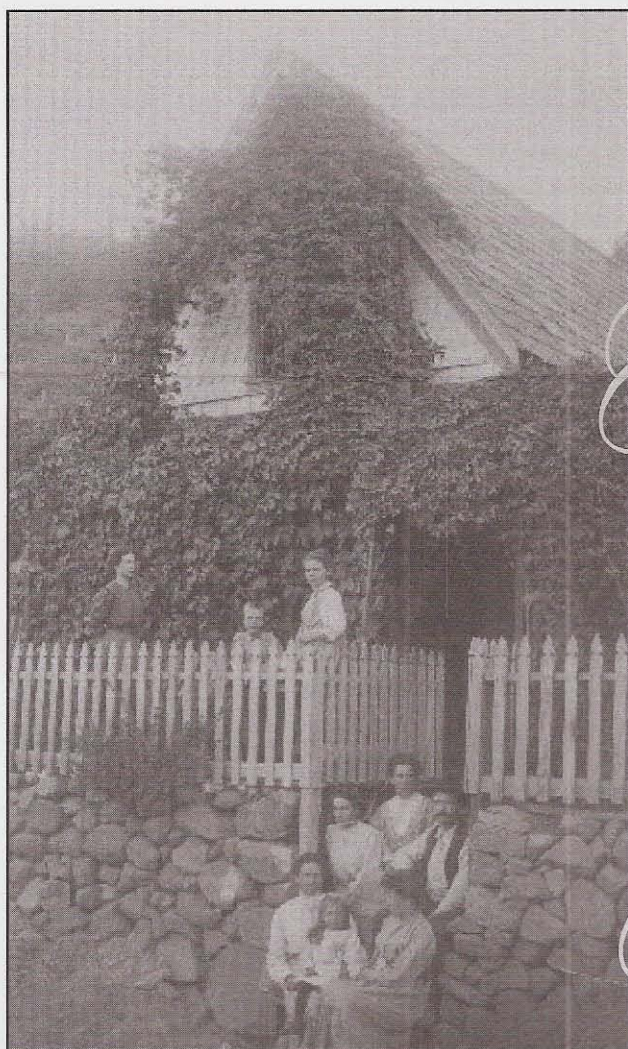


# The Sierran

— A Publication of the Sierra County Historical Society —

MEMBER OF THE CONFERENCE OF CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETIES  
AND THE CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS



John Colman, Lizzie and Clara Wright (behind picket fence), Delbert (on lap), Grandmother Wright, Emma, Sarah, Elizabeth Booth Spears. John Colman's home in Alleghany 1910

## Excerpt from *Their Voices Still Echo in the Canyons*

By Bud Buczkowske

### Memories and photographs of Delbert S. Colman

The home (shown at left) is where Delbert Stanley Colman was born on June 1, 1907. Del will celebrate his 97 birthday this coming June. Grandpa William Wright built this home and helped in the construction of many others in Alleghany. No power tools were used during the construction.

The following are the memories of many years in the life of Delbert Colman. Del recorded them on a cassette in 1996. They are recorded like most conversations would be spoken.

### Memories of Delbert Colman

By Delbert S. Colman

It was a long time ago when Milton was a stagecoach stop on the Henness Pass Road. The stagecoach run was from Milton Dam (Jackson Meadow) in California to Verdi, Nevada.

My grandpa told me a man at Cornish Ranch, which lies in the shadow Mt. Vernon, while out rounding up mules, that had wondered away, for the stagecoach found a quartz ledge from an up rooted tree. They would be rich. He was only 20 minutes from his home bringing his mules

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## THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Sierra County Historical Society is an organization of people interested in preserving and promoting an appreciation of Sierra County's rich history. The Society operates a museum at the Kentucky Mine in Sierra City, holds an annual meeting, publishes a semi-annual newsletter and conducts historical research. Members are sent notices of Society activities, receive THE SIERRAN, and are admitted free of charge to the museum and stamp mill tour. If you would like to become involved in these activities or would just like to give your support, please join us!

### MEMBERSHIP REPORT

We appreciate the interest and support of all our members.

