

## **Adventures in McCloudland**

By Marilyn J. Ogden

Chapter 20

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The bid documents and preliminary drawings are out as scheduled to about six local contractors from McCloud and Mt. Shasta. Lee and I meet with each of them in Ron's office as a way to introduce ourselves and the project. It also gives us a chance to chat informally with them.

Meanwhile, I put the word out that we needed some young people to help move some of the furniture out of our way to the third floor and tear out the small patches of fencing that were left standing in the back. A couple of overgrown, and foul-smelling, junipers near the back porch would have to come out as well. Just as importantly, I want the local high schoolers to know we are going to do this and it was time to stop the vandalism that had been going on here.

In no time we have a crew of 8 to 12 young men wanting to earn a little money. I put a note on each 3<sup>rd</sup> floor room with a different item like dressers, wardrobes, beds, small desks, upholstered chairs, wood chairs or night stands. They eagerly took off with pieces and must have made hundreds of trips up and down the stairs. They're a good crew and hard workers.

The next day, however, I get a call from a local person who wants me to know that one of the boys is trouble and I shouldn't have him in the hotel. The caller goes on to warn me that everyone who has ever had any contact with this person has been sorry. The young man "is a thief" the caller said. "And I should let him go immediately."

But the young man he spoke of had put in a full day's hard work; without complaining. Although I respect the opinion of the caller and thank him for letting me know, I hesitate to dismiss someone without first-hand knowledge. So I will wait and see.

The young crew spent about 2 weeks here traipsing up and down stairs with heavy awkward pieces of furniture to the third floor. They dug up and hauled away broken

fencing and a couple of huge, overgrown junipers; a prickly miserable job. A pine tree had grown on the south-west corner of the building that would have to be removed. It was about 15 feet tall with a trunk about 4 inches diameter. I asked them if they could dig it out. "Sure, we can take care of that."

Several hours later I notice they were not making much headway. The root was just too deep. The young man I had been warned about said he could use his dad's truck to pull it out. I thought that perhaps this was not the best thing to do to a vehicle, but "It's no problem," was the response.

A few minutes later a truck shows up with dad. And the boys set about uprooting the tree. It seemed like it took a long time to get it out of the ground and later the young man mentioned something about a broken axle. But when I asked if I needed to have the truck fixed, he said, "No, Dad's just happy someone is really going to fix this place. No problem."

The boys began sharing stories about how they knew kids who had broken into the hotel to party. (I know what you're thinking; they were probably part of it.) It's okay. It seems it was a right-of-passage for the teens of McCloud.

But they let us know that they had recently told "those guys" that the Ogdens were fixing this place up and not to trash the hotel anymore. No one ever broke in again.

I don't know what alleged problems the young man with the "troublesome" background really were. I don't want to know. He and his classmates did a wonderful job here. I will always be grateful.

They worked hard and were a tremendous help. I hope they took away a feeling that they contributed something important to the restoration of the hotel. Some of them still stop by occasionally and visit with Jeff. But that's a different story. One much uglier.