

## White Grass Heritage Project “Sharing the Legacy”

INTERVIEWEE: Jayne Ottman

INTERVIEWER: Roger Butterbaugh

LOCATION: White Grass Ranch inside Hammond Cabin, Grand Teton National Park

DATE: June 13, 2014

Transcribed by Julie Greene in 2020

Note: This transcript has undergone minor edits, e.g., false stars and some text were removed to make it more “reader friendly,” Jayne’s complete interview transcript is below.

R: (0:40) My name is Roger Butterbaugh. The date is June 13, 2014. I am at White Grass Ranch inside the Hammond Cabin, which is part of White Grass Ranch, inside the boundaries of Grand Teton National Park. I am speaking with Jayne Ottman, who is a former worker and resident here at the ranch. We are going to be talking about some of her experiences during her time here at White Grass. I wonder if we could start with a little bit of background, where you came from, how you ended up in Jackson, your education, a little bit of information about your family.

J: I would love to share that. Thank you, Roger, for the opportunity to be here. I am a Montana gal and Jackson Hole was always dear to my family’s heart. My father was an avid skier and the year that the big ski area opened at Teton Village, we came down to ski as a family and I have never forgotten what we got to see that winter. I always wanted to come back. My goal was to return to some ski town as we grew up a very active ski family. There were 6 children in our family and a father that would do anything to ski. So, we skied every weekend we possibly could. All of our vacations were ski vacations.

I finished nursing school in 1973, I graduated from the University of Portland, Portland, Oregon, with a BA in Science in Nursing. I circled 56 ski area towns in the West as possible employment opportunities as a graduate nurse in 1973. There was not an immediate opening in Jackson Hole when I graduated in May of 1973. So, I took a job in Bend, Oregon and true to my fickle nature, like most of us at age 22, I changed that direction 3 days before I was supposed to start work as a nurse. (Instead), I was hired as the nurse for Many Glacier Hotel clients and staff in Glacier National Park where I had the opportunity to become involved with the rangers as a backcountry nurse for all the backcountry accidents. I was also the liaison between Canada and Montana in terms of transporting people up there. So, I worked closely with the Park Service. I was charged with the responsibility to determine if patients needed to be transported to Cardston, Canada for medical care.

Bob Frausen, a park ranger, was a legend at Many Glacier in Glacier National Park. We would rendezvous at St Mary’s, get a key at the gas pumps that he would hide, that would open the border into Canada to transport patients. And, then upon return, I’d put the key back at the gas pumps at St. Mary’s where he would pick it up the next morning. These were obviously in the middle of the night kind of transports. Ian Tippet, the hotel manager trusted my decision making. This work situation forced me to think independently and make level-headed decisions. I loved my independence, the ruggedness and wildness of being my own boss at Many Glacier. You would no more hand a key to a 22 yr. old (today) to open another country’s border! So that was marvelous.

I ended up here after my first summer of 1973 at Many Glacier and ended up here in Jackson Hole. I spent my first winter at Mrs. Harrison Crandell’s homestead on Antelope Flats Road and fell in love

with the idea of a log cabin without heat or running water. My parents were aghast after sending me to a private school that I ended up in a place that didn't provide me with amenities but they fully supported me. That school was the University of Portland in Portland, Oregon, small Jesuit school at the time and still is.

I had a marvelous winter with Mrs. Crandell, hauling the water out of Flat Creek and heating with 3 wood stoves, all having asbestos backing. We just didn't worry about things back then, party lines with phones. I would usually capture 7 and 10 mice per night. It was the Craigheads, both Charlie and Derek, that help secure that location. I grew up with Derek in Missoula, Montana so that was also a draw to come to Jackson because I knew he was spending some time here and working on their family cabin.

R: (5:00) You are describing outdoors, skiing, adventure -- were you destined to pursue those kind of things as a child? What was part of your upbringing would land you in a place living in a log cabin all winter with lots of hardship?

J: To me it was exciting and fun. I had pretty much a 'Huck Finn life' as a girl. We were given lots of freedom. My parents were wonderful to let us explore and we lived out of the city limits by a creek and when it froze, we would take our runner sleds and sled on it. We learned to ski on the backyard hill. We didn't have a lot of money with 6 kids. My father sold insurance. There were a lot of hand me downs and up until I was a freshman in high school, my annual gift from my father was painted wooden skis with bear trap bindings. I would always get a fresh coat of red paint and I thought it was spectacular.

So, we hiked, we backpacked, we camped a lot as a family up in Montana. Eventually, they were able to afford, by default, someone did not pay my father's insurance premium and had a lake lot in the Swan Valley MT at a lake called Lindbergh Lake, which is really the pristine lake of all lakes in the Swan area. We continue today to drink water straight out of the lake which only goes through a sand filter. It is one of the key lakes in MT where aquatic life is studied and how they flourish. So, I grew up outdoors doing a lot of great things with my family and that is why I knew and what I loved. In college, I had a wonderful roommate and we just spent all of our time outside either hiking or skiing or climbing or whatever. So, it was just natural for me to migrate, none of my other 6 siblings took it this far.

R: So, your attraction to this particular area was really related to the skiing as opposed to some people ended up at White Grass because it was cowboys but that really was not part of your heritage.

J: (7:28) I always wanted a horse and in 8<sup>th</sup> grade my parents connected me with a woman who needed a horse ridden, so I had free access for 5 years to this horse, anytime I wanted. And, I loved horses. As a child, when we would go camping at Lindbergh Lake in the Swan, before we had our cabin, I would save every dime. I would dig worms; I would have lemonade stands; I would do anything to get money; mow lawns (in order) to ride a horse. So, I "lived" at the wrangler's cabin at Lindbergh Lake. So, yes, there was an attraction (to horses). But, I have to say the Tetons were first when I left school - could I find a ranch to ride but could I find an area to ski? (If so) then it all fell together beautifully. I still search out horses and good skiing. And, I always wanted to be a cowgirl underneath it all.

R: What does that mean?

J: Well, it means I love horses, love outdoor life, don't mind getting dirty. It is all part of the deal. And currently, I live adjacent to the Linn Ranch, where horses come right up to our fence boundary.

I sleep outside on a screened in porch 4 months out of the year. We have a house of hair because we have tons of animals that come in and out of the house, dogs and cats and what not, all rescued. And, (I live) close to a ski area, Teton Village, and a lot of back country skiing and that has a lot of importance to my life now. I am so filled by nature that literally, if I cannot be outside every day, I feel like I am suffocating physically. I feel like I need some sense of outdoor. It doesn't have to be an adventure, but I have to be outdoors every day of my life or I just feel I am slowly dying.