#### New Lifetime Memberships:

Suzi Schoensee, Sattley, CA 96124  
Edwin F. Sholtzberger, Goodyears Bar, CA 95944  
Milton Gottardi, Loyalton, CA 96118

#### Ongoing Lifetime Memberships:

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Joanne Busch, Ridgecrest, CA 93555  
Lou Cooper, Vista CA 92083  
Thomas Dolley, Crystal Bay, NV 89402  
Carol Guiffre, Sierra Cty, CA 96125  
Steve Harte, San Bernardino, CA 92405  
Adella Lombardi, Loyalton, CA 96118  
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William Rowley, Verdi, NV 89439  
Ray & Delanna Schneider, Novato, CA 94949  
Maren Scholberg, Sierraville, CA 96126  
Charles Smith, Grass Valley, CA 95945

### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Membership in the Sierra County Historical Society is open to any interested person, business or organization. Members need not be residents of Sierra County. Dues are due and payable each January for the calendar year.

Membership categories are as follows:

INDIVIDUAL	\$15.00
FAMILY & INSTITUTION	\$20.00
BUSINESS & SUPPORTING	\$30.00
SUSTAINING	\$50.00
LIFE (per individual)	\$250.00

Please send dues to the Membership Chair:

Lynn McKechnie  
PO Box 294  
Sierraville, CA 96126

### SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Office Address:

Kentucky Mine Museum  
PO Box 260, Sierra City, CA 96125  
(530) 862-1310

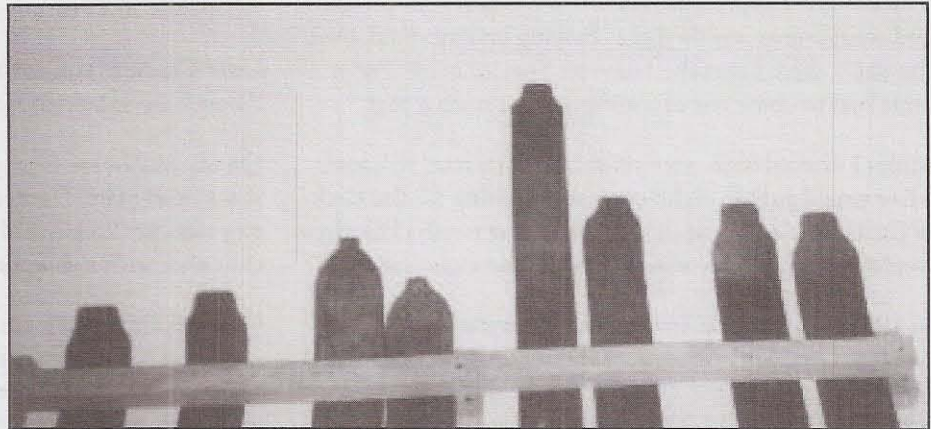
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P.O. Box 904, Alleghany, CA 95910 (530) 287-3287  
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Museum Director/Curator ..... Anne Eldred  
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5016 Holyoke Ave., Sacramento, CA 95841  
(916) 332-1044 Sacramento (530) 994-3066 Sattley

**Memories of Delbert Colman (Continued from Page 1)**

back along with the gold quartz. He drove the mules into the corral. One mule balked as he went to move the mule and was kicked in the head and died. He was rich but also dead.

I married on October 24, 1935 in Reno, Nevada. Jack O'Connell and Hazel (Mildred and Hazel were sisters) drove us in their grey color Hubmobile. We lived in Alleghany until 1938.



*Sierra County Skis*

George Hallock had the Pilgrim Mine at American Hill. There was 12' of snow on the ground. Tom Meehan had died in a cabin there, and rigormortis had set in. His hands were up in the air. Elton 'Specs' Carvin and I were nearby. We knew the area, and were on skies so we went to the Pilgrim Mine and helped take Tom to Forest City. Ray Hawkins was coroner and had to prepare him for burial. There were a few young girls in Forest City curious of what was going on. When they saw Ray break the dead mans arms (in order for the casket to close) the girls took off screaming.

