hoolie Stine homestead. She was about 19 or 20 at the time, and she married Bo. Unbeknownst to her, he had three or four other wives. He kept disappearing from those wives’ lives and faking his death. Before we all knew that about him, he caretook our horses and our cabin. He started a tent church, and he started a church in the Bowerman house that John built. Then he would fake people wanting to kill him. He slashed the tent church, and he burned down the Bowerman cabin, then disappeared off the face of the earth.

If anybody knows a Montana girl like I know Montana girls, Debbie found him. She searched all over and found one of his wives in Idaho, who said, “Oh girl, I have some stories for you.” At some point she found Bo and confronted him. She said, “Bo, I still love you. We can work this out, honey.” Thankfully, it didn’t happen.

Jerry Costello: She caught him in Colorado, and he denied that he knew her.

Joyce: She was amazing at what she figured out. But she’s now remarried and has children and comes up with her parents. That was Hoolie Stine’s homestead originally, and I have a lot of pictures of my kids in front of his buildings, because it was so cool back in those days.

Ray Brown: His real name was Eddie Riddlehoover.

Joyce: I would have changed my name, too! I wish Chris and Monica Graff were here. Monica started writing an article about Bo, and one of his kids or grandkids contacted her and said, “I can tell you stories about Bo and where he is and what’s going on.” Monica said, “I think I’m okay with just knowing the little bit that I already know,” and ended it. But if you see her, you can ask her. She might have a little more for that story.

Capella was born in 1979. Our son Colin was born in 1983. My favorite memories of that period of our lives up here was the community, the way we all had each other’s backs, the way we took care of each other. It didn’t matter if you had arguments—you always came back with a big hug, always. Because we relied on each other. It was a special time in all of our lives. There’s never going to be another time like it, except I can see right now even the people who weren’t here in the 1970s and those of us who were here then, we all have the same spirit. And our kids are passing it on. My daughter is best friends with Wendy’s son Andrew and his sister and grandkids. It’s pretty important what happens up here—it’s magical.

I’m going to pass it to Wendy now. She can talk about how she got here and pass this torch on. I call Wendy “Fred.”

Wendy Upton: My real name is Winifred. Joyce says she has a copy of the first anti-paving road petition, from 1980. Not all of us were anti-paving. There were a few of us for paving. Do you want to raise your hands? And some of the paving people aren’t here. Bob Grimaldi has passed on, but he was a big pro-paving guy. He lived over there in the meadow.

What I call over in the meadow is the other side of the store. It was Ted Ross’s property. When he bought the store, he got the land all the way down to River Drive. Lois might know how many acres it was.

Lois Walker: The Adairs had 160 acres, but it was a long, narrow homestead all the way from the bridge down to River Drive. A lot of the homesteads up here were square, a quarter section or whatever. But when Bill Adair filed on his homestead in 1912, it was a long, narrow stretch, not very wide.

Wendy: When Ted Ross sold the store, he kept the land south of the store and subdivided part of it into 18 one-acre lots [Skyline Acreage 1]. Later he subdivided the rest of it into 30 one-acre pieces [Skyline Acreage 2]. So, in the meadow there are 48 one-acre pieces that we have to thank Ted Ross for subdividing. They’re all sold, but a lot of people haven’t built on them.

I’m going to start with how Rick and I got here. We worked at Spotted Bear, which is on the South Fork of the Flathead. He had a contract with the Forest Service flying in and out of Spotted Bear—supplies, people, whatever. So, he had access to a plane that belonged to Robbie Holman. It wasn’t a Forest Service plane. One fall day Rick said to me, “We’ve never been to the North Fork of the Flathead. You wanna take a ride?” I thought that meant a car. But it really meant a plane. We flew the Cessna 182 over the North Fork, and just loved it. It was a lot different than the South Fork.

The next weekend or so he said, “Let’s take the truck. We’ll see what it looks like on the ground.” We drove up, and I said, “Oh yeah, this looks good.” This was probably in September of 1975. John and Karen had just purchased the store. We asked around if anyone knew of a place we could rent for the winter. There was a place up on Whale Creek. You got water out of the creek, there was an outhouse, and there was a wood cook stove. No propane. There was a big,

long driveway, and we didn't have a snowplow. We were driving a little Courier not-four-wheel-drive pick-up. We had no idea what a North Fork winter was going to be like. But did we care? Nooo. We were young and dumb.

We rented the Siderman house for one winter, and everything worked out fine. I learned to cook on wood. We got our water out of the creek. Loyd Sondreson came and plowed our driveway. We got in and out with chains on the little pick-up, and we met Mark and Jammy Ross. They lived up on Trail Creek by Merry O'Hare. They said, "We'd love to have you for neighbors." Jammy's father owned land around them, so we said, "That sounds like a good idea." We bought 10 acres from him. We went to the credit union for the loan, having no collateral except the pick-up truck. They gave it to us.

So, we bought the 10 acres and started building a log cabin the next spring. We were living in a wall tent. We weren't bear aware at all. Bears—they don't come around food, do they? So, we had canisters of flour and who knows what else in there. A bear came into the wall tent, tore it to shreds, and that was kind of the end of our happy homestead experience. We came sadly, in the middle of the night, down to the store. John and Karen Gray and Dan and Carol O'Brien owned it then. We said, "We have no place to go. The bear ripped up our tent!" Karen said, "Oh, just go upstairs in the store. You can stay there."

