

# **Adventures in McCloudland**

By Marilyn J. Ogden

Chapter 10

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While we wait for escrow to close, we spend every hour sketching ideas and making plans. We'd have to enlarge the lobby. It's just too small to offer guests a place to relax and read or play games. We imagine a lobby fashioned from the 30's with overstuffed comfortable chairs with big bold prints. We begin to pay serious attention to period movies and start noticing window treatments and patterns. We rent videos just to study their period furniture and fabrics.

And of course we'd need a fireplace in the lobby, one with a raised hearth to sit on. How could we hope to attract skiers without one?

Food service for our guests is a major concern. The restaurant next to the hotel in a building owned by Dave & Suzanne Abbott, who own the Dance Country program and RV Park, had had a rocky past. During the end of summer, it had been leased by a woman who is serving Mexican food. But she's having a hard time and plans on closing in early Fall. It probably will not open again until Spring.

The other dinner house at the Guest House is also closed in Winter. The pizza restaurant is closed Sundays. The coffee shop closes in Winter at 5 P.M. Skiers leaving the park at 4 would not be ready for dinner at 5. We also suspect many of our guests would want special dinners as we want to attract honeymooners and folks celebrating birthdays and anniversaries.

We begin to realize we'd have to furnish continuous good food to attract guests. We had to have food service that was operating year round every day of the week. After all, travelers will be here every day and need dinner too.

The basement seems perfect for developing some kind of restaurant. It is half below ground level, has windows looking at what will be the front garden, and has its own entrance to the street with just four stairs which we could easily ramp for handicapped access. It also has a full flight of stairs up to the hotel's rear lobby for a second emergency exit and entrance for our guests. Perfect. We'd have a pub serving beer and wine, with lunch and dinner food service.

Where to place our residence is a major decision we revisit for weeks. We've stayed in B&B's where the owners were relegated to a single room over the garage or behind a kitchen. They had no living room or kitchen to call their own and no life away from the public eye. It became important that we design a space for ourselves which will offer us privacy and comfort.

It's a major decision. And one that would become a frequent query from guests as to our reasoning for taking half of the first floor for our residence. The decision is made after being heavily influenced by several factors.

Our visits to two hotels years before accounted for one part of the decision. We'd stayed at the Mendocino Hotel, a wonderful place, with lots of character. Except our room was over the kitchen part of their dining room. We listened to the staff as they loaded and unloaded pots and pans while talking loudly well into the night. Although we have been back to the Mendocino Hotel we are always careful to ask for a room not over the kitchen. We decide to avoid having guest rooms over a kitchen.

Several years before we ever saw this place we stayed at the old Murphy's Hotel. It was a colorful piece of history on Highway 4 off Highway 49 in the heart of the gold rush country. The street is a narrow 2 lane road with the hotel built in gold country style on the edge of the sidewalk. It's a two story structure with a two-room suite on the second floor across the front of the building. The entrance is on one side of the front floor and a bar on the other. When we stayed there, the hotel was virtually unrestored. Original rustic. We took the Presidential Suite, or maybe it was called President Grant's Suite, both of which sound a lot grander than it was. It was a huge square room with old wall paper and a light hanging in the middle of the room. It was sparsely furnished with a bed and grand piano. A private balcony hung out over the sidewalk.

It had been a long day and we turned in early. When the music and loud talking from the bar below drifted up to our room we closed the balcony doors. It was hot, but at least we'd have some quiet. Not so. The noise was unabated and made it impossible to sleep. We finally got up, got dressed, and joined the party in the ruckus bar with all sorts of good ol' boys having a good ol' time. We were good sports, it'd only be another couple of hours, then we could sleep. As 2 AM neared we said our goodnights and headed back to our room, We once again got ready for bed, opened the double doors for a breath of fresh air and settled in. At 2 the bar closed. Rather than everyone clearing out, they moved outside to the sidewalk and neighboring yard to continue their visiting. Our patience wore thin as we listened to them leave... one... at... a... time. Each bid goodnight in voices which could be heard in the next county. Sleep finally came and so did the lesson that guest rooms over a bar don't work.

The second major reason for locating our residence on the first floor is a personal one which I'm sure I've never told anyone. Everyone on my mother's side of my family has had leg problems as they got older. Some of us even have had them earlier as I have suffered with severe leg cramps and deep leg pain since my teen years. Poor circulation and a myriad of problems seem to beset all the Faris clan. I'm fairly fatalistic about my flaws, as I've watched grandmother, aunt, uncle, mother all cope with immobility in their later years. I've just accepted that I would have some of those same maladies someday and I didn't want to be living on the third floor when they happened. I wanted a place with its own entrance and not a lot of stairs. It also had to be very accessible to the lobby as I wanted to be part of the action even when I'm old.

So it seemed logical. The first floor south wing. It had its own entrance, was level to the lobby, and would provide a buffer between the pub and future guest rooms.