Grandpa William Wright built our family home in Alleghany. (The Wright's and Booth's were on my mother's side of the family).

Upstairs in the Colman house in Alleghany all us children would look out the window watching for my father coming from Chip's Flat. He worked at the Plumbago Mine. We could see the carbide lamp he had mounted on the horse's forehead zig zagging up the trail. When we saw him we all went running down the stairs shouting, "Daddy is coming." Mother would begin setting out the evening meal.

When snow was deep dad would clamp square snowshoes to the horse's hoofs. He trained his horse to walk in them.

When I was 12-13 years old I packed 2x4x8 lumber from Fippin Mill, a sawmill, between Forest City and Mountain House. I made Sierra County skis, which I still have. (The tips on Sierra skis differ from standard skis). There's a pair of Wes Wyllie's brother-in law (Lester "Shelly" Kuhfeld worked for the mine on the surface crew) skis in the Downieville museum. "There is also a

Nevada ski, you might find them in Graniteville."

I began working for PG&E May 31, 1929 for \$5.00 a day, 5 days a week. Pete Hobson was working for PG&E. When he left I took his job. Fred Develey was Supervisor at that time. When I retired we bought a house in Grass Valley near the cemetery. The one I live in now.

I was working at the Oriental Mine near Wet Ravine. I had just brought the ore car train from the mine heading to the mill house. I could see it was hi grade ore loaded with gold. Something only a superintendent is supposed to see. I was between a rock and a hard place; I could have been black balled from mining. I quickly called Dick Wilson to see the ore cars loaded with rich hi grade. Dick and Bill Jones went to the raise and came out with 11 powder boxes (one powder box holds 90-100 sticks of dynamite) of almost pure gold. I put them on a train and packed them to the mill room. Later Dick came out and told me there was \$90,000 in gold.

(I later asked Del to explain how no one else saw the rich ore).

He said, "The ore cars are set below the blasting area. The ore travels down a chute. It is stored there until a baffle is raised long enough to fill an ore car. When one ore car is filled the next one is set beneath the shoot. This continues until all the ore cars are filled. As yet no one has seen what the ore looks like. The ore cars are then brought out of the mine directly to the mill house."

*(Continued on Page 4)*

**Memories of Delbert Colman (Continued from Page 3)**

There was a time when a mule was brought into a mine and would never see daylight. Staying underground until the day it died. Later the Humane Society made it so a mule had to come out of a mine at least once a year.

Mules I worked with were smart. They learned to count. They would pull an eight-car train listening for the click of the ore car coupling. If they heard the ninth click they wouldn't move. They would only pull an eight-car train.

In 1968 I went to the 16-1 to repair a transformer that had been struck by lightning. The lightning had traveled through a cable to the Tightner level a distance of 1/2 to 3/4 of a mile. The 12,000-volt strike knocked out a transformer.

A rod went through Sparky Gardner killing him. The skip jumped the track and a drill rod ran through him. This was at the 16-1 in the '20s.

Saw a large woman skinny-dipping near the El Dorado Mine. Earlier some miner taught her how to pan for gold. She was diving near a large boulder in the river (a place the miner felt was quite dangerous. The boulder could roll and trap her beneath the water.) She found a large nugget in Kanaka Creek and had Ray Hawkins send it to the mint. She got \$1,500 of gold from it. She had three children. She bought a Model-A Ford touring car and went back to Texas.

George Fessler was killed at the El Dorado when his jumper jacket caught on the setscrew of a big wheel in the mill.

A miner was killed in the shaft of the Gold King Mine when the hoist-man lowering the skip gave a wrong signal. The fuse was lit and instead of raising the bucket holding the miner, it was lowered and the miner blown up. The mine shut down and never reopened.

Arthur Bowding a millman at the Virginia Mine, he was an Englishman and hard of hearing outside the mill. He could understand people when the mill was running. He moved to Angles Camp for more money. I sent him a check. I had a mill job for him at the Oriental or Kenton. I received my check back from Angles Camp informing me he had committed suicide using cyanide and acid.