R: (9:28) What does outdoors fulfill for you?

J: It just gives me that inner sense of peace and connection to something bigger than I am. I still am in awe of that every season. Even though I see the same things mostly come up, I still am in awe; that arrowleaf is blooming. It is very important to me that to note those occurrences happen. It is very important that I know there is a full moon and that is part of who I am at a soul level. It is the cyclic part of nature and that keeps me going.

R: I have in front of me which will be become part of the record, a piece that you wrote called "Women at White Grass Ranch, Winter of 74/75." One of the things you wrote and, if you want to read it, which would be fine, or I will read it. It is a quote that starts off, "Once off the Moose-Wilson Road (which is the road that comes up to White Grass) and onto the spur that took me to the ranch, I remember shifting into 2<sup>nd</sup> gear to take in all the fall colors, the smells and the sights at the bottom of the winding, narrow road. Spectacular was an understatement. When I reached the electric fence gate, which opened onto the big meadow which was chock full of horses, I thought I was in heaven."

J: That is really an emotional piece for me as I drove up the road today, I hadn't driven that road for almost 40 years, coming into the ranch, I just took it all in and it really grabs me at a gut level. I don't know how to describe the beauty that one sees and remembers and feels - it all comes up together. It is not like you get to experience, as I drove in today, the snow lingering in the mountains; the breeze and what that felt like and the pollen coming through the air; the smells of the of the fresh pine just reaching in and all of that comes together; and the visualization of 100 horses in the meadow that first evening I drove up; and the crispness of that. It is all very raw and very primal. I don't know, it is like birth, it is like death, something so much bigger than you are but to have it coming together for me was very overwhelming. As I drove up and came to the original road.

Note: "Women at the White Grass – Winter of 1974-75" is printed in its entirety at the end of this interview.

R: (12:20) Well, words comes to mind include affirmation, being whole, reaching very deeply into your soul. Is that too strong to say?

J: No, it's right on. It's going into a place that few people can tap into as if you take the most naked, raw, beautiful experience because it is not doctored. It is all what it is and then you feed your heart that and then you feel what that meal felt like to your heart - that appetizer. It is beyond description. It is beyond delicious. It's beyond peaceful. It's beyond quiet and gratuitous and lovely but it all comes together rushing at you and that is what it feels like. It's sorta like when you ski a really great powder run and are on it and your turns are great and tight and the snow is flying up in your face. It is so really crazy, wild, beautiful, lovely.

R: (13:34) Welcome back to White Grass.

J: Thanks, you picked a good one. WOW.

R: Go backwards, if I may, Mrs. Crandell was Harrison Crandell's wife, who was a photographer, artist and had his studio up around Jenny Lake. Am I saying all that correctly?

J: Yes, that is correct. The cabin I lived in was the old homestead cabin they lived in when he had his first studio. Then later, I believe, it was the Dance Floor, so I just have had a lot of rich history and still live in old cabins without straight walls and are drafty. We always plugged the walls at the Crandell's or White Grass with newspaper. We usually ended up with a snowstorm on the floor. That was how it was.

R: You were staying in the Crandell place in the winter, and then you went back to Glacier for another summer and then finally made it back to Jackson where you took up work at the hospital?

J: They (the hospital) put up with (me) the fickle 23 yr. old. I had a decent shift in the afternoon in the ICU and really loved that intense fun work. The commute from the Crandell's home on Antelope Flats, you have to remember they weren't plowing the roads much at night. So, I would call in if I could get through my party line - I would call the hospital and I would give myself 45 minutes to get in. Of course, I didn't have a place to shower so I would have to shower at the hospital and all that good stuff.

Everything froze in my cabin, so I would take my dog, my wonderful companion dog, Buckwheat, and would just bring (her) right into the hospital. Of course, that was right after the higher ups and docs weren't there. So, I stuck her in the old PT room, turned on the intercom, so I could make sure she wasn't barking. We would play fetch at 2 am, when I had night shift, down the hallways. Of course, you could hear tennis balls clanking, toenails clicking. But, I never did screw up on meds or anything else. I would be fired for that. I could've been fired for a lot of things we did in the hospital back then. But it was always around fun with staff and not around patient care. I do have to put that caveat in. So, spending a winter here, I knew what I was in for.

R: Here, meaning?

J: White Grass.

R: So, you stayed here with 3 other women. Frank and Nona were also wintering here, which they didn't always do. That was kinda unusual for you to be here when they were here. Who else was on the ranch?

J: Sherry Gueiry, who later married Ralph Tingy later, who became superintendent of Denali. He was an avid climber. At this time, he was a ranger in Grand Teton. Both Sherry and Ralph were amazing athletes of their time and probably still are.

R: So, they had a cabin up here (at White Grass) too?

J: Well, Ralph didn't but Sherry came in pre-marriage to Ralph and lived with another climbing friend, Louise, but they dated major climbers of the 70's and people would know their names. I believe, Ralph, was one of those early guys. So, it turned out that all the women on the ranch would winter. They had a modern cabin, Sherry and Louise, and it was the last cabin built on the ranch and it was pretty modern. It had amenities, baseboard heat and things like that. We didn't have that.

R: You heated with wood.

J: We heated with wood in the kitchen and then, we also had little wood stoves in our bedrooms to the demise later of the cabin burning down unfortunately. It was not in our time but when others were in the cabin.

R: Do I remember correctly that you were doing a lot of wood splitting that winter?

J: Oh my God, the kitchen was the happening spot. So, we stacked our wood on a horribly covered, tippy storage area that Frank and Nona had built us; something like a wood storage on our front porch. And, we had Ted Hargrave, down the road, who took care of me at the Crandell's. (He) made sure I had wood and that the ax handles (wrapped with hide) were right for people who couldn't aim. And then, we would haul wood into the kitchen on a chopping block on the floor because we had an electric/wood oven. That was where everybody hung out because that was where it was warm. Karin Abromaitis, my Many Glacier Park climbing buddy, had the room off the kitchen but the kitchen truly was the warmest room.

R: (19:33) We are looking at a picture that you (Jayne) brought about your days at White Grass, (In that winter picture,) there are 3 other ladies, who all lived with you that winter. With Jayne's permission, we will make a digital copy of this photo and include that in the record, if that is okay?

J: We're rough looking, I can't believe it.

R: Let's see, there are 4 people and 3 dogs.

J: Of course, I am sure there was a 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> dog. We all looked like a bunch of worn-out hippies, which we were, but truly enjoying the ranch.

