

# Fire-The Complete Story

## Friday July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Fire started 9 miles away and like a rifle shot came steadily towards us moving eastward about 2 miles per day. The flames were well above treetops upwards to 200-foot flames. This is the **East Finger** of the fire driving east. The smoke was driven directly over our house roof with blue sky on each side of its pathway. We put this serious scenario in God's hands.

## Sunday July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Andrew & Sarah, Jim & Sally began thinning and clearing the forest section between the house and guest cabin in preparation for a fire coming through. We need to be able to fight spot fires so the ground floor needs to be clean and trees thinned to monitor it properly. The afternoon winds again drove the fire forward with its resultant destructive clouds pouring directly over our rooftop. Large and small ash pieces would drop on us from these clouds. We could actually feel the heat of the fire, which was less than four miles from our house now. Our temperatures were unseasonably hot in the 90's which drives this fire as well as wind.

We placed five-gallon buckets of water stationed all over the property filled and ready for potential spot fires as well as all five house hoses with sprinklers that ran 24° a day. All my watering could not quench the dryness of our woods. After hours of soaking in one spot it would be dry within 30 minutes like it was never watered. Our drought conditions for 7 years are showing. The relative humidity was as low as 8% and drove the fires.

## Monday July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2003

We scheduled a work bee and ended up with 21 men that came to help us, of their own accord, hearing of our plight, to thin the wooded areas of our property to prepare for the fire. David Sample, Jack Janetski, Brent Blaney, Paul & Jack Rayne, Mark Fink, Forest & Corla Rankin, Sam Jenkins, Aaron Jones, Kerry Garner, Tom Glatts, Dosung Kim, Paul Williams, Jerry Wernick, Jim, Sally, Matthew, Andrew, Rudy and Barbara Hall. Jim came upon a fire crew of about 20 Mexicans with nothing to do and brought them up to our house and they too limbed trees and helped clear.

With all the men, trailers and clearing we built a mountain of trees and boughs below the ridge behind the guest cabin. (100'X30'X10')

We had to make a sign to place at our driveway on the North Fork Road so all would know if we were here or gone. On a large piece of cardboard that we hung between our sign post it read ... "Still Here."

Rudy & Barbara had taken our generator starter to town with them and returned it to us repaired by early afternoon. When installed it still wasn't right and Jack Rayne examined it carefully and found oil in the solenoid. It worked better by the time he finished with it. We had a lovely lunch prepared by Corla Rankin, good conversation and a good prayer for God's protection and strength.

The winds were supposed to deliver the fire to our property line by evening but there was an "unexpected wind" out of the east, blowing to the west that halted the fire. Praise God! We worked hard with no smoke from 6:30am to 6:00pm—what a crew! A handful of these dear people were planning to stay to fight the fire but there was none to wrestle with today!

Today was also the scheduled day to evacuate the North Fork north of the fire. The Sheriff came and made us aware of our danger and we had to sign a waver that we chose to stay recognizing our danger.

## **Tuesday July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2003**

Jim & Sally did a lot more cleaning up of trees, boughs, sticks and debris. Today the fire developed a **north finger** that headed vigilantly north towards Trail Creek. The winds swirled at the end of the day putting a hook on this finger and it was going south towards us once again.

The **east finger** of the fire was now two and one-half miles from our doorstep.

Fire crews began visiting our home and assessing our property and needs. With each crew different suggestions were made and implemented. Both Jim & I worked through accepting losing our home, property and possessions, if it was God's will. We were at peace and felt God assured us that all was in His hands and would be well but no details were given what that meant.

A local TV station stopped in and talked with us. They liked our story and filmed why we were here when most everyone else was gone. We gave glory to God for the peace and lack of fear that we experienced through all this so far. We felt it was better to be here and do what we can to keep our place safe from spot fires than to leave and always wonder. The potential of

still losing all was there. We would protect but not risk our lives for our home; Flesh is more valuable than logs, so we strove for that balance. This interview would be shown during the 10:00 local news that evening.

