

Adventures in McCloudland

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Chapter 2

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It was sheer luck that led us to McCloud. Whether you think it was our good luck or bad luck, I'll let you be the judge. We had often talked of "doing a B&B." We have frequently traveled with our classic car club and stayed in a lot of historic places. Not unlike most travelers, we'd find ourselves critiquing the place when we left. Seriously critiquing it.

Lee had been raised around the Gold Country in a much quieter environment than the Bay Area where we had lived and raised a family of three boys for 35 years. His father and uncle were forest rangers so they spent the summer months at various ranger camps and the winters in Placerville. He tells stories of trudging back up into the high country on horseback in the spring as soon as the snow had melted enough for it to be passable. He recalls walking along side the pack horse for miles, once with a baby kitten, heading for their home base. I admit I haven't any reference point to that way of life.

My family was from the city, four generations back. Most often they lived around the East Bay, mostly in Oakland. Even when we lived somewhere else, Oakland was always thought of as home. But, unlike Lee's family, most everyone in my family was in business for themselves. We weren't well off, by any means, and often struggled with moving and starting over. But I grew up accepting the fact that people took chances in business. Sometimes those chances were great flying leaps of faith. I vividly remember a day in the mid-50's my mother and step-father, after deciding they wanted a new business venture, couldn't decide where it would be; Agana or Teheran. One was the capital of Guam, the other in the desert somewhere. After much discussion they actually tossed a coin. Guam won. They started an electronic repair business which grew quite large and successful. My aunt's family soon followed and opened a clothing store. My uncle later brought of his electrical contracting company to Guam. They had brought an odyssey that had lasted over 15 years. While it lasted, we all did a lot of traveling, staying in some wonderful hotels, and I had a front row seat where the usual topic of dinner conversation was the day's business. So I had no illusions; I thought.

It was Lee who talked most often of returning to the mountains for our golden years; usually the Sierras. I, however, couldn't quite imagine life in the country uprooted from friends and family. So having a B&B seemed a good fit. He could putsy and I could make nice with guests, and cook. And although he was cautious about the idea of being in business for ourselves, I was undaunted.

Every summer Lee's family would have a family reunion in a different forest. After all the uncles and dads had passed on, we still continue the tradition in their honor. It was late summer in 1993 that we come to Lake Siskiyou and Camp with about 25 family members for several days. Lee and I had long since passed our camping days, and elected to stay at the Tree House where I picked up a copy of a local real estate handout.

Fate was about to take the upper hand, and take us on the ride of our life.