R: You described that you had a lot of contact with Frank and Nona that winter. Would you take a moment and describe the interactions you had and describe Frank and describe Nona, if you wish, and their relevancy to you during that time at the ranch?

J: I would love to because they really were the pivotal point of that whole winter. I saw and did things that I didn't know ever existed. My world was pretty closed in a tiny community of Missoula most of my life. College was just college in the bigger city, but I had really never been out on my own to really experience the world like I had (the world being the White Grass Ranch). These people, Frank and Nona, were world league. They had homes in other parts of the world; they traveled outside of the United States; they did a lot of things that were pretty unusual.

I must admit I lived in Austria for a year, so I did get to see a lot of Europe. I wasn't totally under a rock at that point. I had some amazing travels around Eastern/Western Europe/Northern Africa. I did a lot of stuff but never like this, living on my own here (at White Grass) was pretty amazing.

Frank and Nona were very different. Frank was about as laid back as you get. He was the nicest, easiest going person. I never saw him mad and never saw him flare. He worked hard; he worked at the ranch. He was always working with the irrigation or the water for the cabins. He just didn't sit around. Nona did her work too, but I didn't quite see her in that light. A lot of the work Frank did was manual and he was always congenial. He was often in a grubby pair of jeans and a work shirt and I usually saw him with a shovel or rack in his hands. He was always doing something.

So, it was really fun to walk the ranch with Frank and he would go “that is where some old pens were” where his parents had the fox farm. He could tell us a lot of stories about ownership and what happened at the ranch before he took it over. Nona was the flare. Nona was the red flame. Nona had a fiery personality and Nona could have meltdowns. Nona could throw one hell of a party and so could Frank.

So, like that winter, they kept chickens under their cabin, so we always had fresh eggs and they were always available when they laid. They were especially generous with those. By November, when our water lines were all frozen, that was the end of flush toilets and any running water that we were dreaming of. So, we were on our own to rig whatever we could to go to the bathroom and to get our water which we just got out of the ditches up here. We didn’t worry about Giardia. I am sure I am immune to it now. I have had it so many times, but I don’t recall being sick from drinking the White Grass ditch water.

The parties were exceptional and all the women on the ranch would show up to the parties, at least every couple of weeks. The Galey’s would throw a hell of a bash and oftentimes their friends would come in. Frank would try to keep the road open in the winter...to the ranch or at least up to the gate and then we would ski or snowshoe in. That was always a given and, most often or not, we parked at the gate. We always didn’t have our little road in here plowed but the parties were full of alcohol and things I had never eaten, like caviar. I had never known what that was. Hors oeuvre at the Ottman household was potato chips. We didn’t even know what salsa was. So, when caviar came on, that was pretty wild, and champagne. I am sure I had had champagne but not in the quantities. So, the parties got raucous, very loud. I was shocked at how amazing...I sat back a lot and kinda observed. We were always included, lots of great food. They loved to cook, and they always had magnificent meals available. Most of it I didn’t know what it was, but it was tasty and yummy. There was lots of alcohol.

R: (24:48) Who would cook?

J: I think they both cooked because I don’t recall having a cook in the winter. So, who can say one over the other. But, there was always lots of alcohol. I do remember in the fall, with the parties, when we would sit down on the Galey deck of their cabin that some wall opened up. I don’t remember how that happened, if it were a big sliding door and I thought it was a whole wall, but it was huge. A lot of glasses would go flying out or in the winter they would just get smashed. This beautiful crystal, I just couldn’t believe it, against the rock fireplace.

R: What did that tell you?

J: It was another world of a class of people but what was really cool about these people, they were wealthy class of people that I didn’t know or grow up with.

R: You are talking about Nona and Frank and the friends that came.

J: Some friends of Frank and Nona, I didn’t know them that well to know their backgrounds and I don’t remember who came.

R: Primarily you are describing Frank and Nona.

J: Frank and Nona so they were a very entitled family with a fair amount of money, the way I saw it. But, they were so generous to us lowlifes, us working class. It didn’t seem to matter. It was a party so come join the party and be part of the party.

R: Everybody was equal.

J: Everybody was equal at that party. What was wild for me is that I never saw any of my parents or their friends carrying things out to the extremes. But, it wasn't a big deal. Nobody corralled anybody or scolded them at the party to say what are you doing this for? It was like "Whatever."

But unusual, delicious foods, chickens under your cabin floor and fresh eggs. And that fall, there were pigs outside in the pig pen. I kept losing my dog because she would go out and eat the pig scraps. People would tell me that the pigs would eat the dog and they never ate the dog. Nevertheless, we had pigs, we had horses, then there was the fox farm that was not active. But, it was just so wild around here, just so crazy, with a mix of crazy and beautiful solid nature. That's kinda how the Galey's were. They were mixed, they were absolutely connected to this place at a very deep level. This place is so raw and beautiful and natural and solid. It is an anchored place. And, to a degree they were and to a degree they weren't so, they were very complex in that way. They were never mean (but) they could be mean to one another, but they were never mean to us. That would be adult marriage squabbles.

They were kind to their animals. They were very caring to their animals. The horses were always looked after well. The way I remember it, the dogs on the ranch were always king and they could go anywhere. And, Ralph Tingy was the ranger that would patrol this area. We never saw him much so we never got caught. We never worried about getting caught taking our dogs up to Phelps Lake every day in the winter on skis.

R (28:11) That was in 1974 and 75, in the winter, which meant the Park was really active at that point. It had been labeled a park and designated as such. Accordingly, the rules of the Park were established.

J: Yea, we knew that we couldn't take dogs up Death Canyon. (But) we thought it was different to take them up to Phelps Lake Overlook. Like most moronic 20 yr. old's, we made the rules ourselves. Frank never said don't take your dogs up there and even the wranglers at the ranch would saddle up the horses any time we wanted. We would just ride off in the big meadow to the adjoining ranch, Sky Ranch. And, (we would) lay down in the grass, lay down in the daisy fields with the dogs and let the horses munch. We figured if they ran off, they would come back to the ranch. So, their reins were always rolled up. We were looking at the stars at night or looking what's around on a beautiful sunny day while the dogs were playing. It was just so much fun. Nobody asked where you were riding, they just figured if you were dumb enough to get on, you better be dumb enough to come home. We didn't sign waivers, nobody worried. One of the gals broke her back while she was up here riding and it was "Oh, did you get to the doctor?"

R: (29:49) I can't help as I listen to think about the marked contrast in your life, medicine, structure, organize, procedural, rules, all that sort of stuff in terms of practicing nursing and then up here, being at White Grass must have been 180 degrees almost.

