

Adventures in McCloudland

By Marilyn J. Ogden

Introduction

A bumpy ride. That's how Bette Davis described it in her movie, All About Eve. She said this to a group of friends early in the evening of a gathering at her place. She was preparing herself for whatever happened.

We tried to do that. The night before we opened I met with our nervous staff and assured them that we could expect the unexpected. Long ago, in what seems like some previous life, my psych professor had lectured about unexpected outcomes. He believed that if we were just smart enough and thoughtful enough we could figure them out, count them and deal with them. I think he forgot why they called them unexpected.

We reviewed a host of possibilities for the coming first day and night. We planned for the unexpected. But not in my wildest dreams did I even consider the possibility of the wallpaper slipping off the wall in Suite 216, or the bed falling through its frame in Room 106. Never could I have predicted the look of embarrassment on our guest's face when he tried too many times to explain, "All I did was sit on it, and it fell to the floor."

So our bumpy ride of 21 months getting ready to open this hotel was not coming to an end, but only making a left turn toward inn-keeping.

We should have known. I should have had a hint when, after focusing on opening day for so many months, and planning a glorious breakfast, my new manager (Juanita) asked "So what are we going to do for breakfast tomorrow?" I remember looking at her in total dismay. "You mean we have to do this again tomorrow?"

What follows is not a story with a beginning and an end of this hotel, its town, and its restoration; I don't have a good enough memory to recall everything in the order it occurred. Nor are we at the end. We have been open 16 months and there are still surprises. Instead, I have been urged to share many little stories of our adventure. Like all adventures, it was a precariously bumpy ride. Other times, the view was breathtaking. Mostly it was just putting one foot in front of the other. The alternative to continuing, as we reminded our sons frequently, was that they could come feed us under the freeway.