

Mindy Quivik, owner of Butte Booksellers, interviewed in her home by Teresa Jordan, March 25, 1986.

Mindy was born in Minneapolis, raised in Minn. and Anoka, MN. She spent a year in Denmark as an exchange student, went to St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN, which is where she met Fred. They came to Montana after they finished school; Fred worked in the Forest Service for the summer. Then they went to U. of MN for school and then onto NYC. Fred was at Columbia; Mindy at Teachers' College, which is a brother school to Columbia. She got a masters in the History of Education.

They were very eager to get back to Montana. Their car broke down in Helena. They lived in East Helena for about three months. Mindy did some subst. teaching. They decided that whoever got a real job first, they would move to that place. Fred got on at NCAT; they moved to Butte.

Q: What was your preconception of Butte?

Mindy didn't have the negative preconception many people have. When they lived in Lincoln, a friend of a friend was housesitting the Copper King Mansion for Anne Cote Smith. F & M came to visit; they met Alan Goddard. He took them on a tour of Butte, pointed out old doorknobs, windows, boardwalks, much to see. After that, Fred worked for the Preservation Office in Helena while Mindy worked on a Forest Service lookout. Fred would come up on weekend; he had ecstatic reports about Butte. Mindy was intrigued. She thought it was an interesting place, visually.

Then they moved here. After about three days, she and Fred took a walk. It was snowing; absolutely no wind. They walked around the Uptown neighborhoods. Mindy says, "I was overwhelmed--then, finally--with what visually was here. And tried to ask Fred where I was. Because I couldn't understand it, it didn't make sense that there would be such big buildings next to such little tiny houses, no yards, all this dirt--even through the snow. It was very pretty, but it was really depressing. He tried to just say, 'well, think of it as a mining camp,' and emphasized the word camp. And so I just kind of sat on that for awhile. And I think that kind of helped me think of it as a transient place that for some reason got left behind."

Q: A lot of people think Butte is ugly. Did you have that response?

Mindy didn't because Fred sees through to the design, and she had learned to see with his eyes. He had shown her Newark, New York City, the Bronx, certain neighborhoods of Minneapolis, other Eastern cities. She had gained an appreciation of the external buildings. Also, she had gone through some rehab projects with Fred, and had seen how wonderfully things could be rehabbed.

Q: When you moved here, were you worried about what you would do

here?

Mindy was very concerned. It was a major problem the first three years they were here. It was exacerbated by Fred's relationship with NCAT. NCAT decided that they wouldn't hire both husband and wife anymore. Mindy wasn't involved with appropriate technology, but she had thought she might find some work there and she couldn't. Also, the people at NCAT were very zealous, very energetic about their work. In not finding a job, Mindy felt useless, denigrated. NCAT people had almost missionary enthusiasm. She got caught up in conversations--but it was hard to not actually be involved. She and a couple other women realized it's hard to be 'wives of the corporate counterculture.' They tried to relate to the community on their own--with the Butte Futures conference and the Historical Society.

Fred and Mindy had never made much money before. Fred was getting something like \$14,000 from NCAT, which seemed like a lot--even "too much." She thought she would give time to the community. But she couldn't even volunteer to help in the schools because of the unions.

It was very depressing and lonely. Mindy wasn't interested in R values; no one seemed interested in fiction. She became incapacitated. She couldn't write, couldn't even read. She found a job in Missoula with the Institute of the Rockies for a couple of years. They dealt with back to basics issues; published a tabloid on education policies. She learned publishing. But she didn't like driving to Missoula--once a week for a couple days. Later, with the Montana Multicultural History Project, she was there all week, came home on weekends. She didn't feel at home anywhere. She learned she didn't like working at anything so nebulous. She didn't agree with director; problems ended up in formal hearings with the Montana State Historical Society--it was "really icky."

Timeline: She and Fred came in April of '77 to Butte. M worked on the lookout for the summer; that was her third summer at that job. Fred would come up every weekend full of excitement about NCAT and frustration for the bureaucracy--it was funded by the Community Action Project. Mindy wasn't involved with it, but she would hear these stories; by the end of the summer, she hated NCAT, was frustrated with some of the people.

She worked with the Institute of the Rockies for three or four years; has had the bookstore for 5 1/2 years now.

Q: Did you look for work in Butte?

She looked at the schools, first for a paid job and then as a volunteer. She looked at NCAT. And she even came back from the lookout one weekend to interview for a job with MERDI, though it wasn't a job she would have wanted. She didn't want to work for the Power Company. She didn't have a clear or open perspective about what she wanted to do. Not everyone is capable of creating

their own job. Mindy felt at that time that her options were not very good. Three weeks after they came to Butte, Mindy told Fred that she didn't want to be here. He said, well, maybe we'll only be here for about 12 years.

Mindy had never been a person who could be at home. Maybe now with her writing, she could be.

People were not welcoming when they first came. She applied at the school, was told that she would have to live here for five years to even apply. She's come to know that is just the old boy system; you have to be a native, or around for awhile.