J: You know, it was but there was structure here but more in the realm of, to a degree how I grew up, (i.e.,) go out and explore and enjoy and see what you find in the creek and bring home frogs, if you want. And, we had bird funerals, you can skate on the frozen ponds and when you heard the dinner bell or the whistle it meant (1 whistle) you have 5 minutes and (2 whistles) get your butts home now. But, it was so freeing, so my home experience was a lot like it here.

My parents were not heavy drinkers or alcoholics or didn't smash things into their fireplace. We ate very simple meals, but it was what any 20-yr. old is looking for. We were looking for new experiences and adventure and trying to make that shape our life while still hanging on to rigidity and our upbringing. We were swinging the pendulum of growing up the other direction our parents and education drilled into us, but desperately trying to fit the pieces together. We have to experience that rigid and wild, crazy part in our lives, and you do that in your 20's. So, coming here felt absolutely at home for me but it would not have for my other siblings in any way, shape or form.

R: The other thing that strikes me is in '74/75, here's 4 women living in a cabin and so much is written about the West and Wyoming, and the difference in genders, the males occupying one role and the women, a different set of rules, you were pushing some boundaries, were you not?

J: (32:11) We pushed a lot of boundaries at that time. As young women, every woman had a very strong personality, including Sherry and Louise, very independent women. We didn't come in with that attitude, but we knew it would be challenging living in an environment as I had at Many Glacier. This person right here (in photo), Karen Abromaitis, we met in Glacier Park, was an avid outdoors person and this was nothing new to her. She drove one of the first mail trucks from Jackson to Teton, Idaho every day, over the Teton Pass and had to put chains on it. That was her job for the winter. Janeen Schneider at the time, (now Jordan Lawley) was a substitute teacher so she substituted and also waited tables. This other woman, Beth, was from Texas. She also waited tables. We all had to figure out how to pay our rent and be independent, make enough and not spend too much. There will be no other times like that, it doesn't exist anymore.

R: (33:30) Were you challenged by male oriented society back then. Frank seemed to accept you, it didn't matter if you were male or female. Curly, was he okay?

J: Curly loved his girls. He was so gentle with us. He knew us without knowing us. He knew which horse to saddle up for us. He knew us. I don't know how that man knew us but, he did.

No, I did not find challenges here. There were some in the hospital setting where it was a very male dominated physician world at that time. Dr. Maxine Cameron broke that mold. She was an internist who came in very different. When I worked ICU, she would bring in a recently caught fish and hold it up over one of her cardiac patients - some stinky ole fish she caught out of the Gros Ventre River. That opened my world to better understand how to share the world's natural wealth and ones' humor to those needing to experience that. You learn more, you take it upon yourself to teach yourself a lot of things because you are not going to get it from a book. It wasn't a resentful or world.

The hospital had its own challenges, but I welcomed that. We just worked really hard. I would leave ICU and help with delivery. Can you imagine today you walk out an ICU unit where people are hooked up to monitors and go help with a delivery? There was only one nurse on the floor (and one nurse in the ICU at night) and they would call in a delivery nurse if a mother had to deliver. So, we all pitched in and helped. We had a hand wringer washing machine for Labor and Delivery patients, so it was expected the nurses would hand crank that thing and wash all the bloody sheets afterwards. That is just what you did, no big deal. So, you would have somebody poke their head in the 5-bed ICU and make sure nobody died while you were washing sheets! It was all good.

But, what I learned at the ranch, what I learned at Many Glacier, what I learned at the Crandell homestead and at St John's (hospital in Jackson) is that you really rely on yourself for good decision making. I find that those earlier years is where you learn to make sound judgments, or you don't. So,



given the opportunity to say yes. Yes, great, you can live at White Grass but if you don't get the wood in and you don't know how to split wood, you are going to freeze your butts off. You are going to be miserable and you won't make it.

R: (35:48) Self-reliance.

J: Totally. I just think we all make good judgment calls. I think it's originally parental guidance. It just happened to be we took jobs that were independent, (e.g.,) the person who drove the mail truck over Teton Pass in the day when it wasn't plowed regularly had to make some pretty big calls about that on her own without a cell phone to call her boss. It was just all those kinds of things.

R: You talk as though there is almost an element of celebration in accomplishment, success and progress.

J: Well, it was quite the time when you think about the '70s and the big movement in Boston, women's bodies and abortion issues. There were lots of things on the plate. And women employment, we finally had more choices than being a teacher, a nurse, a secretary. (That how my era kinda was but I did want to be a nurse from a young age). I think pushing boundaries is really great. I think being obnoxious is not and I have done both. I think that we all did that and we were smart enough or we had guardian angels that kept watch on us so we didn't fall on our faces too often.

R: Are there other things about the winter or your time spent here for a couple of summers? Are there other things you want to say about the winter and your experiences?

J: Winter was hard and harsh, and you really had to plan ahead and think about what you were going to do because things didn't work. You didn't have a flush toilet; you had skunks living under your cabin; you had mice running around; you couldn't have plants-they froze; you had to make sure you had gas in your car when you left town; and you had to know how to put on chains. You learned these things.

So, winter was challenging but it was so breathtakingly beautiful at midnight to ski from your job, whether it was from Moose because you couldn't get onto the road or you just chained up to get to the White Grass gate. It was colder (than now). I was here when it was 56 below, living in Antelope Flats with wood heat. I skied over to the Craigheads with my dog. Esther and Frank were very concerned about my well-being in the cabin. So, I skied across the flats at that temperature and spend the night with them.

They always had me at Christmases, when I was at the Crandell cabin. They didn't want me to be alone on that holiday. Frank and Ester were kind to people and so were their family members. I didn't live up here when it was 64 below - I was living down at Fall Creek. I had just built a cabin with my husband at the time, everything had shut down. We just don't get winters like that; you had to be prepared. You get that; you just have good sense of judgment. There was a wonderful sense of caring and inclusion with other people.

R: (39:32) Would you call yourself a risk taker? Outdoors? or are you smart and reasoned?

J: I am a risk taker. And, I'd like to think of myself as smart and reasoned but when you look at my generation of women, there were lots being recognized. I requested an independent senior thesis project, none of which the University had ever seen or heard of back in '73. I wanted to go up to the Swan Valley in Montana, in a very poor rural area and I wanted to do public health work. I wanted to

live in the boonies without a physician or a hospital. So, the dean said, nobody has done that, but I said I would like to. Then, the dean at the time said, “Okay, we will let you. Well, do it, this is like what people really need to see, not everybody is going to work well in a hospital.”