John and Karen wanted to make the Adair cabin into a saloon. Rick had gone back to Spotted Bear to fly, so I was here to help. We spent at least a couple of months peeling and scraping layers and layers of wallpaper off the beautiful logs that you see in there now. Lois said that it was 1976 when they finally opened the saloon. So, I did work for John and Karen that spring. And as Joyce said, Karen did have some foul language, and she did tell you how to peel the potatoes. If you took one piece of white part off of the potato, you were probably docked the big pay. My pay was food and drink and housing. I never remember getting paid.

Karen was very, very frugal. In fact, John's parents, Eddie and Mabel Gray, came in April and May of 1977 to help when they were going to open the saloon. Eddie made the chairs out of Naugahyde. I don't know where he found that. And tire inner tubes, cut up and put around the frames of the chairs and underneath so you'd have a good seat to sit on. Mabel made Polebridge Putney bread. That meant grinding up the wheat in the hand-crank grinder. The recipe is in the original North Fork cookbook.

Joyce: I have the recipe, if anyone can't find it in the cookbook.

Wendy: It also called for oats. It was half wheat and half oats. And we had the first Polebridge Putney buns. I did that for the summer of 1978 in the saloon. We didn't have a lot of tourists. In fact, I don't think we had any tourists.

Cheryl Watts: We had tree planters.

Wendy: Larry Wilson's thinning crew—remember them? Whoo! The Harkers who lived near Moran Creek were good customers. I never did see Tom Ladenburg in the saloon, and I really don't remember seeing Roy Cooper in there either.

Joyce: They would come in for lunch in 1977.

Lois: What about Frank Evans?

Wendy: Frank Evans didn't come—he didn't like to spend money. Some folks didn't come until the 1980s, when they kind of accepted us. Ladenburg didn't like Karen. He was the king. He and Lee Downes and Roy Cooper. They were a trio. They knew everything there was to know. They owned lots of property, and they were like the kings of the North Fork. Very, very redneck.

Cheryl: They wanted the road paved and electricity up here, and we didn't.

Wendy: Ladenburg thought we were all just a bunch of hippies.

Lois: When did you buy your lot in Polebridge?

Wendy: We bought lots number 5 in the meadow from Ted Ross and then lot 4 from Howard Zink. They were near the North Fork Hostel, which was Wally Nolan's place at the time. He was married to Ted Ross's daughter Betty. We still had the Trail Creek property, and we had become good friends with John and Karen. I had a standing job in the saloon. So, we built over there, and that's where our house is yet today. We eventually sold the Trail Creek property when we moved to town in 1985. Our son Andrew was born January 23, 1981, and we made it to North Valley Hospital from here. We had no problems at all.

Andrew was only two days old when we brought him back to the North Fork, and he did fine. They said I had to stay in town one night, because they had to check his bilirubin level. We stayed at the Blue and White Motel in Kalispell, then came up the next day. The Blue and White had special rates for North Forkers. The owners, Per and Winnie Storli, had a place in the North Fork.

Sally Costello: You brought him up to Super Bowl Sunday at our house. Because you didn't want to miss the Super Bowl.

Wendy: Well, Rick didn't. Yes, we went up to the Costellos to see the Super Bowl, because they had television. We put Andrew in a dresser drawer as his crib for the day.

Rick did work for Tom Ladenburg. We finally get to be friends with Tom, the King of the North Fork. Joyce talked about the road. What I have to add is that there were no guardrails. There were snowbanks, but no guardrails. And like she said, it was one lane and usually three ruts. The loggers did keep it plowed real well, and we had the CB radios. With our little two-wheel drive truck with chains, we never would have gotten out of a ditch if we hadn't pulled over. It seemed they were really good about pulling you out, if you went in.

Joyce: You should talk about your wedding. All the old-timers—everybody came to that wedding. We had a real community then.

Wendy: Someday we'll have to have a slide show, because Doug Chadwick took a lot of slides that day.

Joyce: And I have a lot of pictures in my album.

Wendy: This is my wedding dress hanging up here. You can see that I was probably emaciated when I wore it. It was made by Jammy Ross. How she'd make patterns was to take paper bags and kind of fit them on you. Then she'd cut out whatever part she needed. She cut out the different parts of my dress and she sent them around to the locals. This was a surprise to me. I knew she was going to make the dress, but everyone embroidered on it. This was Karen Feather's—she did the Richard Upton and Wendy Rightmire. Ann Hensen did this one. I think

they just sent them around. Someone would start a heart, then someone else would add something to it.

We were married over in Hoolie Stine's field, on what is Wally Donaldson family's property today, where you could see the whole mountain range. All the locals came—Roy Cooper, Tom Ladenburg, Lee Downes, Harkers. I can't remember everybody's names. Maybe someday we'll give a slide show, because I do have them and it would be fun to see what the meadow looked like at that time. I think it's the same now. It's private property, so nobody can build there—yet.

We met all the local people at the time. Pittmans, Cooper, Hensen. I didn't know Bert and Thelma Edwards that well, but I did know Rose Greene, Mary McFarland, the Dziuks, Sonnenbergs. We knew the Elliotts when we lived on Whale Creek. And the Personius family, who ran the store when Karen was taking a break.

Joyce: It was actually in 1979-1980, and they had a baby here who they named Adair in August 1980. They came up here when I was pregnant.

