

Sharon and I met at her house and conducted the interview at her kitchen table. I have been staying with her in Lakeview, so we already knew each other pretty well. She wore Capri spandex pants and an oversized t-shirt. She rarely brushed her hair, and it was tied back and held up by a visor. She wears large glasses and pink lip stick. The kitchen is large and has a pellet stove and kitchen table with chairs. There is a wire fruit basket that is full of sprinkler parts instead of fruit. She lives 5 miles outside of town, and all the windows look out at the surrounding mountains.

Carly Johnson: About how long have you lived here?

Sharon Hiatt: 1.5 years.

CJ: And why did you move here?

SH: Because my daughter wanted to start an alpaca ranch, and I very foolishly went along with it, but I have enjoyed it.

CJ: And do you still have your alpaca ranch?

SH: No. We have our land, so we could get more alpacas, but it didn't turn out that I could take very good care of them by myself because my daughter decided that she didn't like being an alpaca rancher. I

CJ: It was short lived...

SH: Very short.

CJ: Generally speaking, what has your experience been like so far in LV?

SH: I think the people are very friendly. I think my house was a disaster and I had to do many, many things to it. And I broke my leg, and I had to have blood clots, so I have had my challenges since I have been here. I had to fix my stairs because I fell down them. And all my plumbing broke. So it has been challenging, but overall, I have enjoyed it. Actually, it has been interesting. And I really like it. Ya, I do, I like it. I don't know why, I must be a glutton for punishment.

CJ: So what is the most challenging thing about living out here?

SH: The wind. I don't like the wind. I really don't like the wind and of course then movies. You have to drive 100 miles – 200 miles round trip to see a movie, which is, I do it all the time. Every week at least, but it is a challenge sometimes in the winter.

CJ: And that is in Klamath that you go to see movies?

SH: Ya, they have a 12 seated there. 12 screens.

CJ: Do you just stay all day and watch movies?

SH: I watch usually 2. [Laughs]

CJ: So what community groups are you involved in here?

SH: The Ford Foundation. Junior Gardeners, Master Gardeners, The Red Hat Ladies, the Ladies Gold... that is about it.

CJ: Did you join all those right when you got here?

SH: Not right when I got here. It was a little bit later because at first we had the animals and we were putting up fences, and we were very busy with thing, and then I broke my leg, and there were just with things, and then Heidi left, so it was pretty much just me and the animals

CJ: How long do you think you are going to live here?

SH: I want to see my maze grow up. So I have to be here at least 10 years. I think.

CJ: Will it take like 5 years for it to be...

SH: I don't know. I just don't know. I am so curious because even when I went down to the garden show in Alturas, which is a really great garden shop, they didn't have any information on Siberian peas. Nobody seems to have any information on how fast they grow, on how slow they grow, so I am kind of working in a fog, but that is sort of normal. ...but they do grow because we have seen them.

CJ: What is one of you favorite foods and how often do you eat it?

SH: Wine. [Laughs] At least every other night. Sometimes consecutively, but sometimes every other. Is that a food group? Great. I am so happy. My second favorite is margaritas.

CJ: and those are once a week?

SH: Ya, I'd say. Well, in the summertime when Margo is around, she comes over and we have margaritas more often than that...once, sometimes twice a week...but as far a food goes. I probably would say Mexican food is my favorite food. And then I would probably say if I were going out somewhere. Salads. I always like salads, I really like salads a lot as long as it doesn't have boring salad stuff in it. I don't like real fancy salads. And as far as just regular...I like any kind of meat. I am a meat eater. I can't think of any kind of meat I don't like except tuna, which I have and salmon. I hate it. I just don't like those two. Oh, and I am not crazy about lamb. Had a lot of lamb in England, but the rest is ok.

CJ: What is you least favorite food?

SH: If I have to pick something that I really really really hated, it would be beer and liver. Liver is just disgusting. I don't see how anybody can eat that...but there are a lot of vegetables that I don't like too. [Story of how her husband was stupid because he loved it and she wouldn't make it because he said everyone had to eat it if Sharon made it]

CJ: So what did you eat for dinner last night?