So, for a month I disappeared off the radar screen and at the end the dean drove up to check it out in a red convertible and picked me up and we drove back to Portland together...she met the nurse practitioner who supervised me who recalled some of the past month's experiences that would forever shape my nursing career. The only thing I remember the dean saying on the way back was to lay off the gas when I hit 90 mph.

From that standpoint, I did push the boundaries and they have been pushed back at me. I haven't always been successful. In my 40 years plus in Jackson, I have learned to go around the bumps, there's other ways. When things fail, it is a wonderful opportunity to redesign what you want. So, failure is a marvelous thing and I think we look at it as shameful. If you are in an institution, you get a pink slip and write up and I am a supporter of saying “Great, it failed, how do you want to fix it? What will work for you in that situation?”

My parents taught me how to work problems out and solve them and that it is okay to fail. That is how you learn. I have carried that forward over the years with many bumps. There have been some career moves that have been tough for me. (For example) I was the director of Public Health starting in '75. Wilma Elmore, was the first public health nurse, who was the daughter of a physician, Dr. Elmore, one of the early, early physicians here. Wilma spent a year or less, getting it off the ground. I had the pleasure of developing public health. So, that was all its own challenge.

I was the Fun Run Director for Old Bill's Fun Run. I organized the first three. I was not the director of the Foundation but there were a lot of obstacles in that organization I had to figure out and things to work around.

In then, mid 90s, all public health offices were mandated by CDC to increase their immunization rates. And, I was going to do that with sled dogs. I wanted to have fun accomplishing this and fell in love with the idea of mushing. I had never mushed but, I walked up to Frank Teasley, a local musher in the valley and kennel owner at the end of a race in St. Anthony in Ashton, Idaho and said we need to do a dog race and we need to promote immunizations and we really need to get our communities involved with a story line. They don't really care that we have to meet these 2000 goals but might if you give a good story about the serum run in the old Alaska back in the day, we might actually accomplish the mandate.

So, I became co-founder and co-director of the Pedigree sled dog race. The first year, we had to raise \$100,000 for purse money. I thought how in the heck do you do this? Frank Teasley taught me a lot about never give up. That was a big thing.

Frank said I know how to run a race and I said I know how to do immunizations. So, within a year or two, we met those year goals in our county. So did the state, they did really well too. We used this as launching marketing platform for the state to put their teeth into something fun. They did a really good job supporting that and we ran the sled dog race under the guise of good health care for dogs and good health care for children that promoted immunizations, well-being clinics and vet checks. And, it still continues today. The race now goes into Utah and Montana. So, it was a continuous race where they would go to 10 different towns.

We also organized youth philanthropy groups and a lot of (other) grass roots things that I have done, fun stuff. A lot of that stuff is still here today. Old Bill's Fun Run is a phenomenal fund raising for our NGO's in our area, now primarily for Teton County, WY. It used to be for Teton County, Idaho and Teton County, Wyoming and now it is just Wyoming. An anonymous donor couple gave a certain amount of money to then match funds raised by lots of people involved with the community foundation. It was a big effort. I think we hit up close to a 100 million dollars and generated it back to the community to support nonprofits.

So, I had to be a risk taker and smart and reasoned as I could be.

R: (46:13) Over how many years?

J: We are coming up 20 years for the sled dog race this coming year and I think Old Bill's Fun Run is probably 17 or 18. They do a phenomenal job as well.

R: Let's fast forward past the winter into the spring and summer here at White Grass because you stayed on. You were still working at the hospital and you continued to live here at the ranch. Tell me about that part.

J: It was great. The women on the ranch, we were now then down to 3 women at the ranch and it was just fine - the mail truck driver (Karin) and the substitute teacher/waitress (Janeen) and myself as nurse in ICU at the hospital. Spring came and the pipes thawed, the flowers bloomed. Curly came back and we had horses. He saddled them up again and the raucous cabin parties still continued. We could drive to the cabin and we could open windows. We didn't spend as much time in the kitchen, chopping wood as we did out hiking trails. That was spectacular and we saw another season come.

We had an old barn dance in the barn at White Grass, which is no longer here. I remember one night particularly well. I think it was in the fall or spring. (Carole Hofley and her husband had the barn reassembled on property south of Wilson which they once owned). To this day, I can close my eyes and picture myself and remember that beautiful fall evening. Everybody came, we danced while the floorboards shook, many Park Service employees were there. So fun.

Spring was fantastic with wildflowers, critters, and animals on the move. In the fall, we had elk and moose everywhere. We had bears everywhere trying to "fatten up" so we always had bears looking for dog food on the porch because we were really stupid about keeping stuff. There were good stories about bears all over the ranch. And, of course, the pig pen and all the garbage they were fed attracting the bears, so it was great. You could go out and just about see anything. Spring came and we saw the migration and a lot of animals moving around. I don't recall seeing bears in the spring, but we did see lots of other animals mustering through. It was that beautiful cycle of nature, that moment where you step back and put yourself aside for a while and look at what has been created . . . what is part of this world that you have no control over but you get to be a part of. So, we stayed on till June, when "the nuns" that Nona said came every year and would take over our cabin. We were sad to even think about leaving.

The cabin we were in, we had to be out by June 10<sup>th</sup>, so we cleaned the cabin and we went our ways. I stayed in Jackson, not at the ranch, but I said to Nona that I would love to be able to come back and still be able to ride horses. I will help you on my days off. She said great and why not come and clean cabins - I had a teepee that I had purchased that spring from Reginald and Gladys Laubin on Antelope Flats. The Laubin's were well known in the community for their Sioux performances at Jackson Lake

Lodge. Gladys was Sioux. They taught me how to set it up and then offered her the good Sioux blessing. I loved that teepee and sadly later had to sell it for graduate school tuition.

I brought the teepee back to the White Grass that spring...I can still walk the ranch and hear the soft grassy spot call me where it stood. I cut the poles up Mosquito Creek and another woman, who worked at the hospital, and I decided we could set this thing up and forget the guys. It was heavy canvas. It was heavy and certainly out of our comfort zone. It had an 18 foot liner but we did it. I put the old elk hides on the floor (ground) and had a little fire pit in the middle. I thought I was Pocahontas. Nona asked if her guests could use it and I said anytime. I didn't have anything in there except a suitcase of my clothes and would shower at the hospital. This teepee was now part of my home base. It was sheer heaven. I usually worked days in the ICU from 3-11, so after my shift or on my days off I would go clean cabins at the ranch. Occasionally, they needed me to serve in the dining room. I would get an evening ride in after that and Curly always saddled me up the perfect horse.