There was a lot of negativity toward NCAT people in the community. Anybody associated with NCAT was thought to be a hippie or a freeloader, a socialist (socialist more than communist.) It was pervasive enough that Carolyn Smithson had a run in with it. She brought in the New Western Energy Show, a sort of travelling circus in a van that put on shows for kids and others. They were a group of very talented musicians and actors. One skit was based on the Pied Piper and all the rats wore Montana Power Company hats. A group of women Mindy and Carolyn called the Catholic Mothers Club got very upset. Out of that came the rumour that Carolyn was a socialist. She tracked the rumour down, called the guy up and called him on it. She asked him to define the term, asked him if he had ever met her or talked with her about politics, asked why he thought he knew she was a socialist. He had never talked with her; he apologized; she asked him to retract his statement to anyone he had made it to. Mindy learned a lot from Carolyn's response.

There were explosive moments associated with NCAT; at times Mindy was afraid. The director was a socialist, said so in newspaper interviews--Jim Schmidt. For a town with such a strong socialist background and such a long labor history, Mindy was surprised to see the community so upset about his views. There were rumours that Jim was threatened. One time, one guy from NCAT, Cary Shourds, had an outreach worker in his car with him. They had an accident with another car. Cary leapt out of the car, shot the other person's car with a gun. A cop was there immediately; said over the loudspeaker "So and So, we know you're in there," about the outreach worker who was in the car. No one knew why the police were watching NCAT so closely, why they knew who this outreach worker was (he was from out of town). It was strange. It was stupid for Cary to have a gun, etc. But it was strange that the police were watching NCAT so closely. Mindy isn't sure she has the story right, it was so long ago.

Mindy suffered from "classic paranoia." Schmidt had the idea that the most powerful people should be hired to be outreach workers. They were powerful personalities, expert organizers, real heavy duty folks. His idea was that the government wasn't going to fund an organization that was dedicated to empowering the poor, giving them control over their own energy, etc. He thought that they should just get as much done as they could as

quickly as they could--and then let the organization disperse. For Mindy, this sort of idea was like a bomb waiting to go off.

Mindy felt it in little ways. There was a shop in town she went into. The owner would always introduce her as "my socialist friend." Finally, Mindy told her it wasn't appropriate. That term was loaded. Also, she didn't know anything about Mindy's politics. Maybe the woman just thought it was funny. Mindy supposes she could have laughed at that introduction if she hadn't been so scared.

At the same time, she was learning about the fiery history of Butte. Mindy says, "knowing that Butte is also a really defensive town and pretty violent for children--the children of NCAT people had real rude awakenings in school dealing with bullying on the playground and having to deal with that kind of daily violence in their lives. It was a problem."

Q: Can you think of an example?

Tape 1, Side B

Mindy can remember one boy who was really bright. He had lots of difficulty getting home from school without fights. That might have been more for the fact that he was so bright rather than that his father worked at NCAT. And perhaps it might have happened anywhere. But there seemed to be more of that here. Mindy had never seen girls fight before; they fought here. Mindy says, "listening to the people in the neighborhood quarrelling in the street...There's just a feeling of violence here. It's in the unmuffled cars, it's in the fascination with motorcycles. And the stories certainly, the histories--stabbings and shootings and stuff that would be really really unusual and stand out in my home town, that seemed to be just part of life here. And something to be proud of, too, and fascinated with."

Q: Did you have any early friends who were Butte natives?

Yes, through the Historical Society. People there were excited about new members--Al Hooper, Alice Smith, Anne Smith, others. Mindy thinks that it was at the second meeting she went to that Carolyn Smithson proposed the Italian dinner. She had lived in Italy; everyone was excited about the idea, said fine, go ahead. They got money from the MT Arts Committee to have a man come who played the saw--Ciabiattari or something like that was his name. The dinner sold out; held in the Finlen Ballroom. Ossellos sold tickets; sold out early. Mindy put together an exhibit of Italian things--instruments, clothing, lace, implements. Carolyn was a great organizer. The dinner engendered good feelings; Mindy met lots of people. A couple years later the Yugoslavian dinner at the Civic Center had the same feeling.

Those were very positive experiences. Most of the people Mindy met through them were middle age and older; none Mindy's age. They felt, "you're a newcomer, but you're OK." Mindy remembers

"two years after we were here, we were at the Community Concert one night, and a woman I recognized sort of from around town but didn't know, came up to me and said, "Well, are you new to town?" I just thought, oh, come on lady, I've been working my butt off for the Historical Society for two years, "Yeah, I'm a newcomer." But I was so irritated and kind of defensive that I said, "I've lived here two years." I know that two years anywhere isn't very long, but we used to have conversations about that. Is it OK to say things about the community you live in if you're not from there? Fred and I were just talking about that the other day because he doesn't seem to have ever had as much difficulty with that as I did. I felt somehow the sense I got from people I got who were natives that we didn't have a right to say anything about the way things looked or how anything is cared for or whether this is happening or that is happening. Carolyn and I used to talk about that a lot and she finally convinced me that, wherever you live, you have the responsibility to be responsible about that place and your life there and what's happening there. And you may not be anywhere in particular forever, but you are still inhabiting the earth and wherever you are, it's OK to be a human being as fully as you can. So it was like, we had to go through all these discussions about is it OK, but it wouldn't have even been brought up if everybody hadn't said, "well, you're a newcomer..."