### **Wednesday July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2003**

Yesterday and today I packed up the precious items I wouldn't want to lose—pictures and books mostly, and packed them into the trailer Dosung Kim brought with him on Monday's work bee for our use. Smoke was very heavy especially at night. We close up the house at 86° and do not open our windows all night, so we can breathe anyway. Our lungs are starting to suffer as well as our voices from all the smoke, dust and ash.

Ed & Linda Langton came over to visit in the afternoon. Jim & Ed went up to the top of the knoll at the top of the hill to see west of us, the view of the fire.

While they were gone, a lady came concerned for us asking us to evacuate—the fire is coming down Whale Creek to the North Fork Road just south of us and the fire is also pushing across Tepee Lake at the North Fork Road north of us trapping us with no way out she said. I said, "thank you" but was not concerned as there are many false stories that go around with miss information. The fire clouds to our west did not agree with this story. Shortly after this a fireman came to evacuate us as well, telling us a similar story. So I began packing as quickly as possible; all our essential clothes, and getting all the pictures off the walls to pack. Linda helped me pack. Then the siren blew again and again, telling us it was the last call to evacuate—drop everything and leave. I prayed and waited.

Jim & Ed still weren't back from the top of the ridge. Linda called out for Ed and I for Jim but they couldn't hear. Finally they came. They had not even heard the sirens. Jim wasn't convinced this story was so, because he just saw the fire from the ridge top and saw no immediate danger. We packed up the remaining items and a cooler and drove to Whale Creek Road to inquire if this was so. The fire was 5 or 6 miles up this road and not as the report was given. There was no danger to us, so we returned home for the night and slept peacefully. Presently the east finger of the fire is about 2 miles west of our home. We see God's hand upon all that is happening and exercised our trust in Him instead of our senses, sight, and hearing.

### Thursday July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2003

I (Sally) put all my efforts into re-packing that morning in a more organized fashion than the day before. I also packed a few more things that I'd like to have with me.

The north finger took a mad run north and broke through  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile southeast of Morris' cabin towards Trail Creek. Jim went up there to help them fight the fire and they were evacuating instead.

That night the **north finger** of the fire along with the hook that returned south formed a 3 mile fire wall headed east and crossed the North Fork Road, down the hill and across the large spring, across the air strip (our favorite walking spot) and the North Fork River into the park. Jim & I watched the fire wall with 200-foot flames cross the Northfork Road and come down the bank towards the airstrip where we were watching. We left. The north flank of the fire came within 4/10<sup>th</sup> of a mile north of us. Taking the flank of the fire was much better than the front side of it!

We went to bed about 10:30pm I couldn't sleep thinking about what else I'd like to pack to take with me if need be. Logic and sight said we could easily loose our home even tonight. I got up and put more buckets of things out ready to pack in the morning.

11:30pm Jim couldn't sleep either and got up to patrol our property. The red glow that was along our entire north property line was now a red fire ball and the heat was very evident, due to an unusual wind blowing south. We decided to evacuate our trailer of things to Rudy & Barbara Hall's south of us. After depositing our trailer we had to go back to see if our place made it or not. We were safe. The winds and the fire diminished and quieted down.

### Friday July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Got up to extremely smoky conditions with the fires so active and so close north of us. The house was safe though. Again God's protecting hand was on our place. We drove north to check out this fire and its devastation. There were spot fires everywhere. Matthew called and said he was coming up to help today.

It was early afternoon about 12:30pm and the winds began to blow and the **east finger** of the fire began to plume. The clouds quickly became brown and blew directly over our house as usual. We worked hard to pick up as much refuse still on the ground as we could in preparation for the fire

coming through. The USFS provided Jim with a team of twenty men to aide him in this preparation.

It was less than a mile on the west flank and only 4/10<sup>th</sup> mile on the north side from our home and fire could cover that in less than an hour easily.