R (51:28): As you observed the ranch in operation, meaning the guests coming in, how would you describe it, what was it like?

J: It was fabulous. I wanted to be that guest. I wanted to own the ranch and I wanted to be the wrangler. I wanted it all. I wanted to sing the songs at night around the campfire. I wanted to show people where things were. I wanted it all. So, the guests were wonderful. Of course, most of them were returning guests and they would have their cabins for a month or so, they stayed a long time. Cocktail hour was the best. You would go and sit out on the big deck and they would look over the meadows, the horses, the yellow lab dogs running about, the kids playing, the Sleeping Indian, and reminisce about their day. They were happy people. They were older, but there were families that came, a lot were settled women who were about my age now that I thought were older.

R: So, a lot of women, 50, 60 and they would come by themselves with other women?

J: Sure, they would come by themselves or there would be couples. I think there was a man that came every year. Probably retired women, many of them at university level teaching faculty positions that had discovered this place many years before. Many of them rode but I don't think that was their main activity. They came just to hang out and find a place of quiet in the world for themselves. Many had come without their spouses who were now deceased.

I would come up to see a woman that I used to take care of doing my public health stuff like taking a blood pressure. She loved me and I would come up every 2 weeks and we would just sit and chat. I loved her little cabin. I remember her cabin like it was today. It was the very farthest one. The guests were really lovely and kind and there were families with rambunctious kids. Of course, they were tearing in and out around the teepee and corals. Frank and Nona always seemed to hold a place for them. For their guests, they would put themselves (second) most of the time. It was about the guests and their experiences and sharing. (Upon further reflection and research by Roger B., the lady mentioned above was likely Suki Matthews. Jayne knows her daughter and family well but never made the connection until 2020.)

Nona entertained and Nona made sure that flowers were on the table, the cooks had their ducks in a row, that dinner was coming out at whatever prescribed time, and that the cabin girls had cleaned the cabins. She could crack the whip. Frank just knew it would get done and didn't have to crack the whip. Nona might crack the whip with a glass of champagne in her hand! She loved champagne. For us kids, drinking meant it was the cheapest case of beer that you could find for 4 bucks.

R: (55:13) Were the staff happy?

J: The staff worked pretty hard. I think that was mixed. You have to want to come to this lifestyle and know that you are going to be asked to do a million different things. You might be hired as the cabin girl but you might have to go wait tables. You also might have to groom horses, or you might have to go clean Frank and Nona's house, or go shopping in town, or figure out how to entertain the guests' kids.

When my friends came who were fabulous musicians, guitar players and singers – they were the evening entertainment. Frank and Nona were thrilled. Often staff were asked to do a lot more and I think that rubbed them wrong. But, they had not experienced the West and what it meant to be on a ranch. You do it all. I think I did salads one night in the kitchen. And served coffee one morning and flipped pancakes in the kitchen. It was fun and we were appreciated.

R: It wasn't 8 to 5.

J: Oh no, and that is the part that I loved about it so just being open to that made it easy for my relationship with Frank and Nona, which could have been tense but it never was.

R: Was the food interesting on the ranch?

J: Yea, it was always good food. They had fish and beautiful meats and they took pride in what they served. Breakfasts were pretty typical - eggs, pancakes, bacon, toast and probably oatmeal. You didn't get croissants or anything like that but probably homemade or store-bought jam. The food at the parties was always extraordinary, different and great. The food at the dining hall was great. There were several kitchen helpers doing the prepping and then there was a chef. I don't remember the chef being crazy or wild.

R: Did you get the sense of being on the ranch of a real theme of the West and cowboys and cowgirls. There were a lot of people that came from the East, who were guests here. They came for their own particular reasons. Literature talks about coming West, leaving the structure of the East, the sophistication and coming West. Did you have a sense of that as you watched these guests come in?

J: I did. I saw it at the cocktail parties. Everybody had their cowboy hats on and their boots and their silver belt buckles, turquoise and jewelry. Obviously, the kids just laughed it up. There also seemed to be a lot of literary-type people, university types, faculty types, very well-travelled types. Books were important and having time to read was important and having time to paint was important. Things as I grow older, I see as more intriguing.

I do recall the woman (who was in the furthest cabin) painted or drew. There were some artistic pieces of hers. She was older. I think she was in her 80s when I saw her and she had been here for 30 years or so. (Again, the woman was likely Suki Matthews.) The heyday of the 30s and 50s at ranches seems a little different to me than today. I wasn't here on dress up night. I wasn't here when the movie producers rolled in. I don't recall seeing extravaganza. I remember the barn dance and people coming in from trail rides, hiking and they would go freshen up and we would be madly getting dinner ready.

R: (1:01:06) So a very stimulating group of people.

J: Yes, and fun. They weren't here to judge that the cabins were sparse with the one pretty piece of furniture and the one rug. That is what they wanted. They left all their life clutter to come here to simplicity. I love this lifestyle. I love how I carried my life forward from the Hildegard-Crandell homestead days. I would marvel at White Grass lifestyle where I got to see horses being born and newborn calves. (Today when) my yard is full of cows when the fence breaks down, "Well, there goes the grass this year, Frank would say." I wouldn't change how this has evolved. This experience has seared my soul and my heart into the authentic person I am today. I feel like I am 1930s in many ways of my life.

R: A real lifestyle.

J: It is my lifestyle and I love it.

R: A lot of people go through a phase and move on to other things. This part of the land, nature and cycle of nature, close to the land adventure, fresh air...is just at your core.

J: I am not the adventure person climbing every peak and every continent. I am not an extreme skier. I am here for the reasons that I came in 1973 and a still get as big a thrill.

I can't believe you eked out a line in my writing that brought me to tears today. I think that is a beautiful piece, Roger, that you were able to evoke that. I don't know how or why you chose that. It is so funny because as I drove up, I made the drive very deliberate and slow and I looked around and I imagined that first fall night in '74 of coming up here that evening. It was so magical, so rooted, so intertwined, so woven; it is my fabric, it is my tapestry. I can't cut into that tapestry and make that go away no matter how many cuts I make in it because that is who I am.

R: Honored. My final questions, anything else you want to add?

J: I look around at the number of visitors and it is June 13, 2014, and there are busloads. Now, we have safari vans that drives on the Moose-Wilson Road and we have van after van of people coming to photograph even beavers and seeing a deer is the highlight of somebody's vacation. I take so much for granted.