"I was glad to find out just a few years ago that my parents had the same experience moving to Anoka from Minneapolis because that too was a community of pretty long established families and they had difficulty making friends and feeling at home. And they say they still get that, and they have been there 35 years. So maybe I didn't realize that was so engrained in communities. Maybe it's not unusual in Butte."

Mindy likes aspects of the old community. For instance, she tells people that they live in Marie Sullivan's old house, and everyone knows where that is. That's homey.

Now she doesn't worry about it so much. Now that she has the bookstore and is working with other merchants. She has never felt that designation of 'newcomer' in business, in the Butte Uptown Association. They all have the same problems. She is on the board of the BUA; has served as president. And when the Asso defers to an older merchant, it is because of that person's greater experience, not because they are native.

Q: How did you come to start the Butte Booksellers?

In the fall of 1970, Mindy was about four months from the end of the Missoula project. She met Bill Moen in a bar; they started talking about books. He had been a bookseller for about seven years in a couple different places. There was no bookstore in town. Hennessey's had a book department, but it was not a real bookstore. Mindy always bought books in Missoula or other places. She thought that opening a book store would be interesting after writing grants for three years, trying to

generate her own work. It had become very frustrating, trying to get enough money to do too much work. You had to apply for everything, then when it came through, it was a circus of too much work. She thought it would be good to do something grounded, concrete.

She and Bill thought they would give themselves six months to get a business plan together and borrow the money to start. Bill was in Missoula at the U. that winter quarter. They would set up meetings, they talked to others. They had no experience in setting up a business, but they just did it. It was pretty much common sense, not very complicated.

Mindy's folks gave her \$10,000 as a gift; they got \$8,000 more. Fred and Mindy had savings of about \$1000; Bill had about \$2,000; they borrowed \$2,000, had loans of \$500 and \$1000 from friends at low interest for three years. It was relatively easy with generous family and friends.

They thought, at the time, 'this is a lot of money. But they comforted themselves with the thought that if it didn't work, they could just get jobs in a city, pay people back. Bill could drive truck. If they really blew it, Mindy could go get "an icky job in a big city and make lots of money." So it wasn't a big deal. And Mindy still feels that way, so she isn't worried about it. It wasn't \$100,000; that would have made her nervous. Bookstores are cheap to open. And easy to fail.

She and Bill wrote essays about why they wanted to do it. Mindy recently re-read hers; most of the reasons she wanted the bookstore have been fulfilled. She wanted to know more about the economy and distribution; she wanted to be financially independent of Fred--she almost achieved that two years ago, and it felt good; she wanted her own work--she had had so many jobs she hated; she wanted to work closely with someone else.

Q: What are the salient lessons you have learned?

Mindy has learned that you are not set up to have an easy time of it. It's easy to get angry with the inequities of a system that makes it easier to be a giant. Also, distance and isolation in Montana are problems. There is no money to borrow because you are not big enough. You work too hard, and the hours are hard on the family. It's not a panacea. For all the myth of the value of the family owned business, the government doesn't support family oriented businesses.

The store opened in September 1980. Jo Antonioli's bookstore, Books and Books, opened in March of 1980. When hers opened, Mindy and Bill thought, oh, maybe this isn't such a good idea. But they thought with a 90,000 population business area, there was room for two bookstores. They thought Jo's space was too small--they had looked at it. They didn't know where she was coming from. They thought, they'd come that far. And if Jo's didn't work out, they'd feel really badly for abandoning their

plans. The two bookstores are really cooperative with each other. They sell books to each other, buy together.

Q: Do you think that either one of you would have done better if the other hadn't opened.

Yes. If the other hadn't opened, it would double the business. Jo says that if B. Dalton comes in, she will close. Mindy doesn't feel that way; though she might have to.

Q: Were your plans to open the bookstore relieving to Fred?

Yes. Mindy had almost forgotten, but at the time she met Bill, Fred and Mindy were about to leave Butte. Mindy was so depressed. They had gone to see a counsellor; he talked to them for a few minutes, told Mindy she wasn't depressed. She said, OK, but she was. They had decided to leave, though they didn't know where they would go. Fred didn't want to leave, and Mindy was scared--she had spent three years thinking she was not worthwhile. The only thing she thought she might want to do is go back to school. She had loved grad school. They had decided to leave, but had not decided when or where.

When the bookstore idea came, Mindy's frustration and depression changed instantly. Having work ordered her days. It was crucial to her--and she says, she supposes to everybody--to have work. Just being in the bookstore, the demand on her time, the knowledge that it was needed was great. And it was a tremendous challenge. She learned a lot and liked the work. And it was needed. Lots of people had said, "A bookstore in Butte? Nobody reads there." But that isn't true. Sometimes, when Mindy is down, she pulls out the list of titles they sell. People read everything here from Marcus Aurelius to Louis Lamour, and not much of Louis Lamour. She met terribly articulate, inquiring people she would never have met otherwise. She respects that. It was a terrible stereotype of Butte, that Butte is only miners, and miners don't read.

Q: Did you have any problem with unions?