SH: [Takes her awhile to remember] Oh, I went to the Blarney's during the day and I got a salad during the day and I ate half of it for lunch and I ate the other half for dinner.

CJ: So can you find enough salads here that you like to eat in town?

SH: Ya, I like any kind of salad as long as it has regular lettuce in it and not that yucky fancy lettuce.

CJ: So iceberg lettuce?

SH: Oh yes, that is perfect. [Laughs]. I am happy with the salads here [Story of not liking salads in Italy because they has fancy lettuce] but the Italians had great artichokes

CJ: Which you do like?

SH: Yes...

[Interrupted for phone call]

CJ: So, what are 3 things that you appreciate about the food system in Lakeview?

SH: the fact that it is here. And you can just go in and buy it.

CJ: At restaurants or at...

SH: ... Well either one because it is not very far away. It is fairly convenient. They have...I am not that fussy as you know. So whatever it is I can eat it. I am just not that fussy. That was 2 things, because it is there and because I can buy it. The third thing is I guess it is edible.

CJ: What about things that you don't like about the system here?

SH: I don't like that they don't have frozen artichokes in the store, and I don't like that they don't have spun honey because those are 2 things that I like. I don't really like that the liquor store is in a different store from the main store because every time you stop there everyone is driving by going a drunk, another drunk. And I don't go there that often, but when I go I make big purchases. [Laughs] because I know they are going to go, oh, there she is again.

CJ: You pretty much shop at Safeway right?

SH: Ya

CJ: Do you go to Stewarts ever?

SH: Sometimes, they have spun honey there.

CJ: They do?

SH: I think so. They also have little cooked things in the front. Every once in a while I am in the need for like one fried chicken or something like that because I don't usually ever have it because nobody has it. So a couple of times I have gone there and got that just because it there.

CJ: But you don't do your big shopping there ever?

SH: I don't do a big shopping anywhere. I don't do big shopping.

CJ: IS there anything that you want to eat that you cannot get here?

SH: Indian. I love Indian food, but you can't even get the spices here. I mean, there are just a lot of things. And the Chinese food is not really what I would call up to scratch here. But I guess I would get some... and I don't eat that many different varieties of Chinese food. The one I like I do like to get. Oh, frozen yogurt. I love frozen yogurt and they don't have frozen yogurt here. I love frozen yogurt.

CJ: What about the history of your family's involvement with the food system in the past. Have people owned restaurants or been farmers?

SH: My husband, when he first came, they owned a cabbage farm and he used to be out. He used to go out and whack off cabbages. You stick your hand down there and there would be all of this gunky stuff and then you would whack it and he said that every time you were afraid you were going to cut off your fingers, but you just whack off the cabbage and throw it in the thing and whack off another one and throw it in the thing, so he is my only... My mother has a firm motto "never eat anything that is home grown" so we never had anything home grown. It was her firm feeling about her things [laughs] and I always thought she was a very smart woman, so don't eat it if it is home grown, which doesn't work too well here, but I am sticking to my guns.

CJ: So then are there special recipes in your family?

SH: Oh ya, did you see my great baked beans? And we used to make Mrs. Horton's chocolate cake but we forgot how to do it, and Mrs. Horton died, so we can't make her cake anymore, and it was the best chocolate cake I ever had [laughs] I used to make a lot of things, enchiladas, good Mexican food, tacos, lasagna, and spaghetti with hot sausage in it. I made a lot of things when the kids were small, but I don't do it too much anymore. It is just pointless. You can't even make spaghetti for one person.

CJ: So do you eat with groups of people around here?

SH: I go out to lunch sometimes with people. I go out to dinner a couple times with people. Usually I must admit I go out to dinner with Margo at least once a week. We have a good nadir over whatever it is we are eating at the time. She likes ribs, I like ribs too. We like steak and we go to Mario's sometimes. He has good steak. My friend, Catharine Berry, we go out to

lunch occasionally now that she is back working again. And she has had me over for dinner quite a few times. It has been nice.

CJ: What restaurants do you go to? Mario's, Mexican.

SH: I have been to Mario's only twice and I have lived for 1.5 years, so I can't really count it as a big item. But ya, we go to the Mexican Restaurant. Well, actually, we drove to Burns for Thai food [laughs] and we drove that other way for the other food...