Wendy: That's right, because I took care of Ahesha while Honey was having Adair. Andrew hadn't been born yet, so that was 1980. And Ahesha was a "creecha." And David Silverstein, who we knew as Babu. They had a bunch of kids.

We did regularly go to Sondreson Hall for meetings, but the best part was the square dances. Rick isn't very social, but he would go the square dances because he got to dance with Ruth Sondreson. He loved dancing with Ruth, and she was really, really good at it.

And we knew Frank Evans, being down here in Polebridge. In fact, did you plant trees for Frank, Joyce?

Joyce: We did not. We cut trees on his property and used them to build our house. [After the beetle kill epidemic]

Wendy: Well, Frank lured me, and I don't remember who else, into it. As you go down Polebridge Lane, on the left side that was all open. All the trees that are there now were probably planted in the late 1970s. He'd gotten little saplings free from the Forest Service. He didn't pay us money. He invited us over to his place after we did the planting to have gin and tonics, and some kind of food. But he drank them in quart jars, with no ice, just gin. Maybe there wasn't even any tonic in it. It was pretty strong. So, we got to be good friends with Frank.

Lois: Frank Vitale and Ellen Horowitz helped plant trees, too.

Wendy: Frank Evans is the one who introduced us to Mark and Jammy Ross. That's how we got to know them. Andrew was born in 1981, then our daughter Sarah was born in Columbia Falls in 1986, so she didn't really get to live in the North Fork during her early childhood.

My favorite memories of the North Fork is everything. I don't like the development. That's kind of hard for me to watch, but if you look at Kalispell and Columbia Falls, anywhere in the valley, it's happening. I just like everything about this place. I always have and probably always will. Thanks for coming. Any questions?

Joyce: I'd like to introduce a couple of people who are really important and have them come up. John and Pat Elliott were up here year-round for a while when we first moved here. They had two kids who they homeschooled. By the time we came up full-time, they ended up in Columbia

Falls. But they were an important part of this community. What Pat brought today to show you was a wooden box they used to carry their milk jugs. It held two big gallon jugs. They would get their milk from the Mathison's cow. Virgil Lane, the mail man, would pick up empty jars coming up or down. Johnny and Marlene Mathison would fill the jars, and on the next trip up he would deliver them. And the top one-third of those milk jugs was cream.

The Mathison family, who were part of the Holcomb family, lived on the old homestead, across from Ray Hart's big place and a little bit north. They had a couple of kids, and they were an important part of the community. They had volleyball games in their front yard. I remember going up there with Capella, and Ruth Sondreson would say, "Let me hold the baby. You go play volleyball." I sounded like fun to me. But the minute Capella cried, I couldn't stand it, so I'd have to run over. She'd say, "You're gonna spoil this little girl. You gotta let your baby cry."

We actually got our milk from Barbara Lawrence and her son, Andrew, who lived in the Wurtz cabin. I'm almost picturing that you could put this wooden box for milk jugs down in a creek if you needed to.

Wendy: Pat, did you make this wooden box?

Pat Elliott: Yes, John made it.

Joyce: The Elliotts have a beautiful place on the river. And their kids are great. In 1979, their daughter Melissa got married at Sondreson Hall. I have the announcement of their wedding, and John O'Hara organized the music. Capella was three or four months old, but she went with us everywhere. It didn't matter where. When she was ready for bed, she just fell asleep.

Today, Pat also brought her two embroidered mail bags. They say Elliott on them, and one of them actually has a zipper on it. Did you have a mail box, Pat?

Pat: We had a mail box, but before Ben Ringo came that was how you did your mail. There was one for outgoing mail and one that the mailman would fill and put in the mailbox. When you went to get the mail you grabbed the bag, and everything was in it. Everyone had them.

Joyce: Those of us who lived in Polebridge proper had mail boxes at the Polebridge Merc. Pat also brought a cool little emergency telephone number list that Melissa kept. We all had crank telephones in those days. The wire ran right up the side of the road.

Pat: When we moved here in 1975, the only real communication was Karen at the store and the McFarlands had service out at their ranch.

Rachelle Losey: And there was one by the mailbox at the end of our road, Red Meadow East.

Pat: Then Jon and Johnny Mathison and the Edwards boys and our son Jeff re-routed the telephone line and hung it up on trees. So, we could call Karen, and she was the emergency responder. Many times outside people would call Karen, and then she would call us to transmit information. There were many times when Jon Elliott and Johnny Mathison would go to town and be really late coming home. They would call Karen, and Karen would call us to say, "The boys are running late. Don't worry about them. They'll be home at midnight."

Melissa's list shows that the Elliott ring was 2 shorts. The Evans were 2 longs. Mathisons were 2 longs and 1 short. And the Polebridge Merc was 1 long 2 shorts. The Sondresons were 1 long 1 short. And the operator was Karen.

Cheryl Watts: Later on, the operator was in Great Falls when we had more modern phones.

Joyce: That's right. This is Cheryl Watts, who came up in 1975. She still owns her property just this side of Moose Creek Road. Her first cabin burned down in 1997, and she's rebuilt a beautiful log home.

Wendy: One more thing. You have to remember that we didn't have cell service, we didn't have the internet. We did have the crank phones, and we did have CB radios. But, if you wanted to get ahold of somebody you went to see them. There was no other way to get in touch with them.