Bill and Mindy were not able to pay union wages. They had a little electrical work done by union workers--about \$400 worth--but that was all. They did the work themselves. But they were scared--they had been warned that that would cause problems. They went ahead and started by tearing down walls. They did it on a Sunday. They wanted to be as inobtrusive as possible. They were so worried that they actually pulled the nails out of the studs instead of just banging them down; they didn't want to make noise. They had understood that as long as it was just them doing the work, or their family, (no friends) and they didn't pay anyone, they would be OK, but they were still worried.

Mindy felt comfortable with doing the rennovation and plastering; worked 14 hours a day for two months.

Tape 2, Side A

They got to the painting, were nervous about that. Mindy called a man she had met, a friend, who had one time been the secretary of the painters union. She thought she could trust him. She told him what they were doing, wanted to find out what would happen. She felt she could trust him. The one problem with talking to the union is, you tip them off, and there you are. She told him what they were doing, what their financial sit'n was, that it was just Bill and her painting. He asked the dimensions of the place, she told him, he just laughed. He said, that's too small. Nobody cares about that. Later when they wanted to get the electrical work done, they wanted to get two or three bids; they could only get one. No one wanted to mess with such a small project.

They only had one instance. They were working; there was a knock on the door; by the time Mindy got there, she saw someone getting into a carpenters van. She went to talk with him; he asked what they were doing; she said, 'she and her partner were cleaning up the space; he asked if anyone else was working, she said no; he said OK. No problems.

Mindy thinks that the only problems come from big projects where word gets around that you are paying scabs. But Bill and Mindy took it seriously. Only one friend was angry, adamant that they use union labor. That was Bob McCarthy; it was an ideological thing. Bill and Mindy felt that if they could get a business in there, they could pay union scale later.

They got it open; it was very bare. That's why they opened the art gallery; they had too much space to fill with books. The only gallery in town at that time was the Arts Chateau, and it was set up at that time for national exhibits that were booked a year in advance. There was no place in town to have local artists represented. And when the Chateau switched to local shows, they focussed more on representational art.

The gallery has been very fun; doesn't take too much work. There have been some shows Mindy has hated to take down.

The openings became events. Bill was good at saying, we're having an opening, why don't you come.

Q: What was the response to the store?

Mindy laughs, says she remembers the woman who owns the Knitting Nook came in, said under her breath, "it's so clean!" The response was very supportive; people were excited. The other merchants were helpful. Mindy remembers that she sold the first book to Meg Sharp of Sharp Expressions; it was a book on volcanoes; Mt. St. Helens had just blown. Right from the start, people were very comfortable in that space.

In the first three months, Mindy wasn't that comfortable about

how to look things up, etc. People would come in, she'd freeze. But that changed. The first three Saturdays, she worked alone for some reason. Jim Johnson was the first to come in, sort of hang out. She remembers that one of the first times he did, they had a discussion about a psychologist who believes there is no mental illness. Mindy was delighted with the conversation; Jim enjoyed it. People would come in, talk about ideas. Gradually, people began to meet at the bookstore, drop things off. There were jokes about having post boxes at the store.

Q: Did the bookstore bring about a change in your relationship to Fred?

Yes. Fred was relieved that Mindy wanted to stay. With NCAT and his work with preservation, there was lots he wanted to do and lots he had been able to do, lots he still wants to do. At the same time, those three years of negativity for Mindy didn't really get healed even though they worked at it. They saw a counsellor in Missoula during the winter before the bookstore opened. They thought they had done well then. And Fred was always utterly supportive of the bookstore, full of praise for Mindy's work there. She mistrusted the praise sometimes, but she needed it. They didn't really get their relationship worked out until last year when they separated. They were both working so hard, and their work masked the incommunication until it broke down. Work was welcome, a good thing.

Mindy doesn't think she got completely over resenting NCAT until this last winter. She was so jealous--he could go away for conference, etc. Mindy couldn't bring herself to be happy for him. She was resentful. She says, its the "wives of the corporate counterculture" syndrome; they are treated the same as wives of the regular corporate culture.

Q: Who were some of the other wives?

Janet Cornish, Carolyn Smithson. They would get together, make plans. But they would end up crying. They tried to understand what was wrong in the NCAT society--the talk there was feminism and equity, but mothers were still home with the kids, unhappy. NCAT wasn't different than other corporations in many ways. They ended up talking about it, being emotionally supportive. Sometimes they wondered what the big noise about NCAT was--so much was made of it, but it didn't bring about social change as they thought it should.

They talked about doing oral history. Janet was interested in looking at the Jewish history of Butte. Carolyn was interested in arts and crafts. They wanted to look at things from the women's standpoint. They talked about that sort of thing. They helped each other with their projects. The quilt, the dinners, etc. Mindy was in Missoula so much, she generally helped on the others' projects rather than initiating her own.

