Adventures in McCloudland

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Chapter 33

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With no activity in the building during the day, every creak and groan of the building magnified itself. I'd often walk the halls and sit in what would be our living room and try to hold onto our dream while looking down over town.

Frequently the noises from the room above became so pronounced I just knew someone or some animal was up there. I'd go to investigate, warily opening the door to 227, and be faced with an empty room. I'd shake it off and get back to work.

I reworked our financial statement now that the house was sold and several loans had been paid off. We could even show some new income from the 2nd Deed we were holding for the new buyers.

We reconnected Truckee River Bank in Rancho Cordova who had indicated an interest "after the sale of the house." We made an appointment, gathering ourselves together and headed out again. We were becoming pros at this process.

The manager met us and asked a lot of questions. He said he'd get back to us.

The next week he called and said they thought they "might do this."

We could hardly believe it, but suspended any celebration.

They'd "need a lot more information, though, about your cash injection and an appraisal. We can only loan 80% of the appraisal," he warned, "so a lot would depend on it. It's going to be a difficult project to appraise," he said. "Single use buildings, and especially hotels, are always hard when there is nothing comparable in the area."

We remembered that the Professional Association of Innkeepers International, a group we had joined, had recently had an article in their newsletter by someone in Berkeley who appraises Bed & Breakfasts all across the country. We passed his name to the bank manager with the article. It seems the appraiser was booked up for six months, and charged several thousand dollars. Truckee River said they didn't care about the appraisal charges...we were to pay for it. Oh.

It took them another month to schedule an appraisal with a woman from Redding. Meanwhile, they wanted an accounting of every cent we had put into this project to make sure we had sufficient interest in the project. They wanted the original receipts attached to the actual cancelled checks.

It was June, 1994. We were going to miss opening anytime in the summer months of the current year. Maybe it would be better to open in the slow season and learn about running a hotel before it got crazy busy. Maybe by Christmas. We dared to dream.

In an effort to hear the words I had been waiting for so long and tie down a time line I asked the bank manager, "Is Truckee River Bank committed to this project?" "Can we tell our contractor and our friends this project is back on track?" It was music to my ears when he said. "Yes." "The amount will depend on several factors, but, yes, you can tell people."

Yes. We could hardly believe it. It was going to happen after all. Things were definitely looking up.

We wrote a hasty invitation for the town to attend an open house the next afternoon and posted it in a few strategic spots around town. We wanted to share our good news and let people know we were not going to leave the building looking like this. We had lots of food, congratulations and grins all the way around the block. It amazed me how many people said, "We were counting on you," or "We knew you could do this."

The appointment was approaching for the appraisal. I had noticed that when I showed visitors around the building and tried to explain that we would "open up this room," 'put the bath here" and "add a fireplace there," that some of them would get this blank look on their face. Not everyone can visualize.

Since this appraisal was so critical, I hired a local artist to put my ideas on paper. I had samples of the fabrics and pictures of the furniture for the lobby as well as fabrics for some of the guest rooms. He painted the lobby, a sample guest room, and a suite in beautiful color. Perfect. People who see those pictures now are amazed at how much they look like the finished rooms.

Jeff and I cleaned the lobby and mopped up 15 years of grime from the linoleum and a multitude of cobwebs from the ceiling. The two lobby walls slated for removal were still in place as they were major support walls and would need major support posts and beams when the time came. So the lobby was considerably smaller than it would be. But we went to our basement and brought up a sofa done in English Chintz (it had been in our family room) that would eventually go in one of the suites and positioned it over an Oriental rug with an accompanying club chair and coffee table complete with a small plant. We pulled in one of the many dressers that would go in the guest rooms and put it to one wall with a guest book on it. We also put one of the small desks in which we were going to mount the wash basins and positioned it against another wall with a mirror over it. All the fabrics and pictures of the furniture were displayed on the wall with the dresser, and the garden plans on another. I brought down several yards of new fabric and draped it through a ring at one window.

Perfect. We were ready.

The big day arrived. The appraiser walked through a few rooms, accepted our dimensions and the drawings and left saying, “I’ll be in touch with the bank soon. They’ll call you and let you know.” She wasn’t here more than 45 minutes.

Truckee River Bank had an insatiable appetite for more information and numbers. They’d call weekly with new requests. Every request they made took me days to prepare, weeks for them to review followed by two-hour telephone conversations to dissect every number. Summer was slipping by.