Joyce: And her one last thing leads me to: once we had two kids, we hooked up a CB radio to the North Fork Hostel, because they had an emergency radio there. My youngest climbed up on a stack of things and drank Triaminic cough syrup. He was two at the time. Luckily, we had an extensive first aid kit with ipecac syrup. We gave that to him, and we had to keep him awake for 24 hours. You can imagine what that was like.

We have more people here who have been here since the 1970s. Jerry and Sally Costello have a lot of history. Lisa Hale's father Jim Hale had a lot of history here. Ray Brown. The Wernicks.

Let's hear from Linda Wernick and her daughter Rachelle Losey, and Rachelle's son Curtis. I want to introduce them as the most amazing people who have stayed up here all these years, and they live off what they grow. Rachelle was homeschooled and then went to medical school.

Rachelle Losey: I didn't prepare anything in particular, but it was so fun to take a walk down memory lane. All the names of the people who shaped who I am. My parents bought their property in 1976. The thing that is really interesting to me is, what was going on in the 1970s? All these people in their 20s were putting everything on the line and buying property in the North Fork. What an amazing, insightful thing to do.

Lois: How many acres did they buy?

Linda Wernick: We bought 35 acres. We got all we could afford. Otherwise, we would have gotten 40, but we could handle the 35 and we wanted to get it paid off as soon as we could. We bought from Don Jensen. I don't know if any of you recognize that name. He was from Whitefish. He was a land developer. He might have done something with that property, but he was busy in Whitefish with other things, so we were able to get that property from him. It was great.

Rachelle: Your story was similar. You had friends in southern California, and the four of them and a baby took off on a cross-country summer trip to find the most amazing place in the world. The story that I've heard from both couples—my parents and the Genstlers—is that they rounded the corner north of Big Creek and saw the mountains, and they all said, "This is it!" The Genstlers still own the property in front of us, and their kids and grandkids come and play with Curtis, so that's a really neat connection.

I came on the scene as the result of this amazing thing, that these people and those of you who have talked decided to do, and that was to put roots down in the North Fork, and I got to grow up here. I didn't come on the scene until 1980. We did have running water. Our toilet flushed. I had cloth diapers that would hang out on the line, I've been told. I loved every minute of it. How I survived, I don't know, because I was a free-range child. I would walk around to the neighbors and hang out with the local animals. Peggy Genstler had a cow that washed into the river in the

flood and ended up in Polebridge. She had chickens. I guess the thing I'd like to say is that I had no idea that wasn't normal. This was all very normal to me and so amazing, and I'm so thankful for it. I remember pictures of me sitting on the counter while my mom and Ellen Horowitz were canning.

I was an only child, so I was raised by the community. I had awesome kids my age. They all started disappearing on me sometime in the late 80s, but I had so many amazing adult friends, who were just so inspirational. And Curtis is an only child, too, and it is an amazing thing to raise another generation up here. So, my perspective is really shaped by all of you, and for that I am so grateful.

Linda: Just to add to her comments, I agree. Like Wendy and Joyce and all the rest of you who came about then. This was a fantastic place to raise a child. The community was more than we ever imagined when we came up here. But I'm so glad we landed here, and I'm glad so many of you are still around. It's great.

Rachelle: And a plug for the saloon. Ted and I, when we got married 20 years ago, had a great community event. We had our rehearsal dinner at the saloon. They made morel mushroom pizza, and it was fabulous. We got married June 20, and it decided to rain for about two hours during the ceremony time. Thankfully, it was sunny before and after, but that caused a bit of drama. We got married in the solarium at our place, which we've had the privilege of rebuilding this summer.

We were not supposed to get married in that building, so it was a little cozy, but a lot of great North Forkers were there. The bridal party crowded into my dad's office to get ready. It was all sort of ad lib and last minute and crazy because of the rain. I saw Peter Moore outside, but no one could get in the door because everyone was crowded in there. So Peter crawled through the window into my dad's office and was able to be part of the wedding.

It has just been such a journey and a blessing to grow up in a place like this. Now to come back and be part of the community and to raise Curtis here, how incredibly awesome is that? Curtis, do you have something you'd like to say?

Curtis Losey: I love being in the North Fork.

Joyce: Now Ray Brown, Diane Boyd, and Sue who married into a family that's been here forever—if there are things that people want to talk about, please go up to the microphone so people can hear you.

Diane Boyd: And I love the North Fork. I had a little different experience, because I came up here in 1979. I had no husband. I had no kids. I had no community like down here because I lived in Moose City, which was at the end of the frickin' world in 1979. But what I did have, that other people weren't privy to, was a community of researchers. So, not only did I have the mark against me of being a hippie, but I was a researcher. It was a different world that I experienced up there, and I got to be friends with the north-enders. Tom Reynolds became a very close friend. Many of you attended the Polebridge Prom, which I brought him to two years in a row. He was the hit of the party! Joyce probably danced with him, and Wendy.

Joyce: Of course we did, and I have pictures in that album of him at the Prom.