Carolyn and Mindy wanted a garden. NCAT was the old poor farm;

there had been a garden there. They looked into it, but one of the scientists at NCAT analysed the soil, there were lots of heavy metals in it. They went around and around about whether they should do the garden there or uptown up by their houses; instead of thinking of it in simple terms, they felt they had to organize a whole community-wide gardening thing in order to have a garden. Mindy finally told Carolyn, in a "burst of unconscious selfishness," "I don't care about anybody else, I just want my own garden." All of a sudden they realized that they were falling into a trap of having to be productive for other people in order to have something they wanted. It was a wonderful moment of realizing that if they wanted to garden, they could just have their own garden. So they did. Ended up that six families had garden plots for four or five years. Even that got complicated; someone had to be responsible to water it, etc. But it was a good lesson that they didn't have to have it for everybody. They began to think that applying what they wanted to see happen was good. It personalized it more, made doing it more fun, less of a chore.

Mindy says, "all we could see, when we first came here, was need. There was nothing offered. There were no films, there was theater to participate in but not to look at, there was no community garden, there wasn't any bar like the Silver Dollar--there was Charley's [New Deal Bar] but there was no music. The list went on and on. The needs were so great, it was burdening. You just knew if you didn't do it, it wouldn't be there. It was hard to live that way all the time. That's largely what burned me out on the Historical Society. I just put a lot of energy into doing things to make sure it happened, and you can't give without nourishment and you can't always take whatever form of nourishment there is as everything you need. Sometimes you need enrichment."

Q: Futurists tell us as that we become more high tech, there is more human need to be involved in community. It's easy to look at this group of people of which you are part, which has become very involved and has a legacy of projects, to see this commitment as an answer to the suburban, job-transfer, non-community involvement life style that is out there. Do you think it is?

Not for Mindy. The only community she had NOT been involved with was in New York City, and a rape in their apartment building made people get involved, organize. She grew up in a town where her parents were involved. Her need here wasn't to find a community to be involved with so much as to be a worthwhile person.

Mindy went to Chicago for a publishing convention in 1980; it was boggling, there was so much there. She stayed with friends in Eavnton or another suburb, rode the train to their new condo development. It was so depressing. She wondered at the time, how could she live if she lived there? The only thing she could think about was to live in some sort of economic collective--a community. She hasn't felt that alienation; it's not her choice.

She thinks that it must, to some degree, be self imposed--boredom, or lack of commitment. Because if you just put your finger up, there are so many projects that need you.

Tape 2, Side B.

Q: At what point did Butte change for you so that it would be hard to leave, so that you felt you had community here?

The community Mindy knew through NCAT was transient. While they were here, Mindy was a part of it, but it wasn't stable. The people who she is close to here now will always be her friends, her community, so even if she left, they would still be in her life. Mindy says, "some people can elicit in me some guilt about the idea of moving because it would be disruptive to community, but I don't believe in that, I guess. I think I'm more drawn to stay here because I've always been more affected by people who throughout the centuries have written about how important place is, and being somewhere where you are there over time enough to grow and change and see growth and change and be part of something, whether or not you always feel like it's wonderful. You just make that commitment. When I was most depressed about being here, that had little value because I thought I would be more able to participate elsewhere--wherever that was, who knows. That was because of the issue of not finding work. But having work in a place, makes it change. And then despite frustrations or whatever you feel you are missing, there is still that connection with the community."

The community has changed for Mindy over time. The people Mindy sees have changed. It's strange, they haven't moved away, they just don't get together anymore. But you still know they would help you or you would help them if they needed it. For instance, Mindy and Kathleen McBride don't see each other much now; she is working in Helena. They used to cry together; now they see each other only a couple times a year. Yet, it isn't uncomfortable.

Q: What is frustrating to you now?

It's hard to get away. Mindy loves to be exposed to different environments, different ideas. At first, she missed the theater, classical music, lectures. She still misses those things, but she saturates herself with them when she can. Like last fall, in New York, when they saw six plays in five days.

Mindy says, "I just decided that I was going to learn whatever I could learn here. And there are different kinds of things than I thought I wanted to learn, so I just have to learn to be open to that. I decided that I would try to be."

Q: What, specifically.

"A sense of humility about being alive. I always had probably typically adolescent grand illusions about what I wanted to do with my life, what I was capable of doing. And if you live in an

isolated place where the state is the community in some ways--I mean, I can practically stay with somebody anywhere I go, even if they are a bare acquaintance for political reasons, or whatever it might be--you live in a small environment. You are not making any big waves in the world. And yet there is a greater value--this again from wise people who have spoken through the centuries that I always wanted to believe but I couldn't feel--learning to appreciate life itself. I think that having to live here has helped me be forced to learn that. And I sort of took it on, too. I decided, at this rate, I'm not going to get a PhD in educational philosophy from Harvard and write some important paper--a past illusion. Not still impossible to achieve, but that was on my agenda for awhile. You're not going to do that when you're a bookseller in Montana, or when you're an unemployed grant writer in Montana whose primary focus is the neighborhood. But I take seriously people like the outspoken, thoughtful legislator from Missoula--what's his name? Who ran for city council after being in the Montana Legislature. He was just real blatant on the radio--about running, he'd gotten a lot of complaints about what are you narrowing your focus for? You were important in the state, now you want to run for city council? He was talking about the important things happening in your own home town, in your neighborhood, among your friends. Responsibility starts at home. I've been trying to learn that--learn it at an emotional level. I think this has been a good experience for me that way. I don't find any value in lofty ambition or acquisition of wealth or power. I think that it's not necessarily as important to be far reaching as it is to be wise. So I think that a community like Butte is a good place to exercise what you need to know to learn that. It really hits close to the bone. I've been criticized for not changing my ways. To live in a community where people can still like you and tell you over coffee that they have said negative things about you in the past because you don't shave your legs or you wear funny shoes. That's a value, because that is where people change, at that level. To 'be a good person', quote, unquote. Hardworking, trustworthy person, in a community where people can know each other over time and struggle, and get mad at each other and learn to forgive each other and do all that stuff--I guess I always believed that was a greater value than major accomplishments that people tend to think are more important, but now I get to really do it, learn it. I mean, I would love to publish five Pulitzer Prize winning novels. That would be fun to do. But I don't really know why. It's not really any more important than being a wise good person. I can work at it.