There was six-feet of snow on the ground. Doctor Padgett put on the webs (snow shoes) to go to Forest City over

the ridge from Alleghany. He stepped on Chick Evans, who was drunk and buried in the snow. Doctor Padgett took him home, and revived him. (Doctor Padgett left Alleghany in 1942.)

Later Chick fell off the footbridge at Oregon Creek in Forest City and died. He was on his way home.

On my way home from school I passed the firehouse. I saw a dead man. There was an on going feud between two men working near Foote Road and one had shot the other with a shotgun.

My grandfather told me the Alleghany Band, when the snow was too deep, would travel through the Tightner Tunnel to the South Fork Mine in Forest City. Then walked to Bald Mountain taking the Brass steam train into a large chamber where they held a dance. Virginia Vivian and some stockholders decided to build a dredge in that chamber. It was built, but never used. Today I understand this chamber holds a one million-dollar dredge.

They say Tommy knockers do not want women in the mine. I know who Tommy knockers are. When I worked at the Virginia Mine in Coulterville at the 500-foot level there were huge stulls (timber columns), holding up loose rock in the ceiling, some had mushroom tops from the weight to the ceiling and caused cracks in the timbers. I drove wedges into the cracks to determine the movement in the ceiling. The next day if they were loose or fell out I knew there was danger of a cave-in. When it was quiet you could hear the timbers splitting. This is a warning.

On the Foote Grade, just below the ball ground at the city dump, Doctor Hardie had the Bag-Dad and Bag-Dad Extension Mine on a nearby ledge. It had two holes with water in them.

Spec Carvin and his wife Thelma had a new 1922 or 23 Chevy and tried to shift gears and rolled down the dump. She fell out and lost the stone from her diamond ring. The next day someone found it. She had a lot of stitches taken in her groin.

(Keith their son was a boyhood friend of Lowell Hiscox. Keith was a Marine. Tom was a County Supervisor. Thelma was a bookkeeper for the Alpha Hardware Store).

Elbert Davis and another man went over the slide at Wet Ravine. He had his nose cut most of the way off and sewn

(Continued on Page 5)

**Memories of Delbert Colman (Continued from Page 4)**

on by Doctor Hardie. He turned out looking like a prizefighter. The other guy had his back broken and never walked again.

Two schoolteachers, one was Barbara Davey. They were raising money for a school program. They went to the Kenton Mine where they saw an old man digging ditches. He was wearing Levies with holes and patches. They asked him for a donation. The man gave a very large bill (\$100). Back at the cooks shack Barbara asked the cook if the poor old man could afford it. She was informed that the "poor old man" was George Gamble of Proctor & Gamble.

Pete Daley (Boston Red Sox player 55-59) and Jack Wolf had the mine down the road below the Mack House. The Mack House was about 2 1/2 miles out of Alleghany on Tyler Foote Road and Rapps Ravine.

Bruce Nightingale was killed in the Pilgrim Mine near Forest. He got caught in a compressor belt. Doris Foley was his sister.

Joe Blake was the first Highway Patrolman in California. He taught me how to drive at Bar Meadows. Because of the rugged terrain it was a great place to learn. I got my driver's license at age 12. ~



## School Teaching Memories

By Barbara Davey

I taught in the Alleghany School from 1940 to 1943. I had 25 pupils in first four grades and 25 pupils in the high school band.

The school was only two years old, and had an automatic electric heating system, which was quite a contrast to the school in Forest, which still had a pot-bellied stove. We had a janitor, while the Forest teacher was paid \$5.00 a month to be her own janitor. She paid a little boy \$.25 cents a week to build a fire in the stove every morning before school.