Diane: So, my memory of the North Fork was not part of the Polebridge community, but part of the north end community. To this day there might still be a little separation. But there basically wasn't anybody north of Trail Creek except Tom Reynolds, the border station, and the researchers. I had the privilege of living right across from the Customs Station with the Border Grizzly Project. Michael Cimino's crew filmed *Heaven's Gate* right behind the cabins at Moose City, and they'd dump their bacon grease and cooking waste in the gopher holes behind our cabin. At night, after the crews would drive all the way back to town and we had all this food resource sitting in our back yard. You'd go out at night to go to the outhouse, and you'd shine a flashlight. If the eyes shining back were orange, it was okay, because it was a deer or an elk. But if the eyeshine back were green, it was a predator. So, you'd look at the height of the eyes and the width. If the eyes were four feet or more above the ground and more than four inches wide, you knew it was a grizzly. You went back inside the cabin and grabbed the coffee can, and you didn't go outside.

Because we're talking about the old days, I thought I'd just read an excerpt from my book. This is my book (*A Woman Among Wolves*). It starts in the old days and comes up through modern times with wolves and wolf conflict. We've already talked about the road, so here's what I wrote about my first day in the North Fork:

"I drove my little Toyota Hilux two-wheel pick-up slowly to the Canadian border on a September afternoon in 1979. The 60 miles of dusty, potholed gravel road took two hours to navigate. Grass was growing in the middle of the road for the last few miles. I parked at the old U.S. Customs log cabin, its hand-hewn cedar shake roof a veritable terrarium of green and white lichens. John Senger, the young, amiable U.S. border guard had his feet propped up on the porch rail and was reading *The Monkey Wrench Game* by Edward Albee. This was a rather relaxed government operation.

"The Trail Creek border crossing was 50 miles from the three Ps of civilization: pavement, power, and phone. There were fewer than 100 full-time residents living within a 50-mile radius of it. I was a long way from anywhere, in one of the most beautiful landscapes I'd ever seen. A wide valley with few humans, the perfect setting for wolf recovery to begin. I'd arrived at my new life to become a wolf researcher at last. I was smitten."

I didn't have the community you had down here. I had a different world, and to this day I am still smitten, but it is because of the tolerance and the kindness of the original people in the 70s and 80s that those wolves who came down from Canada weren't shot, trapped, poisoned, and were able to set foot here. People thought having wolves around was kind of cool and novel. So, it was a special time for the predators, also. To be able to homestead, make friends, and raise their families in the North Fork.

That's all I wanted to say. If you're interested in the book, I've got some to sell, but my North Fork is every bit as special as yours. It's just a little different North Fork that I remember.

Joyce: I think you need to let everyone know who commented on your book.

Diane: Doug Chadwick wrote the foreword. Then on the cover it says, "Informative, fascinating, and beautifully written — Dr. Jane Goodall." I'll read one more short paragraph. This is the first page of the introduction. I talked a little bit about my introduction into the North Fork, with the community and the researchers. This is sort of my baptism with the wolves.

“My pick-up banged and rattled along the Inside North Fork Road in the northwest corner of Glacier National Park. Boxes of wolf traps and jars of bait slid across the truck bed. I was in a hurry. My mind was focused on the wolf caught in a trap somewhere ahead in the lodgepole pine forest. Out of the corner of my eye, I noticed a motion in my rearview mirror. I looked up to catch the glassy reflection of vivid yellow eyes framed by a wolf’s black face looking over my shoulder from the back seat. How did I get here?” That’s how the book starts. And then I tell you how I got here.

Joyce: I’ll introduce a few more people if they need it, but I want to make one comment about this woman. Speaking of someone who would come into the saloon, and all she ever wanted was a piece of pie. That was great—we appreciated people who appreciated our homemade pies. They still do—and now Katie and Austin are doing homemade pies out of here again. This is full circle. About Diane: I remember Diane coming to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July of parades. In that album you’ll see the parades that we started in 1978. No spectators until well into the mid-80s, even late 80s. And all those pictures show all of us locals just doing floats and getting our kids into a parade and celebrating the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Diane had these two massive dogs. She hooked them up to some sort of a dogsled on a wagon. I remember looking at her and thinking, “Wow! She might study wolves, but she is a wolf.” This woman has figured out how to live in that rustic atmosphere her whole life. And she’s kept up with it. She’s gone everywhere. And everybody knows her in the world. She’s really famous, and we’re so lucky to have her here. Please, read the book, because you’ll get the history of Diane up here. She’s amazing, and everything she has done is great.

There are some other people I’d like to introduce. Some of them don’t want to come up, but I’d like to introduce them nonetheless. Jerry and Sally Costello have been here forever. They have been huge members of the community. Jane Collett and her husband Sam have a beautiful home. They and Jerry and Sally live on Paradise Ridge. We’ve got Bonny Ogle. Would you like to come up and talk?

Bonny: I could. I’ll get rid of my stage fright from earlier. Gosh, this is a beautiful day, and this is a fun crowd. My husband Lynn bought up here in 1960 when he was 18. He had been up here as a boy scout starting when he was 14 or 15. His dad told him property never gets any cheaper. I married him in 1968, so that’s when I first became a North Forker, but I didn’t get to see it until a year later, because he left for Vietnam the day after we married. That was an interesting time, but it was a different world. Like most of you, on the first trip up when we came around by Camas Road and the mountains hit me, I was a goner. I’ve been in love with it ever since.

We’ve had quite a time up here. A lot of laughs about the road, but I can remember coming from town on weekends, because for a long time we were just weekenders and vacationers, trying to make payments on the land and whatnot. I can remember washing my hair in town and putting on a shower cap, probably with curlers under it. We didn’t have air conditioning, so the windows had to be open or you couldn’t breathe. I had a mask and a shower cap, just to get up here with clean hair. We were packing our water from Trail Creek. We would swim under the bridge at Trail Creek for many years. I used to skinny dip under the bridge, but it got way too popular after a while. So, no more of that. It’s cold now.