A fire truck came in about 3:00pm and encouraged us to leave now! We decided to stay. We got all our valuable things out of the house and packed into the car and trailer. The firemen wet down all our buildings with fire hoses, then foamed all the buildings. I took wonderful pictures only to loose them to a faulty camera.

3:30pm they put a Mark 3 pump in our creek and pumped water from it to supply 2 big fire hoses well. Matthew helped them water everything down; the carport, the trees and the grass. Then they duck taped one hose to a tree and it sprayed the west side of the firewood on that garage side. Another hose was duck taped to another tree aimed on the back porch of our cabin.

4:15pm the **east finger** of the fire ceased for no reason for the wind was still blowing. Yet the angry brown and black billows ceased and turned to white. All the radio dispatch went silent for no known reason. It was so strangely quiet, even the firemen commented on it. We felt like the angels were there and God said, "*This far and no farther!*" I sensed the angels were holding these four winds of fire away from us.

Then it was evident that the **south finger** of the fire was still very active and had been coming along side the east finger of the fire but it continued to advance towards us. The brown, ugly billows angrily crept and foamed and tumbled towards us. I felt like Satan was wroth with us and the message we give and vehemently reaching out to touch and destroy all we had and us. This was very graphic in our present circumstances. After about 15 minutes this finger went in a south direction rather than east to us.

The firemen were alerted to leave in 1 minute the fire was coming down the hill and could cut off our south exit route. The fire director said we needed to evacuate in 45 seconds and we all were. We went south to a field  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile south of us. We watched that south finger come in this direction devouring the lofty grandeur of the magnificent trees like a roaring lion for one hour coming towards a big open field. The winds suddenly ceased and the fires slowed and went to bed for the night. It never came down the ridge or to our home. Kept in the cleft of His hand once again!

We returned to our home after 30 minutes to check on our house. It was fine but the water pump quit. Jim restarted the pump and we left again. After an hour we returned to our home for the night.

Matthew and Jim went up the back hill to check things out. They found 3 large spot fires doing their devouring work and they hauled up our back sledding hill 20 gallons of water in 5 gallon buckets. They successfully put out those fires. The fire now has us in the 90° corner. We were hedged in on the north and west. This is becoming a comfortable feeling.

Matthew returned home to help his wife and Jim & I rested like little babies that night in our little mountain home. We rested in the arms of Jesus our Deliverer. Twice God has let Satan's wrath be poured out on us to destroy and devour us and twice God said, "No further." We are truly under His care. Jim and I sensed that we would not lose our home but we needed to be prepared to let our home and all go if God required it and trust that would be best. Truly we only have what we give away to God's care. He cares for us! I Peter 5:7.

### **Sabbath July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

Andrew and Sarah came up for the day after church. After lunch Andrew and Jim went to walk the borders of our property looking for spot fires. They went back up on the backbench where last night they put out the spot fires and there were more, and more, and more. Andrew vigilantly attacked the fires he came upon. Jim checked the big picture only to find hundreds of spot fires all along the hillside up to Wurtz' cabin 4/10<sup>th</sup> mile north of us. He reported it to the fire crews requesting to put in a fire line at the base of this hill along the whole length from Wurtz to the end of our property.

Come evening there was a skidder and one hundred twenty men on foot. Where the skidder couldn't go the men did. And before dark it was done. They hoped this would make a fire break for the sleeping giant fire that was behind this bench and still coming our way. This firebreak was about 200 yards from our property.

### **Sunday July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

The **east finger** of the fire was about 1-½ miles from us now. They had built a large roadway as a firebreak but it didn't work and the fire crossed over.

Janell arrived.

Fire crews came in and cleared more trees west of us on Forest Service land to the small ridge that was in line with our guest cabin. Janell and I were picking up boughs, sticks and refuse to burn piles. Now we had 5 large piles of trees on top of our bench, as well as the one huge one below this ridge.