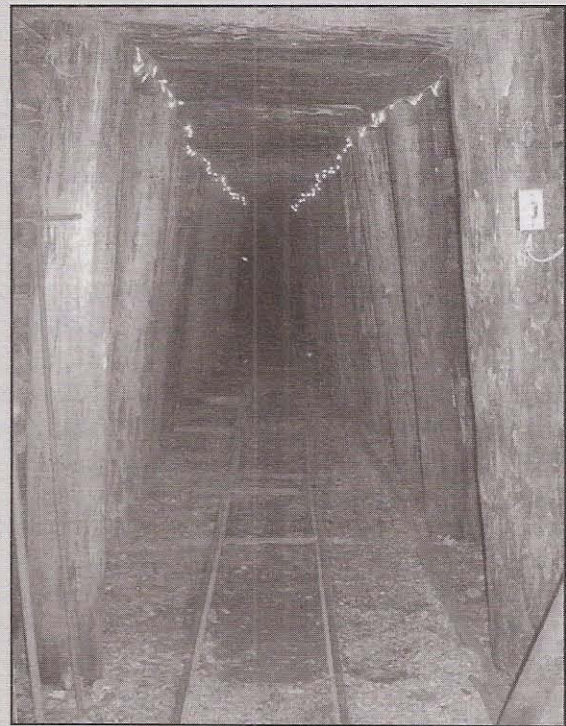
Mr. Sinott was the Superintendent of Schools and taught high school in the same building. He offered me the services of his shop class and made painting easels and a very nice puppet theatre for me.

The band had very pretty blue wool capes with gold satin linings. When we practiced marching down the street, we could only have three students in a row—two marching in ruts and one marching up the middle.

I taught band every day after school. Then every Tuesday night I taught the woodwind section separately and every Thursday night the brass section. In the summer I taught band every Wednesday night, had individual lessons before school, at lunchtime and all day Saturday. I was paid \$400 a year for this. My annual salary was \$1,320 for my grammar school job.

It was a lot of fun and I enjoyed every minute of it. ~

*Taken from the Sierran, Vol. XV, No. 2, Winter 1987.*



### The Kentucky Mine & Museum (open the week of Memorial Day)

**Wed. through Sun.  
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

**Tours will be given at 11:00 a.m.  
and at 2:00 p.m.**

## Notice of Annual Meeting

Yearly meeting in Loyalton—Don't miss the annual meeting of the Historical Society which will be held in Loyalton, Ca, at the Social Hall in the City Park at 12:00 noon on September 11, 2004. Bring your lunch—hot lasagna will be provided by the society. After the meeting there will be a historical tour of Loyalton and the local cemetery. A small fee may be charged for the tour to cover the cost of the bus.

## Message from President Bud Buczkowske

YOUR OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS have accomplished a great deal since the annual meeting held in Alleghany, California 2003. The Concert Series is under way with quality entertainment for the public to enjoy. The SCHS has acquired the Historic Keim-Lagomarsino cabin in Loganville, with hopes of restoring it (Bringing it back to its past glory). We have increased the number of Directors from seven to nine, because of the great distance Board members travel and winter storms at times make it difficult getting a quorum. We are considering having a tenth alternate Director. The alternate would abstain from voting if all 9 Directors were in attendance. We are also in the process of renegotiating our agreement with Sierra County on the Kentucky Mine Museum.

Our Annual Meeting will be held in Loyalton, Ca on the Sunday after Labor Day weekend, September 11, 2004. We are also planning a Sierra County 2005 calendar and a book on Sierra Valley Schools. As you can see, your Officers and Board Members are hard at work. Keep in mind the lifeline of our historical society lies in its membership, so keep on the lookout for good prospective members. In closing, if you have an idea or direction you would like to see your Board review, please let us know. Respectfully, President Bud Buczkowske

## A Shelf of Histories

- ✱ *The Historical Homes of Sierra Valley in Sierra County*, by Maren Scholberg is available for \$17 (includes tax. Add \$2 for postage.) Orders payable to: Sierra County Historical Society, Box 141, Sierraville, CA 96126
- ✱ Jim Olsen's popular memoir, *The Camps of Clover Valley*. Make checks for \$19 (includes tax and postage), payable to the Sierra County Historical Society, Box 141, Sierraville, CA 96126
- ✱ *Sierra County Pioneer Cemetery Historic Survey* (to 1925) compiled by Lee Adams in 1997. \$22 (only a few copies left). Order from the Sierra County Historical Society, Box 141, Sierraville, CA 96126
- ✱ *Voices Still Echo in the Canyon* and *Whispers on the Wind* by Bud Buczkowske, recounting the history of Alleghany and some stories from the Goodyears Creek/Canyon Creek band of the county, respectively, replete with photos. \$22 includes tax and postage. The books may be ordered directly from Bud at Box 904, Alleghany, CA 95910
- ✱ *The History of the Schools of Sierra Valley*—will soon be off the press and available for purchase. This is a must for collectors of the history of Sierra Valley.