Q: Butte is a place where you have the time to learn wisdom?

"No, it's a place where you can't do anything important enough in the world, so you have to look at what really matters. I guess I look at it more that way. It's not Washington, D.C., it's not any center of power, there is no academic institution here of any worth for me--or in the state or in the region. I would have to be in the East...so I guess I'm sort of learning there is something more important for me to learn than that easy stuff

which anyone can believe."

Q: On the other hand, Fred is in a position where he can have great visions and see it come to fruition [e.g., the Mine Yard Plan].

Mindy tried to understand how Fred can fit his vision into tangible reality. She isn't sure she can really understand that. It seems like it is a lot of 'happy synchronicity.' He has a different focus than Mindy. He doesn't wonder why we're here, on earth. He says, here we are, what makes the most sense to do. His is a different kind of mind. It is a wonderful place for him here; Mindy says, "I have really been happy to see him get so strong because he never thought that he could do anything and everything he has done here has, in my mind, been exceptionally wonderful. He has been an inspiration to a lot of people, he has opened up a lot of vision, and he has only been having the courage to say the things that he thinks about, which is something we should all do, wherever we are. It's not always very easy. I used to resent that, but when I got to the point that I thought I should maybe look at what I was resenting and learn something from it, then it wasn't so hard."

Q: What will you be doing in 10 years?

Teaching theology at a University, or being a minister in a rural church. Neither of them would be in Butte. So Mindy might not do them. In which case, she would just write her five Pulitzer novels.

Q: So you still have those dreams.

"Yeah. But the focus is not to follow along some idea I have of what is worthy to do with one's life. It's trying to figure out what I can do with where I am. My goal with the bookstore is to make it strong enough. Right now, it's sound, but it's not profitable enough. It needs to be made profitable enough and at that point I can either sell it and at least get my money out so I'd have school money, or find a partner who wants to run it while I'm gone. I want it to stay, and I want it to stay in hands that can care about its place in the community. Bill's notion of selling it meant to me that that would not be possible, either to sell it or to find someone in that time frame to accomplish that, and I thought it was a really damaging thing to the community, so instead, I had to buy him out. There wasn't any option. I would be really sad to leave Butte. I would be very sad. There are many things that I think I will still learn here as long as I live here. And who knows, I might live here forever. But if I left, I would take so much good with me, so many skills I have learned, so many perspectives on what we're supposed to do, being human beings, that I think they would all be useful always. And, I think coming back here after leaving and not living here would be very painful because I would have so many fond memories. I love walking to work, I love looking at the mountains as I walk to work. I never get out in them,

though--I work too hard to get out and do the things you're supposed to do if you live in Montana."

For Fred, it's like burning coals on his feet to talk about leaving Butte. A lot he has dreamed about is happening. On the other hand, he can also talk about how it would be to apply the same things somewhere else.

Mindy recalls a letter to the editor saying that it would take only 10 minutes a month to sweep the gutter in front of your house. There is so much trash here; it made her feel comfortable when they first moved here because it was like New York--dogshit on the sidewalks, trash everywhere, dogs running everywhere. But it was also ludicrous because the newspaper was having a campaign against dogs--at the same time there was massive unemployment, toxic waste. The dog problem was bad, but it paled compared to toxic waste wherever you look.

Q: You have been here through the shutdown. What are your thoughts about the town's response to that experience.

Mindy is puzzled about how people are getting along. She knows how some have done it--they have moved away; they come back to visit their families on weekends. A lot have quit talking about the white horse that will save them, the magical 400 or 1000 jobs, and they have begun not just to quit talking about it, but to actually quit believing in it. It's a good dose of reality.

There is still so much mythification about the big companies coming in.