What it brings back to me is what Rockefeller said so eloquently about what nature does for us. That really hits the mark. We all are drawn to something bigger than ourselves and in order to do that we have to step aside from ourselves to experience that. Whether it is a beaver or a robin, it's here and we must allow that time to be quiet and to let other things in. Or, we really miss the essence of living. I hope everybody can experience that. We are selling this valley so fast down the road for second bike paths in the park, for more extreme and complicated man-made pleasures rather than the simple enjoyment that comes from being quiet or immersed in pure nature that offers us so much more. Living here is a gift. I happen to be one of a few that has figured out how I can. There are so many people who will never get a chance to experience what I have. I am so grateful and blessed.

People who come here are coming for that sliver of nirvana, whatever that is, and it is not dancing to a hot band at the Cowboy Bar. It is the solitude listening to the elk bugle in the fall (one of my favorite things to do on my birthday was to take a blanket and lay out under the stars at the White Grass ranch and listen to the night noises). It's watching a moose and looking at her newborn calf, seeing horses run freely in a meadow and hearing eagles and osprey overhead call. It is all of this that drew me here that fills my soul and makes me feel whole, complete and hopefully a better person. It makes me stop

and reflect on my life and reminds me to be kinder, gentler, both on myself and with the people that I am near and love.

If I don't have these natural experiences in nature, then I am not the person that I really want to be. I am cranky, I have sharp edges and so I want to always have in my lifetime, selfishly, a place where everyday, that is part of my day. I can't come to the White Grass and live anymore. I can come back very often and reminisce and just sit in the meadow in the fall with a blanket and my picnic dinner and listen to the elk. Thank you.

R: (1:08:02) So wonderful. You are welcome, thank you for sharing. I am so pleased that White Grass and this Park is here for many people and that it speaks to your soul.

J: Oh, it does.

R: Anything else?

J: No, Roger, thank you and the Park Service for preserving this. It was very sad as I was here in the late 70s and saw many of our ranches ...our history was erased. It is so scattered, and I am so thrilled that there is some focus on restoration so other people can understand. I didn't get to live it in the 30s and 40s, with Frank and Nona or he 50s or the 60s with the Rockefellers, Struthers or Nathaniel Burt (although I live in their Three Rivers Main cabin that my partner and I have restored) the Hammond family, nor the Galey's. I am thrilled that this piece is being preserved. People can see it, experience it, feel it, by walking around. I was heartsick when that decision was made to do what was done (not preserve the ranch in 1985 after Frank Galey died). I remember the Brown cabin on Jackson Lake, I remember these places. I want other people to know them even though they weren't there.

R: As a side line to what you are saying, the former director of the Western Center for Historical Preservation, who is responsible for the work that is being done here, a program in the National Park System – he has said many times that these old buildings around here are really just sticks and logs without knowing the stories and the people who lived in them. So, your stories make this place come alive and makes it a real place. We are delighted to be recording these things so other people can have perspective on it too. Thank you again.

J: I think it is important what you just said in that if you don't have a story, you don't have an understanding. I want people to picture what a wild dinner in the Galey cabin was like and I want people to picture the barn dance. I want people to picture a meadow full of horses where you were free to walk up to any one of them and jump on bareback. And, where you had a wrangler full of love and alcohol. He (Curly) was so kind and he knew the perfect horse (for me). In the old homestead cabin, I would leave (the top half of) the Dutch door open so in the morning, I always had a horse looking at me. There was nothing better than that. I didn't care if a bat flew in; nobody died of a bat. People say what would that be like, what is a Dutch door; what do they mean- a meadow? They need to come up here and look. Thank you. It was a pleasure.

The Women at the White Grass Ranch – Winter of 1974-75 by Jane Ottman

I first came to the White Grass Ranch Sept 1974. There were 4 of us to be exact, all women, who had just finished working at Many Glacier Hotel in Glacier National Park that summer. I talked them into coming here as I had worked at St John's Hospital the year before having just finished Nursing School. I was hooked on Jackson and no other place on earth would do. That first winter I lived at the Crandall Homestead cabin on Antelope Flats Rd and survived temps to minus 56 degrees, wood for heating, an outhouse, no running water (hailed) and a gorgeous Monarch wood cook stove that I quickly mastered with the help of Mrs. Hildegard Crandall, a sprite 75 yr old at the time! The White Grass seemed so civilized with running water and indoor toilets after that! My first job in this valley was ICU night supervisor and with that came as many stories as the ones at the White Grass.

That crisp September day I had driven from Montana to the White Grass. Once off the Moose-Wilson road and onto the spur that took me to the ranch, I remember shifting into second gear to take in all the fall colors, smells and sights along that winding narrow road. Spectacular was an understatement. When I reached the electric fence gate which opened onto the big meadow chock full of horses, I thought I was in heaven. The meadow seemed to roll out of the belly of Stewart's Draw. The evening light was raspberry pink against all those brilliant fall oranges, reds and yellows. The aspens were especially beautiful. Frank and Nona Galey's yellow labs, including their gorgeous male named Doodie, greeted me warmly as I turned off the engine to my 3-speed on-the-column '67 Chevy truck. Sitting in the front beside me and ready for any adventure, was my faithful yellow lab named Buckwheat. I was glued to the seat of my truck watching the evening colors fade from that delicious raspberry to a soft yellow glow through Death Canyon onto those magnificent granite rock walls. Everything about the ranch took my breath away. And still does.

Nona and Frank and the pack of yellow dogs gave me a tour of the ranch, including the homestead cabin where I would live that winter until June when dudes would return once again. This big beautiful loved-hard structure was one of the first cabins built on the ranch and was closest to the swimming pond. Only once did I venture there to swim that fall. The cabin was spacious, sparse and spectacular, and the kitchen (as always) was the gathering place mainly because it had a wood/electric stove complete with an old stump chopping block right there so anyone could chop dry kindling quickly for a fire. That was the warmest place in the entire cabin. There were 4 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms. I chose the bedroom farthest away from the kitchen but with my own entrance...a beautiful Dutch Door. I loved keeping the top half of the door open those fall nights waking up to a horses' head and big eyes staring at me while munching grass!

Two other women also rented at the ranch that winter. Sherry Guirey (Tingy) who had a custom ski wear clothing design business and her climbing friend, Louise. (can't remember her last name) Both were amazing athletes, climbers and outdoor experts. They lived in the modern cabin near us and thus began the saga of the "Women at the Whitegrass" that winter. Sherry eventually married Ralph Tingy; at that time he was a local GTNP ranger who quickly climbed the ranks of the NPS.