Janell spotted a large spot fire when she dumped the wheelbarrow load of sticks and debris. Jim & the firemen were called. Janell and I pulled our house hoses and added sections until we reached the site of the fire. Here is where I met Mike the Division Commander in charge of structures that would be taking over the fire here ... "Would you like me to get a fire truck in here for that?" Mike had a real heart to help and was concerned about us ladies here in the fire area. Firemen with shovels had lessened the flames and the water from our house hoses put it out dead!

Sally met Sue who owns her own fire truck and was part of the fire crew. We had some very interesting heart level talks. So I gave her a copy of Jim's book, "Escape to God" thinking she'd appreciate it and she did.

A night crew watered and patrolled our property.

### **Monday 28<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

The Indian Team is the #1 fire team. Neil and Billy White are the leaders. They have heart and are very hard workers. A fire flared in the section between the backbench and us less than 200 feet away. Full flaming trees blazed and this team rushed down to it with one-fire hose, chain saws and hoe dads. "Lets go men. Let's go get it! Hustle—Hustle—Hustle!"

This crew of men ran down the ridge to the fire. Chain saws wailing and trees on fire fell to the ground away from us. Soon fire trucks arrived and water trucks added to the teams efforts. All day they fought it with 3 fire trucks, a water truck, and our Mark 3 pump in the creek and kept this bench fire from taking its toll on us.

Sally felt impressed to pack everything possible except our luggage of clothes, and the cooler into the trailer and did.

Mike the Division Commander came in the late afternoon and took 3 trucks from us for other needs. Soon thereafter the Mark 3 pump quit and the fire truck crew could not get it going again. The Indian team say that the main fire came down the bench with 100' flames. It was out of control and there was nothing more they could do. They evacuated at once.

Sally was moving her water hoses and saw one tree, then two trees burst into flame. It was just south of the guest cabin on the edge of the

driveway! She sounded the alarm to all necessary. Mike returned with the fire outbreak as we were leaving and said, "Are you leaving now?"

"Yes."

"Remember, God works in mysterious ways."

We had evacuated in less than five minutes from the sighting, with trees torching on both sides of the driveway. We drove through an archway of flames that were set on devouring our green oasis and lovely home. We had done all we could do. We prayed again for God's will to be done and let us be content on our inner heart and we had total peace and were resting in His providence.

We drove  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile south to the open field and watched the flames plume from our place, moving towards the North Fork Road. The Indian team was so sad, so apologetic thinking we would loose our home and green oasis too. "We did all we could," they sighed. Again we submitted our wisdom to God's Divine wisdom and will to be done and peace was retained.

After about 2- $\frac{1}{2}$  hours we returned to our home prepared for the worst. Many fire trucks lined the Northfork road spraying the fire on the West side of the road. Our driveway was full of thick smoke and another fire truck met our gaze. A little ways up the road we saw total devastation to the left side of our driveway back in as far as we could see. Everything in the fire's pathway south of our driveway was burned to a crisp. The fire burned real hot here and not a bush, blade of grass of anything remained but black sticks of trees and smoke. Happily most of the driveway had a small row of green trees of varying depths remaining to hide the devastation. Praise God for a green corridor. This property is an easement through someone else's property and is not ours.

Coming to the place where we escaped through flaming trees on the driveway we counted only 10 blackened trees on this other side of our driveway. It didn't burn any further than this on our property. God is wonderful! The guest cabin was fine and all green immediately surrounding it. This is shocking! All our buildings were fine. A D-6 cat was making a nice road on the west side of the bench on forest service land in line with our guest cabin. Little fires were burning all over the place west of that. A tree would flame up every now and then. Once again God preserved not only our home and buildings but also our oasis of beautiful green trees! What an awesome God we serve. The Devil is wroth and you feel his hissing fire desirous to devour you and God put forth His hand through His angels and again said, "*This far but no farther.*"



We lost only  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre on the south end of our property. Today the fire was within 100 yards on our west side and  $\frac{4}{10}$ <sup>th</sup> mile on the north, and touched our south side.