Mindy recalls one acquaintance, a welder--"He found out he was losing his job four days before Thanksgiving and was unemployed for a couple years. That was really graphic for me. He and a buddy who was also a welder came into the bookstore about three or four weeks after they were unemployed and I asked them what they were going to do. And this guy, who was buying the Harvard classics for his son and is a really thoughtful person in terms of economics and politics, and real clear about where he stands, and he is appreciative of the union, he understands, at least in our conversations, we've had a lot of conversations, he stood there in the bookstore, and I said, "well, what are you going to do now?" And he said, "you mean what can I do?" And I said, "well, yeah, you could start there, what can you do?" I said, "You should write down everything you know how to do and see if you can figure out how to make that into employment." And he said, "Hell, I don't have to write that down, I can stand here and tell you in 30 seconds." This is a really really really bright man who was a skilled welder and at one point went to Colorado to--and I'm not trying to use an example of somebody as an overall generalization; I just really don't know what people are doing, this is just what he was doing--went to Colorado and did some more training in welding so he is now capable of doing other kinds of work in that field. He could get a job, he said, any time at building a nuclear plant, and he just can't do it.

Rather than that, they are living on his wife's income, and their kids have finally graduated from high school, but I don't know what they are doing for college. But I was really sad to hear him say, and his buddy say, we're worthless, we don't know anything. And here he has this incredible ethical concern...He's working with disabled people in job retraining now. He found a job. It's not really what he likes to do because it's more paperwork and working with people than working with his hands, but it's a job."

Ron Garbarino.

Mindy feels good about what Don Peoples is doing. He spoke to the Uptown Association at their last meeting at Mindy's urging, about the business incubator. Mindy thinks that the more we think about local, small economies, the better. Mindy recalls the Alumax dinner a couple years ago, designed to woo the company here--it was so mindless.

Q: You have not supported the Our Lady of the Rockies project--what are your feelings on that?

Mindy has been fascinated by the controversy in letters to the editor. She thinks that people were thoughtful, especially in their opposition. That's a difficult position in a town of Irish Catholics. She never thought the project would actually be accomplished.

Tape 3, Side A

She had heard horrendous stories about Joe Roberts; was offended by the project because of what she felt was his pretentiousness; she was offended that someone would wreck the East Ridge. She thought the statue would be bigger; actually, you don't notice it much. She kept hoping it wouldn't happen. Then she got to thinking of the positive aspects because of Carrie, [a Washington, D.C. freelance writer who has been working on a book on Butte, did an article on Our Lady.] It's amazing that people raised the money, people got together, unemployed welders had a chance to work, etc.

But she had to draw the line on participating. She had a bad experience with tickets for the Mark Staples benefit concert--she said she wouldn't sell them. She had a long conversation with Mary Mollish, an older woman who is very active in the community, cheerful, wonderful woman. Mary asked her if it was environmental; Mindy told her yes, and also religious--she was raised Lutheran, and she had trouble with the idea of an icon up there. Mary said that it wasn't religious, it was to honor all mothers. It could as easily be Elvis Presley's mother. But they had a good conversation; Mindy felt it ended amicably. Mark Staples was upset, had a long conversation with Fred once about it. He had donated piano playing at the Booksellers opening, he felt badly that they wouldn't sell the tickets. Fred said that their not selling tickets had nothing to do with not supporting

his music, just had to do with not supporting that particular thing. Mindy would have said the same thing. Since then, she has been approached about selling cards, etc. with Our Lady, and she just has to keep saying no, because she doesn't want to be part of it.

Mary Mollish told Mindy that she should support it because it would bring in tourists, which would be good for her business. Her response was that lots of things are good for the community but no one is involved in all of them; we all do different things, and hopefully they are all contributing to the same positive end. "And I feel pretty good about that. We had an OK conversation about that and I'm sure she told other people; I'm sure I've not been approached to sell tickets other times because she let them know I wouldn't...She seemed respectful. It was the sort of conversation you like to have with people in the community where you live, where you can disagree about something and you say why and you respect each other, you don't hold it against 'em. I've seen her since and we say hello. It's OK, I think. As far as I'm concerned, it is. She's a very very nice person."

Q: What has helped Butte make the transition? It has been more successful than some other communities.

Butte is successful despite people because it is such an important environment in terms of history. People are more and more aware of that. There is an enormous amount of interest in remembering its history, its place. There is more awareness, an awe about its history and Mindy didn't hear when she first came here. At that time, people were talking about places with fancier malls than Butte. Maybe Mindy hears the new awareness because she is tuned into it. But the BHS has done everything it can to make people aware of what is here, receptive to it. "But I think the historical society has done an excellent job of doing everything it can to make Butte's history have substance rather than just some nostalgia for the 40's when the streets were full, which was what I heard most of when I was first here. And I finally had to tell somebody--I think it was Al Hooper--that I was just really tired of hearing about how wonderful Butte used to be because I think it's really wonderful now. And I don't get to see that time that used to be. It's not here anymore, and it's real nice for people who saw it to talk about it, but streets full of miners coming off shift is only going to be a real blurry, kind of whited out movie for me, that little 18 minute thing that somebody found in someone's basement...it's really dramatic to see all those guys in black with their lunchbuckets. It's what everybody says, coming off the hill. But it's not real anymore. And it used to bother me that that is what the conception of this place was--only what it was, rather than what it is or what it could be. And I hear more about Butte's future lately in a tangible way than I ever did before. But I'm not sure that everybody understands that. The banks don't. The banks are no help at all that I can see. I've heard nothing but stories of thwarting new enterprises." Pat Van

Aulton couldn't get an \$8,000 loan to open a bakery; Mindy couldn't get a \$4000 (check) loan to expand the business, even though she had paid back three loans; had never been late in payment to a publisher.