With winter on the heels of fall, getting wood for heating became the #1 priority. That meant contacting Ted Hartgraves who lived just down the road from the White Grass to deliver wood for heating the cabin. He was patient and wise when it came to this task and gave his time so generously. Knowing we'd ruin a good ax handle quickly with our poor aim, he quickly wrapped the part of the handle near the junction of the metal blade with old elk hide so when we whacked the handle against the wood instead of the ax blade, we could keep the wood shaft intact. And it worked brilliantly. We never fully wrecked our ax. Four cords that winter kept the fires constant and the cabin somewhat warm.



My roommates didn't arrive for another 2-3 weeks. Lucky me to have this place alone! Days were spent chopping wood, riding horses, hiking all around the ranch area with my dog (certainly can't do that now) and working at the hospital in ICU 3-11 shift. The late shift gave me ample time to play during the day, dance at the Cowboy Bar after work and sleep in if I wanted to. My cabin mates were the best! Jordan Lawley (Traverse City) who became a substitute teacher and waitress, Karin Abromaitis (Chicago) drove the mail truck over Teton Pass to Tetonia each day and Beth Beckelheimer (Corpus Christi), waited tables. Three of us married locals several years later. One remains married today.

The Galey's who normally went to the Bahamas in the winter, decided to remain at the ranch. Frank and Nona were good to us. They kept chickens in their crawlspace under their cabin and frequently provided us eggs. They had pigs that year they were fattening up so later we enjoyed fresh pork. The ranch dogs loved getting into the garbage scraps that were fed to the pigs. So did the bears, lots of them. And then there were the winter parties at Frank and Nona's cabin! I had never heard of nor eaten caviar or pate` nor had I seen such extravaganza with liquor, particularly champagne and martinis. If Nona and Frank had a party, the "women on the ranch" were always invited. The parties were always held at Frank and Nona's cabin, which was furnished with the best of the best in those ranch days. Lovely crystal from around the world, hides from other countries, lavish china and fabulous western furniture. If the weather was good in fall or spring it was not unusual to have one of the walls of the cabin's living room open up (never did figure how they did this) to the meadow which made spacious room to expand the party onto the deck. The views were breathtaking. Frank particularly liked his martini's and Nona her champagne. It wasn't unusual for crystal goblets to go flying outside or against the rock fireplace, smashed without any hesitation or remorse.

Our parties were tame in comparison to Frank and Nona's. For every pate and caviar dish we devoured there, we served up wild game spaghetti, loaves of French bread, salad and oodles of cheap beer at our cabin. It was not unusual to have 30 people over for a simple dinner on the spur of the moment. People often stayed the night and there were plenty of couches and floor space and extra sleeping bags to go around. We never fussed about what we had for breakfast the next day-leftovers and strong coffee worked fine.

Cookie, the wrangler, was there that fall and lived in one of the cabins near the barn. I loved this old guy. Any time we wanted to go riding, Cookie always saddled up the perfect horse and loved seeing "his girls" ride off with pigtails flying and dogs at our sides sniffing and running full tilt. Frank and Nona were generous and offered this experience anytime we wanted. I took advantage of it as much as I could. There were no waivers to sign, no insurance issues, no lawsuits and if you fell off, too bad. One of my favorite rides with my faithful dog Buckwheat was north to an abandoned ranch. Being out with my dog and horse under the Tetons was about as perfect as I could have imagined.

The snow arrived permanently by Halloween. Frank plowed the road from the gate to the ranch but more than not we parked our vehicles at the gate and skied to the cabin. The NPS plowed to the gate but often after getting off my 3-11 shift the road was blown in. I remember on several occasions skiing into the ranch from park headquarters in the dark or crashing on someone's couch in town. I didn't have a headlamp back then and holding flashlights in your mouth was out of the question. Park priorities were keeping the main road and the road to Beaver Creek open where employees lived. Getting stuck was part of the deal. Chains were a must. If you couldn't put them on, you were toast. I can still remember frozen fingers. I usually chained up in Moose and then drove like hell and crossed my fingers I'd get to the ranch gate. My truck was only 2-wheel drive.

By November our water lines were frozen. This meant getting our water from one of the nearby streams that ran and then eventually hauling it from town when the creeks froze. We didn't know about Giardia then. And for some miraculous reason, we didn't get sick. Showers were taken at the hospital or at friends', laundry was done in town, and chamber pots were stashed in our rooms at nights! Frank and Nona compensated with more fresh eggs and more wild parties! We couldn't have plants in the cabin because they'd freeze.

Everyday we skied to Phelps Lake overlook with our dogs. Rarely did we see anyone else. We all had wooden skis (I still have and use my old Bona's) and Alpha low top leather boots. We were experts at waxing. The trail up and back became an icy luge run by spring and the speeds we gathered on the return were so damn fast and dangerous that the only way we could stop was to run into a tree with outstretched arms in bear hug fashion. Lots of scraped faces, bruised legs, torn pants, busted ski tips, twisted knees and loads of laughs. We tried our best to learn how to telemark on the face to the north of Phelps Lake but really never mastered this. To do this using our stiff edgeless skis and ankle-high non-supportive boots was impossible. But we had a blast trying.

Christmas was one giant sleepover with friends. Those living on the ranch were also included which also meant at least a dozen dogs! It took 3 days to heat the big living room- using only the fireplace. There was a giant hook for hanging pots inside the fireplace that we used to cook the Christmas chili. I'm sure we chopped a tree for the great room in the park nearby. Oops! The lights came from Orvilles Thrift store in town and the decorations and cranberry/popcorn garlands were homemade by the "cabin girls". As for alcohol, we had a couple cases of cheap beer like PBR, Hamms and Buckhorn and a few bottles of Catawba, Annie Green Springs or Ripple wine and of course some tequila all chilled or frozen in our outdoor frig-the porch. Homemade pies and cookies and ice cream topped off the dinner. Someone had a stereo so the 33's played all night.

Winter melted into spring, the ranch thawed and we moved out the end of May. Dudes were arriving. That spring I bought a tipi from Gladys and Reginald Laubin and with permission from the Gayley's and help from a friend, set it upon the ranch. In exchange I cleaned cabins and helped in the dining room on my days off from the hospital. Guests could use it when I wasn't there...so it worked for everyone. That summer I rode horses again with Cookie agreeable to saddling the perfect horse.

I've meandered around the ranch all these years afterwards and remember so many details of life there. Back then it was raw, wild and lovely all at the same time. It still is. And I'm so grateful for the restoration work that has been going on lately. Loving hands and hearts are restoring this "no-other-place-on-earth" ranch. What a beautiful new beginning.