Mike came up to us and said, "This has almost converted me. I have been 30 years in this work. This is definitely Divine intervention."

There were fire trucks and water trucks all over our property as well as scores of fire fighters putting out the blazes. It was a big buzz of activity to secure the safety of our home and property.

Once we surveyed the entire property we did our bucket brigade to the few remaining green trees on the driveway that were buffering the black devastation behind it. Jim wanted these saved and there were many spots fires that could easily take this clump of trees if we did not give this attention now!

Matthew & Angela, Andrew & Sarah were called and they were coming up to spend the night with us and keep watch on our property during the night. They so wanted to help save the home were they were raised whatever the cost. So we all slept cozy warm with the windows closed at 86° and safe all night!

A night crew was provided to water and patrol our property.

This was the **east finger's Second attempt** at us but this was the third major assault upon our home, possessions and property. God is good! This fire now has us hedged in on three sides.

### **Tuesday July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

Matthew, Angela, Andrew & Sarah started early to put out any and every spot fire they found and kept busy most of the morning doing just that. As the fire crews came in later that day, they were cheering my family at their job well done. We are truly all one team working under God aren't we?

Sally felt safe since the fire swept through and asked God if it was safe to move back in. Getting an affirmative from God and Jim, all the girls cheerfully pitched in to move all the precious items that had been packed into the trailer for evacuation purposes. It was superb to have the girls help clean everything off and return it to its proper place. There was more left in the house than was packed in the trailer so us girls had this done before our afternoon lunch. I like having girls—it's wonderful!

Mike brought in a large crew to mop everything up. Mike was very tender hearted and kind towards us. When I told Mike I had moved back in

feeling real safe—he gave me that fatherly-disapproving look and said, “It’s not safe yet! Not now! Maybe in another week.”

This was hard on Mike and I wanted to lessen the pain of it. “Well Mike nothing against your position or safety perspective, but we filter through God all options and then do as we see He directs us. We appreciate all your protection and care for us though. You’ve done so much for us!”

The Indian crew always brought security and hard work with them. Janell and I began to do cold water runs for all the fire fighting crew on a regular basis rather than sporadic. We’d haul 4 gallons to the Indian crew and they would drink all we brought. We appreciated them and they us. We brought them dried mango, which became everyone’s favorite for a little extra energy twice a day. Other crews drank water but not like these men.

Fire trucks sprayed water to both sides of our driveway with two men sitting on top of the fire truck. Other fire fighters had water trucks and long hoses they took to the more interior roads to spray out all smoldering spots they could with their long hoses. Chain saw teams took down root-damaged trees. Men on foot with shovels, ho dads, and water bags worked were no one else could. And so it went.

Sally was moving her hoses and saw one tree—two trees—three trees go up in flame. It appeared to be on the driveway again but it was on the secondary road just behind it. I sounded the alarm, “FIRE!” But no one heard me. I ran to the house alerted Jim and Janell and they came instantly. I took off my thongs and put on my boots to fight the fire. Jim connected the trailer filled with 12 (5 gallon) buckets of water. Jim drove to the site that was firing up more little trees. Sally ran down the ridge to our west, “Billy, Billy. We have another fire topside.” And Billy came running out of the woods getting his back pack water bag. With glee, joy and enthusiasm we all entered the area of small trees on the edge of the black burned area to douse the flames with water. Hiss, hiss it gave way to the water. Two trips with our “bucket brigade” put it all dead out. “That was fun don’t you think?” We all agreed with a “Hoorah.” “Thanks Billy!”

Jim said, “Did you time us Sally?”

“Oh no I didn’t think of it!”

“Well we will just have to do it again then!” And we did! We became a very efficient fire squad with whatever we had available; buckets, hoses or shovels.

“Is this normal to enjoy putting out fires?” Sally asked.