## Sierra County Historical Society Renewal Notice

THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY is an organization of people interested in preserving and promoting an appreciation of Sierra County's rich history. The Society operates a museum at the Kentucky Mine in Sierra City, holds an annual meeting, publishes a semi-annual newsletter and conducts historical research. Members are sent notices of Society activities, receive THE SIERRAN, and are admitted free of charge to the museum and stamp mill tour. If you would like to become involved in these activities or would just like to give your support, please join us!

### Membership Information

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By including the Renewal Notice in "Sierran" mailing we are saving postage. Please help us by renewing now for 2004.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Renewal ☐ New Member

Membership categories are listed below.  
Please check your choice.

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual            | \$15  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family & Institution  | \$20  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business & Supporting | \$30  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining            | \$50  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life (per individual) | \$250 |

PLEASE SUPPORT THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Send dues to the Membership Chair: Lynn McKechnie, P.O. Box 294, Sierraville, CA 96126

# The Sierran

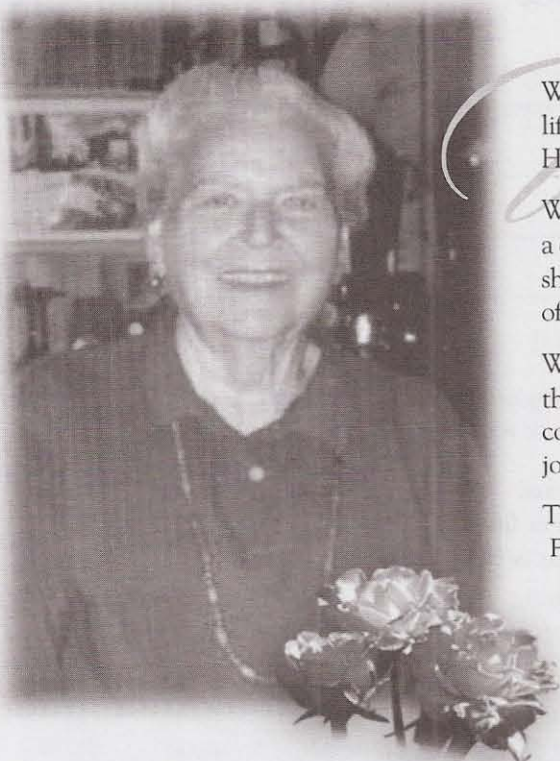
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**PLEASE SUPPORT THE SIERRA  
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Be sure to renew your dues today.  
We've included a convenient form  
inside this edition of *The Sierran*.

THE SIERRAN

SPRING/SUMMER 2004



## Wanda Longsine

Wanda Longsine left us last winter. She left a large hole in the community life of Sierra County, a larger hole in the leadership of the Sierra County Historical Society, and a painful hole in the hearts of her friends.

Wanda worked at her many tasks for the Society with a gusto for life, and a dedication to service with excellence, that was a rare joy to share. She shared that joy of service with the Society—and her beloved community of Calpine—until well past the time her health failed completely.

Wanda was considered publicly “stoic” when confronted—all too often—with the self-absorbed human failings of those around her. In private, her wickedly comic and concise on-target assessments of the self-important, were another joy to share.

The Society’s directors—from their own pockets—are making a Memorial Fund contribution in Wanda’s name and a Memorial Plaque will be erected at the Kentucky Mine. When the snow melts around the high lakes, some of Wanda’s friends plan a kayak flotilla to scatter her ashes amid the serene beauty she so loved. It will be a task we share with joy. ~

— Bill Long