The LDC [Local Development Corporation] has not been helpful--its the old boy crony network; they don't take seriously their positions.

Mindy feels there is some gut level thing going on here. Something really mysterious. When Fred and Mindy first came, a woman was here who did astrological charts; she had done hundreds in Kansas, then had done hundreds here. She said that peoples charts didn't usually overlap; they didn't in Kansas. But of the people who were natives or who had been drawn here, they all had some part of their charts that had similarity. She had two hypothesis: that something about the ore drew certain people; or that there was some connection with the earliest Native Americans in the area--Mindy never understood that.

The other thing that fits in with that--the Public Library has a pamphlet from the Butte Business Association from the turn of the century. There are 7 or 10 or 12 clairvoyants mentioned in it. It's curious. Mindy has also known people who participate in seances, have experiences with ghosts, are interested in esoteric spirituality. Perhaps they are in other places. but there seems to be something about this place that can be talked about in a variety of ways. Something powerful spiritually.

A man who comes into the bookstore says he was drawn here. He showed Mindy a book that charted a flat map of the world in terms of energy centers. The one center in North America was Butte.

Q: What do you think hurts Butte?

Parochialism. Nostalgia. A kind of intolerance that isn't very overt but is very strong. It comes from a lack of education, from fear, from hardship. Doesn't harbor well for new things.

The church Fred and Midy belong to -- Gold Hill Lutheran -- Mindy is on the church council because she wanted to see what that was like. They all went on a retreat to talk about church direction. The pastor gave statistics of church size, pointed out that they are at the awkward stage--bigger than a family, but not big enough for clearly delineated tasks. Among the problems they discussed is the fact that the church has historically had the minister do everything.

They have not donated to the national Lutheran Organization because any extra money has always been put away to help church members during strike time. They don't have that problem anymore, but the idea that they should donate to the national org. is hard for people to accept. Mindy says, "It's those kinds of abstracted relationships that maybe haven't been very imminent." In addition to giving money to Food Bank, Gold Hill

helps out other families with food.

Mindy would like to know what it would be like to assume a strike every few years--tough.

Q: From what you can see, how much has the hardship felt over the past few years pulled people together?

Mindy isn't sure. She hears a lot of "thank God the pit closed; now we can get down to business." The community helps each other--a boy has cancer now; McDonalds had a day to help him; other businesses are talking about what they can do.

Tape 3, Side B

A few months ago, a family that was moving back to town had a severe auto accident; several were killed; they had no insurance. The church raised \$50,000 to help them in three days.

Perhaps something more directly related to the mine shutdown was the Butte Community Union. It had its first big meeting in the Butte Miners Union right after the layoffs. They met with city and congressional leaders. Mindy remembers people talking about how they couldn't get help if they had a car; they had worked all these years to be able to have a snow machine; now they would have to lose everything in order to get food stamps.

The Food Bank has been very successful; anytime they are in need, the community comes through.

Q: What has torn the community apart?

Is it St. Patricks that is closing on main? Someone said that closure is terrible; very hard for those people in that neighborhood. Mindy has heard it with other church closures. A couple years ago, the church had a big reorganization; changed priests at some parishes--just when people needed support most, they had a new priest.

Mindy doesn't know what would have happened if Butte Forward had gone ahead. There is still so much resentment about the Chamber of Commerce moving off the hill. The Flats vs. Uptown debate is still alive; everyone claims that they are concerned about all of Butte, but they have vastly different ideas. Mindy says, "That whole move to move Butte off the hill continues to be a really disruptive factor. We're talking constantly in the Butte Uptown Association about how better to work with the Chamber of Commerce. There is so much resentment about the Chamber moving its office off the hill. People are still angry--how many years is that, eight probably. The issue of the Flats vs. Uptown is still alive, and everybody seems to be claiming they are concerned about all of Butte, but they are from vastly different perspectives and communication is really hard. That's hardship because that's what happens to a physical town because of the industry in it and the after affects when that doesn't happen. I

imagined, and I think that I'm probably right, that a lot of those business people who expected their buildings to be bought by the Anaconda Company and then they weren't--and they were going to retire and just sell out and they've gotta keep going. And then they have to face all these revitalization people who want to paint and fix up. For some of those people, it's just "Wait, we did a facade renovation in the '50's; isn't it OK?" No, it's not OK anymore, and that's kind of a divisive thing. People get sort of badmouthed about not getting on the bandwagon when its for the good of the community."

A couple years ago, Mindy was President of the Butte Uptown Asociation. She had the state tourist director come and talk about what the state is doing. One of the things Mindy talked about in the introduction was how the Butte Uptown Association had started in opposition to Butte Forward. Afterwards, one of the supporters of Butte Forward came up, said, "I resent that; at the time, it was the reasonable thing to do; we wanted to contiue our businesses in the community." Mindy appreciated him coming up. For the most part, those frictions seem to have healed. Also, the BUA had a meeting recently of past presidents; they talked about how they had a lot of opportunities for growth and change. The BUA has moved from being a defensive organization to one concerned with positive things.