“It’s the joy of working for the Master. He always wins in the end!”

The **east finger** of the fire was still a sleeping giant above. I took water up to the top of the sledding hill to fire fighters up there. A skidder was trying to let the existing road be churned up to inhibit the advancing fire. I walked up a ways and saw the creeping sleepy giant at a little distance that had filled our place with smoke for 12 days now. All it needs to bring it to life is wind. Lord God Creator of this earth—it's too big for me it's Yours!

### **Wednesday July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

Today the smoke was notably less. The fires all over were being drowned with water. Again they had many fire trucks in here watering both sides of the driveway and deeper towards the bench. Fire teams from the neighbor's properties were coming our way with hoses to drown out these fires as well. Teams of walking crews were doing a criss cross grid work closely looking for fires. A very large spot fire flared up back in the woods just south of our home. They put crews on it and got it out. Our place was the hub of all activity it seemed, much like Grand Central Station—for which we are very grateful.

"Mike will it be quiet today?" Sally asked.

"No it's a red flag day. We are very nervous about the other two ends of this fire—Trail Creek and Moose Creek. I'll be pulling all my equipment and dividing it between these two areas expecting the worst. We are to have high winds and lightning without rain." Mike answered gravely serious.

"We will make it a point to pray to God to eliminate the high winds and ask for no lightning. This is awful. And we are all so tired. All the fire crews are exhausted. They have worked so hard and so long."

God answered our prayers and we had no lightning nor high winds. Praise God! Mike was pleased for a little reprieve to rest and catch up.

Sue saw Jim and said, "I wondered what I was doing up here and after reading some of your book I understand why I'm here and what God is trying to do. Thank you so much. This alone is worth me being here!"

I went back into the interior where the Indian crew was working and carried 6 gallons of cold water, which they drank, and the last of our mango. They were so appreciative. The temperatures had been 89-94° for the duration of this fire so far.

When I was leaving the Indians called out, "Sally, Sally, come here. We have a bunny we just caught and saved from the fire! Will you take care of it?"

"Why sure I will." She had one eye that was burned and damaged from the fire leaving a cataract-like look. Her paws were very hot and she was very frightened. "What shall we name her?"

After several days and a number of options we settled on "Embers" as Coshann had suggested. We took good care of her for over a week in our home until all the noise, commotion and many more threats of fires ceased.

Janell made a sign to add to our "Still Here" sign at the end of the driveway and it would add, "Thanks to Fire Crews!"

The winds came up and the sleeping giant awoke and came down the bench to join the creeping bench fire that was not yet out. Fire flamed up here and there and the crews put them out. Then the fire flared up just west of our bench about 200 feet from our guest cabin. Again the Indian team got their hoses and charged the fire with vigilance. The fire flared many trees and was a spectacular fireworks display. But once again the Indian crew suppressed it with God at their side, while we prayed.

Night came, the winds ceased about 8:00pm, and the fire went to bed for the night once again.

#### **Thursday July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2003**

We lost our Indian crew today and a Mexican crew replaced them. The winds were low. Mopping up continued and the day was quiet with no events. There were more threats of strong winds and lightning storms which we did not need up here in our conditions. Again we prayed for God's mercy and again God answered our prayer to stay this destruction.

Another spot fire called us to action. Jim, Sally & Janell began hauling five-gallon buckets that were posted around the property to it. Quickly the firemen assisted the carrying of the buckets. Yet another fire was put out.

The Hungry Horse Newspaper saw our sign at our driveway and drove in to see what was here. Jim had the opportunity to share why we were "Still here" and our story. It was printed up in the special edition on the fire that would come out the following week.

**Friday August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003**

In the quiet of the morning we had fire trucks and hoses watering down once more. But they all left come afternoon. All was quiet!