This is a great neighborhood, and we’ve had the good fortune of being able to retire up here. Sixteen years ago we moved here full-time and got to know everybody so much better. But it’s the trip along the way that has been so interesting. I remember Diane when she first came. Beautiful blonde, and still is. Look at her. And I remember Sally Costello and Joyce O’Hara.

They were so beautiful, with long dark hair. I just admired them so—I thought they were so pretty and so nice. The O’Haras had a golf tournament one time. What a kick! I was up here inspecting houses, because I was an insurance agent then. I came to inspect something, and they were having a party. They waved me in, so I picked up a club. I’d never golfed before. I pulled this rusty old club out of the barrel and went with some guys who were going around. And I got a hole-in-one! Everybody was screaming and yelling. I thought, “That was fun.” They had papers on stumps, but they had a pretty good course set up.

Joyce: John’s father mowed two acres so they could play golf. The first one was probably 1980.

Bonny: Then I remember when we went to John Frederick and Sharon Costantino’s wedding in the Donaldson field. And the Wernicks—what a joy they’ve always been. I think theirs is the perfect life, and they’re living it. They’re doing for themselves and for others. Great times up here. And the Elliotts. I remember when they came. That was the first time I got to see their place. They’ve had quite a time here, too.

But I have to tell you, the people that have come since have been wonderful. We have a great bunch of new neighbors. We live on Kintla Ranch Road, between the Trail Creek bridge and Trail Creek Road, toward Larry Wilson’s. I can’t think of much more to say, or I’ll get really gabby.

Joyce: That happens to all of us. We like to gab about things. I’m so glad you came up to talk. And Bonny is one of the most beautiful women I’ve ever met in my life.

Cheryl: I think we need to recognize some of the people who are no longer with us. John Elliott, John Frederick, and Rosalind Yanishevski. They were very instrumental in saving the North Fork, so we could all enjoy it. Tom Riemer, Robin Cox, Bill Olmsted, Judy Dill. My husband Michel, Becky Braunig. There are so many people who have gone by the wayside that we need to remember.

Joyce: There are so many people who we’ve lost who are important to the history up here. Obviously, the homesteaders and their relatives.

Pat Elliott: There’s not been any mention of Harold and Rachel Sweet.

Joyce: Do you have history of them? I’ve got pictures of them. I don’t have Harold—I only have Rachel. We had a group called Hens and Chicks. We all used to hike everywhere. I actually have some pictures of the hikes, but I don’t think I put them in the album.

Pat: I remember carrying ice cream freezers up to Link Lake and making ice cream with Rachel.

Joyce: And Michael Cimino filmed some of *Heaven’s Gate* on part of her property. Capella was in a backpack when she was six months old. I went to visit Rachel that day. She invited me up. As I was coming in, there was a big tall guy in a dark three-piece suit on a black stallion. It was Kris Kristofferson. I had a camera in my hand. I got out of the car, and he was like, “Oh, a baby. She’s so cute. Could I hold her on the horse?” I was like, “Uh, uh, sure.” I never took a picture, because I was so starstruck. He looked pretty darn good, I’ll tell you.

Diane: As long as we’re mentioning people who have passed, in this amazing era of northern lights, you remember August 6, 1982 was the most amazing northern lights display we’d ever had, and it was the night after Frank Evans killed himself up here. I’m sure that Frank Evans

caused that display. I laid out in the Moose City meadow, and the northern lights were just streaming and colors, and I said, “Thank you, Frank!”

Joyce: Ray Brown has been here forever. Please come up. Ray took care of our house once. And Diane mentioned researchers. Our cabin door didn’t have a lock on it, because all the researchers would stay at our house. We might be gone for spring break, because we didn’t like mud season and wanted to see his family and go ski. Ray came and took care of the house. Diane moved in with some researchers. All the researchers would just open the door and go on. Cheryl and Michel, during the 1988 fire, knew that the house was open. They just moved in. It was wonderful to have that memory, too.

Ray: I’ll do something a little different. I’ll introduce myself first. I moved up here in 1978 at the Newton homestead, where Sondreson Meadows is now. I was very fortunate to meet the original homesteader Ethel Newton. She had come here in 1902. She was the daughter of Ben and May Hensen and lived on the Hensen homestead, which is on the Loop Road now. I was able to live near her over the course of many summers—say five summers in a row—and got to meet many of the original homesteaders. It was just a blessing to meet people whose names have been forgotten in time.

What I’d like to do is kind of refresh my memory with your help. Starting down at Tom Ladenburg’s, working our way north, mention the names of the people who lived here. Help with the names that I forget. I remember Tom Ladenburg, the Gus Sonnenbergs, Roy Cooper, Art and Clarisse Harker, the Greenes. I knew Ron and Peggy Olson. Carl and Linda Pittman. Dick and Mary Smith. At Polebridge Karen Feather and the people in the meadow. Walt and Mid Connelly, who bought from Frank Evans up on the hill. The Lawsons and the Decks. Ben Jr. and Ann Hensen. Louie and Iola Mason. Ron and D’Ann Wilhelm. The subdivision on Numa Peak Lane that the Harkers developed. Then Jerry and Sally bought from Bud and Charlotte Fishel. Tom Riemer, who we all miss very deeply. Bill Olmsted. Bill Brown. Helen Huck Ramon. Jane Heckathorn owned that 160 that’s been developed now. The four Tacheny brothers. Murland Searight, which got sold to Cimino. Ed Neneman, but he was up on Trail Creek 20 years ago.