CJ: To Klamath for.

SH: This is really bad but every once in a while I get hungry for a grilled chicken salad at Denny's, which is really terrible, but they have this great bread that goes with it that I really like, so I drive all the way out there so I can have the salad at Denny's and go to the movies. My life is not complete enough obviously.

CJ: Do any of those groups that you belong to eat together? I guess master gardeners had that lunch together.

SH: Ya, they had that lunch together and on Thursday, what is today, Tuesday? Wednesday the Red Hat Ladies are going to have lunch together and I get to wear my read hat. [...]

CJ: And where do you ladies meet for lunch?

SH: Different places. Everybody has to plan, so once a month one person plans it. I planned it when we went to the gold course, and we played all kinds of games. I planned the best one of course. The luncheon was nice, but all the things we did were really what made it special.

CJ: And how do you thing the farmers and ranchers are fairing here?

SH: How do I think they are doing here? I haven't a clue. I really don't. I mean I talk to them and they think it has been dry this year. Last year they said it was set, but what does that mean? I don't know. I have no idea. One is dry one is wet, you know. I don't really talk to them about stuff like that because once I tell them I don't eat anything home grown that pretty much shuts down the conversation [Laughs]

CJ: Do you know who low-income or disabled or elderly people get food in Lakeview?

SH: I know the senior citizen place cooks lunch 4 days a week I think it is. There are a lot of older people that go there. Well, actually, senior citizen, they spend a lot of time there. Doing various things. I have heard of one person that got kicked out because he wanted to watch TV on a different channel than somebody else, and they had a big fight. And I think they have, it is not like meals on wheels thing, but I think they deliver some kind of boxes of food, but I am not really up on it, I really don't know. I know the lady across the street is older and her daughter brings her lunch every day. But that is a private thing. And I know a couple of other people like that, where the parent lives on part of the property on one of the ranches and then the kids who are married and have kids of their own who are already grown up, you know, bring over a dinner or something like that, so they can join if they want to, but they have their own independence, they just bring them over.

SH: As far as structure of the town, I haven't paid much attention. I just don't know. I know they have something, but I don't know what it is.

CJ: Do you know where the food comes from that you buy at Safeway or Stewarts?

SH: Probably someplace really wretched. Probably Guatemala or someplace where they have bad water, but it don't matter because I never get sick.

CJ: do you eat any local meat?

SH: I have no idea. If it is in Safeway, I eat it.

CJ: Is there anything that you would like to see changed here in the community about the food system?

SH: Well, that is kind of a hard question for me because I am perfectly content with whatever I have, but I am sure there are other people who would like it changed. The biggest change you should have in the community is have 6,000 more people so you have more variety, and that is not going to happen I don't think, so realistically, whether I would want it to happen or not, it is probably not. So I think that is the only thing that would really make a change in the food here. There are some little niche markets like the Lakeview Lockers where they were able to bring in some, I don't know where they get their stuff either, but they were able to do some little more gourmet stuff, and that added with the regular stuff is adequate for a town this size.

CJ: Do you know other people who are trying to make change? Have you heard about stuff like that?

SH: Well, like the lady in Plush that bakes the bread and stuff, she started not so long ago with just doing a little things around her house and then people liked it so she started doing more and more. I don't know if she really makes and money at it, but she seems to have a business where she is selling to more and more people, so I think there are those things where you can come in and still...it is still America you know, you can still make the big changes.

CJ: And what about Lakeview in 20 years...what do you think it is going to be like?

SH: It will be just exactly the same [Laughs] If they get the biomass in, it seems like people seem to think that that is going to make a change. If they get the biomass and they get something to do with the thermal heat they were talking about harvesting that somehow or another and doing something with it. If they could bring in the right people without causing all of the arguments and everything that comes along with that and get in a couple more businesses along those lines, then I could see where there could be some growth. I think the prison is going to grow. I think they are already talking about expanding the prison. Well, I have heard rumors, and it is a great prison. I think it has been really great for the community, which is not what they thought it was going to be. So, that is what I think.