That evening about 4:00 Jim & Janell were picking up sticks and debris when they saw fire flare up in the trees in the same area as Wednesday. Jim alerted the 2 fire crews of the fire. Some of them came to the ridge and watched the fire come closer and closer but did nothing. Sally came to see and was astonished that this crew was just watching the fire come but doing nothing! We waited a bit more. Jim talked with one strike team leader and Sally the other. They did nothing. Different groups of the crew retreated to the house by their vehicles and sat down there.

"This is crazy! The firemen's lives are in danger too—why don't they do something Jim?" I asked.

"I don't know either," said Jim. "But we can do all we can. Get our hoses up here as fast as you can! Trust in God and don't loose your peace."

Jim said to some firemen, let's get the hoses out of the low lands and start spraying water on the fire? No one came to help. He went over the hill alone and tried to pull up hundreds of feet of water filled hoses alone. He couldn't! Jim implored the water truck man (Bill) to help him pull up the hoses and he did. Once at the top of the hill, some of the fire crew began to pull the hoses now, and it was comical because the hose sections fell apart. They hustled to put them back together, but Jim had gone to start the Mark 3 pump to get water and by now the water was coming. The pump had to be stopped the hoses put together and the pump restarted. Now a part of the crew went to work with the hoses on the fires before us. Jim & Bill got extra hoses to add to get the water closer to the torching flames.

In the meantime Janell and Sally were pulling all our house hoses as close to the area of the fire as we could get them. With the last of four hoses a couple men helped us drag these long hose lines to their destination. It looked impossible to rely upon the arm of flesh for help, the wind was gusting and creating such a fire that was growing and growing, so Janell and I knelt down right there in the midst of all these men standing around watching and prayed to God for help. Sally prayed out loud but did not pray in a condemning way because of these men but out of the depth of our need of God. When we got up from our short prayer the winds slowed notably. God was answering. Within 20 minutes it looked much better.

Mike was made aware of this situation, came and was very apologetic of this incident. He brought fire trucks, water trucks and manpower that

immediately began watering, and hoeing to put a line around this fire. This was getting real close to the huge mountain of trees and refuse just below the guest cabin. He couldn't do enough for us. "It's all right Mike, it's all right." Sally said. "God has taken care of us. We are all right now. It's all under control again. It's ok—really!" As Mike evaluated the fire he called for helicopter drops of retardant here and water on the north fire.

**The North Finger** of the fire had also acted up at this same time unbeknown to us. It tried to come south to us but the winds shifted and blew it eastward. It got real big and out of control and the wind blew it east and it jumped the big river to the park side like the last north assault. Now this fire was less than 2/10<sup>th</sup> of a mile from us with spot fires even closer. God even took care of us when we didn't know the Devil was coming at us from the unseen side. God took care of the enemy and stayed him with His Divine hand.

We had wanted to go to Kalispell church Sabbath to meet the people that still came for the Open House that didn't happen. All these people knew they could not get up the North Fork Road to see us due to severe fire danger. Only property owners could come up under the present restriction. This was patrolled very carefully. How could we go now? Matthew and Angela volunteered to come up and watch the home so we could go to church.

### **Saturday August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2003**

On our way out we met Mike. He said, "I don't want you to worry one bit about your property while you are gone. I will personally see to it, it's kept safe." He put his whole division's resources on our place; 200 men and 23 fire and water trucks. He would put out everything from north to south and everything on the west side as well today! Truly God does work in mysterious ways! Everything good comes from God. Thank you Mike and Supreme thanks to God!

Matthew and Angela were already on their way. So they too had a Sabbath rest, which they needed very badly.

Matthew and Angela made smoothies for all the firemen here. A larger portion was given to the Indian crew in profuse gratitude for all they had done, but everyone had seconds or all they wanted. There were about 80-90 men that came in for their smoothies during lunch. They used their radios to invite all who'd like to come. Matthew just loved it. There were groups of 20 here and there "filling" our yard. And Matthew made sure the

Mexican crews got this treat as well. There were many good men on that team they just lacked leadership. We appreciated all that they did as well. We are eternally grateful to all that helped us preserve our property! And God you are number One!

