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Joni Reynertson - "Seldovia, it just feels like home."

by Mary Glover



Joan (Maloney) Reynertson was born in Marion, Ohio and came into this world as the number two child in a family of six children. Their Catholic family lived in the country outside of Marion. Joni describes her dad as a "hard-working blue collar worker who took good care of his family" and her mom "took care of the children." One of her earliest memories was this: "Us kids dressing up in our Sunday best and Dad took us to church. Mom stayed home with the babies. The first three children in our family were very close in age, only about 11 months apart, then we had a little break and three more came and then Andy was born.....Andy was Mom's favorite because he was the baby boy. *Ha! Ha!*" (You may know Andy Maloney; he is currently living in Seldovia and keeps very busy as a handyman. Joni and Andy like to tease each other trying to

mean they could be a family again and both became very involved in their kids' school and sports activities. Joni was the Team Mom and Kurt was the coach. The children were 13, 10 and 9 years old at this time. What is interesting about living in Saudi Arabia is that after the ninth grade, the children had to attend a boarding school, as there was no high school in camp. Usually, the American families would send their high school age children to a boarding school in the United States that was near a relative. Joni said that when Scott and Brent attended a boarding school they came home at Christmas, Easter and the summer vacation time. Each year Joni, Kurt and Johnna would also plan a family vacation trip to visit them at the boarding school.

prove which child is the mother's favorite sibling!)

Christmas in Joni's youth was different from the Christmas times of today. Her parents provided one great toy for each child to open and then this toy was shared with all the rest of the family. No toy belonged to any one child. Toys she remembered were Lincoln Logs or Tinker Toys. Mostly, they were just happy to get new clothes, shoes, etc. Everyone in Joni's family played together and appreciated how their Dad had to work nights, seven days a week to provide for his family.

Later the family moved to [Castalia, Ohio](#). Castalia is a small town, just like Seldovia. Joni feels that because she lived in Castalia, this is why she loves Seldovia so much... "It just feels like home." Joni said that there was "no way you could get in trouble without your Dad finding out." Imagine Joni as a skinny, freckled faced, blond haired kid---and the most ornery (not malicious) in the family of six kids. If someone was the instigator of a prank, her Dad knew where to look!

Joni told me the Maloney Christmas Duck Story: Joni was a teenager and had a crush on a boy. She decided he would like a duck for Christmas. They lived near the wetlands and she got Andy to help her catch a duck. Now the wetlands were a protected refuge area for the wildlife...a "hands-off" area. Nevertheless, they were successful in catching the duck and wrapping it up in a box, complete with breathing holes for air. She presented it to the boy and promptly left his home. He had no idea that it was a live duck. He opened the present in the presence of his hunting dog--in the living room that was lit by a large Christmas tree! All chaos broke loose! The duck flew out of the box with the dog in chase of the duck. The duck then tried to climb up the Christmas tree. Then the finale, the huge Christmas tree fell down! The next day, Joni's Dad was reading the local newspaper. The newspaper reported, "Someone was in the duck refuge chasing the ducks." Joni's Dad looked straight at her and said, "You wouldn't know something about this?" The boy was livid with Joni, the duck was returned unharmed to the refuge with only a few ruffled feathers, and Joni was in hot water for the rest holidays that year! However, the story became a family favorite.

A few years passed and Joni met Kurt Reynertson. Joni was one of the managers at the Brown Derby, a hotel/restaurant establishment. Kurt had come from North Carolina and was performing a engineering consulting job for a company in Sundusky, Ohio. After a while they were married and Joni says, "the adventure began." They had three kids between them (Scott, Johnna and Brent) and they traveled from Norman, Oklahoma, to San Antonio, Texas, and on to [Dhahran, Saudi Arabia](#). In Saudi Arabia, Kurt worked as the chief engineer for Saudi Aramco and did not have to travel as much as he did working as an engineering consultant. This

Living abroad afforded the Reynertsons some amazing vacations in areas like Ireland, Singapore, Sri Lanka and [Maldives](#) (islands near Sri Lanka). Maldives was where the family went scuba diving. Then there was the time they vacationed skiing in Switzerland.

Later the family moved back to [Boerne, Texas](#) and this is where Johnna graduated from high school. Kurt worked again as an engineering consultant for SW Research and Joni worked as a floral designer for Albertsons. Although Albertsons paid more than Amy's Flowers & Gifts, Joni later went to work for Amy's Flowers because it meant that she could spend her weekends with Kurt and the kids (when they were home).

Then as fate would have it, Kurt got the opportunity to work again in Saudi Arabia and they found themselves outside the USA once more. However, the political climate was changing and the Reynertsons were thinking about planning for the future and their "retirement business"—if there is such a thing! Their oldest son, Scott, was stationed at Elmendorf AFB and Kurt and Joni were coming to Alaska to visit. After a few trips to Alaska , they started looking for a business. They found Seldovia via [www.seldovia.com](#). Considering several different businesses and towns in Alaska, they came to Seldovia one fateful day. Joni says, "They got off the Rainbow Connection and she put her foot down on the dock and knew this was home. It was so beautiful." They were actually here to look at purchasing the Boardwalk Hotel, but Peggy Boscacci had them look at Herring Bay Mercantile, which was also for sale. Joni states, "The rest is history---we were home!"

This Christmas their children are located: Scott is in Army Intelligence (in Arizona on temporary assignment); Brent is in the Air Force in the Linguist Program (also in Arizona) and Johnna is finishing college (Ohio State University) with her major in teaching. Scott is married to Alexis who is a Bank Manager at Alaska First National Bank in Anchorage. Scott and Alexis met at Florida State University where they were students. Scott is in a retraining program and will graduate in March. After graduation he will be transferred to Washington State and Alexis will then join him. Brent is in flight school in Tucson, Arizona and Johnna is living in Columbus, Ohio with her husband, Matt, who is in school studying to be a lawyer.

When asked about her hobbies, Joni said that she loves to quilt... that is her second love (after Kurt, of course). She usually has one quilt on display at the [Herring Bay Mercantile](#). Joni has been asked to teach a quilting class in 2007 which is sponsored by the Seldovia Arts Council. The Reynertsons own the [Herring Bay Mercantile](#) and Joni manages and operates the store. Occasionally she will take a day off, but especially during the 100 days of summer, she is there diligently minding the store.

Joni is truly a wonderful addition to Seldovia and I, for one, am

so pleased she chose Seldovia to make it her home.

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