

Continuing A Local Legacy

Restaurateurs Basil and Kathryn Kelley revive the spirit of a Klickitat County landmark

By Lori Froehlich

The Logs Restaurant, a piece of Klickitat County history, has been nestled between White Salmon and Trout Lake in BZ Corners since 1932.

Originally built as a tavern and noted for the size of its octagonal dance hall, The Logs once was extremely popular with the many logging camps that populated the area.

Every Friday and Saturday night, The Logs was the place to be. Eighty years of history accumulated under that roof for the Trout Lake, Glenwood, White Salmon, BZ and Husum communities.

In 2010, this well-known landmark sat vacant and in extensive disrepair.

Enter Basil and Kathryn Kelley, a couple that could see through the shambles and the nightmare that the renovation would be. They saw what should and could be standing there, with all the history and memories intact.

The couple's original idea was to save the restaurant from the impending destruction that awaited it. They would clean it up, restore it and find a restaurateur to reopen it as The Logs.

"Sixteen months and a small fortune later, we found ourselves the reluctant, but passionate, owners of a fully operational restaurant, yet with no experience in the restaurant business," says Basil. "I think they call that a recipe for disaster."

The Kelleys are no strangers to the blood, sweat, tears and commitment that this venture required of them. Both grew up on hardworking family farms in Texas, where everyone pitched in and did their part.

They are also in the construction industry and have owned



Basil and Kathryn Kelley stand in front of The Logs, a newly renovated restaurant with 80 years of history within its walls.

their own businesses in Aurora, Oregon, for 30 years.

Basil and Kathryn have two grown children, Shane and Caitlin, who pitched in and helped their parents, no matter what was asked of them along the journey.

Throughout the remodel, the Kelleys desperately sought the right person to hand the reins to. This person would have to share the same interest for the history of the area and would know the significance of The Logs.

That person never materialized. But as the Kelleys like to say, "It's the Logs!" So they rolled up their sleeves, dug in their heels and made it happen themselves.

Kathryn smiles when she thinks of her husband's dedication and love of The Logs.

"This isn't Basil's first rodeo," she says. "He was on his way to retirement and spending his days on the sailboat. Well, that



Clockwise from top left: The fireplace room in The Logs, which features Basil's handiwork; Harley, the Kelleys' faithful companion, helps serve concessions at the Glenwood Rodeo; The Logs with the octagonal dance hall, which is where the cabinettes (overnight units) are now, circa 1937.

boat is currently in dry dock.”

Basil designed and built all the tables, the bar and the barstools in the restaurant. The floor and the siding are built with local wood, cut and milled just for The Logs.

Throughout the construction phase, many locals who had grown up with this piece of their community would stop in and thank the Kelleys for the time and effort they put forth. They waited with bated breath for the final unveiling to see if it again could be the gathering place it once was.

The Logs opened for business December 21, 2011. The Kelleys look back now and laugh with each other, but recall how horrendous and crazy it was with new recipes, servers, cooks, procedures and inexperience.

By the end of the night, they wondered if they should really

try to do it again the next day.

Luckily for the area, customers and every passerby on the highway who smells that barbecue, they came back the second day, and have every day since.

The Kelleys are committed to continuing The Logs' legacy for the community.

Klickitat PUD was thankful for the Kelleys' perseverance when the ice and snowstorm hit the area in mid-January. They graciously opened The Logs' doors to tired and hungry line crews from various counties. Inhospitable weather, late hours, treacherous roads covered in downed trees, and power outages conspired to exhaust the usually tireless repair crews.

The less-than-ideal conditions didn't stop the Kelleys from helping keep the crews fueled with food and giving them a place to rest. The linemen still reminisce about the delicious hot soups and the few minutes they had to enjoy it.

The Kelleys revel in the number of residents from every local community who walk through their door. These people can again find respite at The Logs.

“Sometimes we stand here and just enjoy watching the people laughing, talking and just enjoying life over good food and cold beer,” Basil says. “This truly makes the entire journey worthwhile.” ■

The Logs Inn, 1258 Hwy. 141 (BZ Corner), White Salmon, WA 98672; (509) 493-8228