Frank Vitale and Ellen Horowitz on Red Meadow. And the Wernicks on East Red Meadow. Paul Mueller was there a long time at Moose Creek. The Shermans up at Tepee Flats. I actually met a fellow named Joe Heimes. Does anybody remember that name? He was the guy who captured Joe Cosley, who was a ranger for the park. He was friends with the Newtons. I met Austin Weikert, who built the border cabin that was at Frank Evans’ place but is up at Ray Hart’s now. Walt Hammer was at Placer Point. I never had a chance to meet him. Tom Reynolds. The Gaffaneys and the Hoilands and Tom and Marie Price Peterson on Trail Creek. The Foremans and Paul and Maxine Maas. Wild Bill Atkinson. Dave Walter. Madge and Ollie Terrian.

Joyce: I have one more person to introduce, unless there’s someone else.

Ray: I’d like to hear from Cosmo [Jerry Costello]. Give us something, Cosmo.

Lois: Where all have you hunted in the North Fork, Jerry? And tell us about building Home Ranch Bottoms.

Ray: Yes, Jerry knows where all the elk are.

Jerry: I’m going to stick to honest stories, though.

Ray: This guy is an icon. Don't let him kid you.

Jerry: Don't listen to him. Anyway, my name is Jerry Costello. This is my wife Sally. We moved up here in the early 1970s. We rented a cabin from Frank Evans and spent a winter there. We zipped our two down bags together at night, because you could see through the roof. But we were 29 years old, so it was a good deal. Then I kind of worked for folks who had a mill over here, for \$60 a week. We'd take that money and go to the Blue and White, get a pizza, and party on the weekend.

Joyce: That was Bob Kraft's mill. There are pictures in the album.

Jerry: Then we took care of the Wilderness Cabins across from Ben Rover's cabin for a couple of years. We used to socialize with Ben Rover. He was an old-timer who owned the store for many years. He had a lot of pictures from the old days. He actually had bears and wolves hanging from the front of the store, as I remember. I don't know whatever happened to those pictures.

Lois: He and Annette owned the store from 1943 to 1956.

Jerry: Nobody thought there were wolves up here, but I think Jerry DeSanto saw a wolf back in 1958 on Big Prairie. Diane probably knows more about that.

Diane: Ann Hensen shot one in 1970 near Polebridge.

Jerry: All I know is anything I hunt I eat, so I don't shoot wolves. So there, Diane. And that's the truth. Then we met Bud Fishel and Charlotte Bowman. Charlotte owned about 1500 acres up here [after her husband Sonny Bowman died]. Sally and I were looking for property. We came around the corner, just like the rest of you guys, and went "Whoa" when we saw the mountains. That was back in 1974. We looked at some pieces of property that Bud and Charlotte had while we were still working at the Wilderness Cabins. They came by one day and said, "We'll make you kids a deal." They showed us a piece that was almost nine acres. It was outside of the subdivision on Paradise Ridge, because they were going to build there. They sold it to us cheap. When I agreed on the price, she said, "No, I didn't tell you that. It was less than that." We still have it, and my sister-in-law Jane and her ex-husband Bill Brown bought it together with us, and we subdivided it. So, her ex-husband lives next to us—thank you, Jane.

We built a log house. When I worked on Bob Kraft's mill, we went down to Linda and Carl Pittman's and they gave us the trees to mill the house logs. On the weekend when we were off, we milled the logs for two houses. So, my house is still there. In 1988 everything burned except our house. Bill Brown's house burned. He rebuilt, but we saved our house by watering and doing what you're supposed to do.

We've gone through a lot of fires up here, especially you guys up at Trail Creek. There's a lot of tension when we have hot summers. But, I'm originally from Chicago, so when I go back there and work a couple of months there's more tension there. As far as bears and predators are concerned, this is probably the most remote valley in the United States. For you to live here, you're fortunate, and you just have to be aware. But you can't be fearful. I've had incidents in the past, and I scared them. I enjoy everything we do up here. I love it up here. We're never going to sell. All our property goes to our nieces, since we don't have kids. But we helped raise our three nieces up here.

And we've met a lot of nice people. I do a lot of bow hunting and elk hunting. Fortunately, I can still do it. I run into a lot of nice people. Mark Heaphy is top-shelf. He and Margaret are super nice people. I don't get around too much, socializing, but everybody I recognize here has been here a long time. It's always nice to see the new people who love it. Pat Elliott is a fine example of loving it. I don't think anybody who's been here for years is ever going to leave.

Joyce: I'm going to let you wind down, because there are two things I'm going to do. Jerry claims me as his wife.

Jerry: This is one of my wives.

Joyce: He mentioned Mark and Margaret. I'm going to tell you a story about Margaret. In 1980, John was doing some log work down the road. This little girl came up to him. He came home and said, "You're not going to believe this, but this little girl came up to me and asked for a job, working on a log house." I said, "Really?" Margaret told me years later that it was her. It was in 1980. She and Mark wanted to move up here, and she was looking for work. John was astounded. He looked at her and said to himself, "This little girl can't peel logs and haul logs around." And I guarantee you, she could! She still can!