### **Sunday August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2003**

Quiet day with light rain—maybe 1/10<sup>th</sup> inch!

I released Embers to the wild. I had taken her on several occasions for a walk to see all the luscious clover in front of the greenhouse then would take her behind the greenhouse to the wood pile where there were many places to hide safely. All the underbrush had been cleared so there was no wooded area where she could find safety at this time.

### **Monday August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

Quiet. Sighted Embers eating clover on the side of the greenhouse.

### **Tuesday August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

Quiet with light rain again. Did not see Embers.

Unbeknown to us old fire embers took flame and ignited an area south of our house down a secondary road area that had had no fires as yet. This is about 200 yards from the front of our house. It is behind the wooded area of our property that we limbed and had cleaned. It had plumed on both sides of this secondary road. Mike's men had made him aware of it and he called in the helicopters to drop water on it and followed this up with hand crews. A second outbreak a few days later was handled similarly.

God is just like that even more so. If we put Him in charge of the care of our life day by day He knows about all the fires that are threatening our lives seen and unseen and makes adequate provision for us. Thank you Lord for all the unseen things you do to care for us in our lives.

### **In the final analysis ...**

There was definitely Divine intervention. We have a horseshoe of burn around our property. God left us with a green oasis. We only lost  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre that we cannot see on our south side. Our views are nicely intact on all four sides of us.

Isaiah 42:1, "... Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called [thee] by thy name; thou [art] mine.

43:2 When thou passest through the waters, I [will be] with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

43:4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee ..."

God is Good Always! He can bring good out of difficult, trying, even devastating situations. We love to serve Him more and more!

### **Thursday August 7, 2003**

Mike stopped by to ask if we would be willing to be interviewed for a human-interest story on Embers? I informed him of her release and haven't seen her for days. Someone would come by tomorrow for the interview anyway. They did not show. A few days later a representative came by to apologize.

### **Sunday August 10, 2003**

Still have not seen Embers although I have made many attempts to see her early or late in the day almost daily. I even looked through the bishop weed near the back of the greenhouse for that was one of the few hiding places remaining. Today Jim was watching the fire develop in the park in front of us, from the greenhouse roof and saw Embers come out of the bishop weed clumps in front of the greenhouse and eat. We were so delighted she is healthy and well. Her poor eyes have apparently adjusted. I had wondered how she would fare.

Early afternoon the fires in the park right out in front of us began flaming up very seriously. Many huge plumes of smoke over and over blossomed just to the left of our view. As the afternoon grew on the plumes increased in number and location. By 4:00 the plumes were enormous to the left in 2 distinctively different locations and smoke erupted over our entire view across the front and to the far right. It now spanned across at least 6 mountains wide in our view alone. The wind blew to the north and gusted greatly. There were no aircraft doing anything in this area.

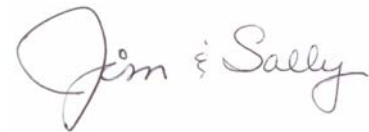
Come nightfall there were no winds yet to our right view around Rainbow Mountain near Bowman Lake the fires were enormous. The red fireball was so sad as we watched huge flames jump 2-300 feet in the air giving evidence of mass destruction. Another area blossomed in mushroom



like clouds of smoke and again huge flames emitted from the mountain area just south of Rainbow. May God have mercy on our soul. Satan is being permitted to destroy the most beautiful area in the USA.

New management and fire crews have taken over this area today. Lord bring rain for only You can put out these fires of mass destruction. Let not Satan win and do his dastardly deeds. Bring serious drowning rains to wet this parched land in which we live. We need you Lord! To God be the glory. Please bring more good out of these awful fires and continue to preserve us in this decaying society and world. Our trust is in you. We thank you for this trial of our faith and for preserving the integrity of our little resting place.

Your Fellow Pilgrim,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim & Sally". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and personal.