Now, John O'Hara wants to tell a quick story, and Austin wants to take a picture of everybody. John wants to tell you about his introduction to Tom Ladenburg and how he got started building Tom Ladenburg's log home.

But Jerry wants to say one more thing.

Jerry: I don't want to say too much about this, but I logged with Tom Ladenburg for awhile. I knew him for 20 years. Myself, my wife, and my other sister-in-law went in as partners with him and built the Home Ranch Store. And that's all I've got to say on that subject.

Joyce: Jerry, introduce Ed Neneman. Everybody has holes in the ground that Ed has dug. And he hauled a lot of gravel for all of us.

Jerry: He knows all the legal points. If you want to know something, go talk to Ed. But he might charge you. Here's shy John.

John O'Hara: Thank you, Cosmo. It's time for a little ho-ho-ho here. Everything Joyce said is true. You come up here, and you don't know where you are, and it doesn't matter. If you've got some skills, you're good. I had some building skills, and I had all the dead timber that people were giving away, begging you to take it. So, we took it. Of course, Margaret, I regret that I didn't hire you. Next time come with the proper paperwork. We couldn't have had one more helping hand, because I got the shell of our cabin up and got the roof logs peeled, but by then we had been playing softball with guys up and down the valley. So, I had a crew I could get. I assembled a roofing crew. We called it a barn raising, like that was so romantic.

It was on a Saturday. I had about seven guys up here, all big and strong. We worked all day long, and Joyce and a couple of other ladies did the cooking. It was right out of the Wow textbook. After the meal, we went down to the saloon. I made the mistake of drinking too much, but so did everybody else, so I felt like I was okay. We walked into the saloon and sat down. We got a couple of pitchers of beer and some peanuts and we were laughing. I noticed a guy walking in front of the table that was on the other side of the chairs that I was staring at. I noticed he was a little drunk, but it didn't matter, because I've been there before and I know what's going on.

Then he started to look at me as he was walking. That messed with his coordination even more, so he was grabbing for the tables. I'm thinking, "I wish this guy would go away. We're having fun here." But he didn't. Then he looked at me and started making eye contact. The notion came into my brain, you are about to get into a gunfight with this guy. Maybe not with guns, but this was not good. So, it was all hands on deck, Johnny-O. All hands on deck.

He was walking back and was looking at me. All of a sudden he came across and spread the people out who were in front of me, and he said, "Which one of youse is O'Hara?" His face was this far away from me, so there was no mistaking. What was I to do? I didn't know him. I didn't know that he owned 2,000 acres and was Ben Cartwright. All I knew was that he didn't like me, and I didn't know why. So, I said, "I am." He slammed his elbow onto the table, really hard, and he said, "I can lick any Irishman alive." There are people out in the audience who I know can collaborate this story, and Jerry is one of them. He was sitting at the end of the bar going, "Oh, my God, I'm glad it's not me."

He had his elbow on the table, and he had me scared to death. He said, "Let's arm wrestle." Now we're talking, because I had been a bartender and I knew how to arm wrestle. I had nothing else to do; I had to fight him. I summoned up all of my adrenaline. I was cooking, and I was ready to go. We started, and we were right about at this angle. And this is where the rubber meets the road, but it was like a cement block. I couldn't budge him. I couldn't do anything, and I was quickly running out of fuel. So I backed off, and I could hear Jerry Costello taking a breath. Then down I went again, bending him slightly my direction, but nothing. It was like there was a stick between my hand and the table.

The only thing I could do was what I later learned any good Polebridge guy would do. I was gonna cheat. I had no other way out. So, I slid my hand under the table. And what did I find there? His hand. He already had the spot and had braced himself. He looked at me, and I looked at him, and to the last day I ever saw him alive we never discussed this even once. Not once. Because the arms went up, and then he looked at me again and said, "You have a criminally-shaped head." What was I to think. Then to top it all off, he looked at me and said, "How would you like to build me a log cabin?" Where was this coming from? I said, "Yeah, how did you know . . ." He said, "Don't worry about it. I'm gonna swing by tomorrow."

He swung by the next day. We talked it over, he hired me, and right now my son is finishing the 52<sup>nd</sup> log home that we've built, and it all started that night with a cheatin' son-on-a-gun and a criminally shaped head.

Sally Costello: I have a story about Joyce and John. It was 1976 and I was working at the Merc. Joyce came in every day, and she would buy a huge Hershey chocolate bar. She came every single day. I said, "Hey, you must be my friend, because anybody who comes in here every day and eats a chocolate bar has got to be my friend." She said, "Well, it's not really for me. It's for my husband." Sure, Joyce, sure.

Joyce: I didn't eat chocolate, believe it or not.

Sally: There were only six of these bars on the counter. She would ask for each one of them. She wanted to feel which one had the most almonds. I said, "You have to be my best friend."

Joyce: Chocolate and horses.

Sally: And we've been best friends ever since.

[Austin came and took a picture of the audience]

Austin Wallis: I'm going to grab the microphone just for a minute. I want to thank Wendy and Joyce for approaching us to host this event. I'm so thankful to have so many amazing locals come back here to share your stories. I think that the history and the lineage of this place is super important. We're so thankful that you're all here.

