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Arts & Events

She's got a friend

Carole King is loyal to locals and the land of Idaho

By **JENNIFER LIEBRUM**
Express Staff Writer

Though publishing a memoir lends itself to an all-about-me theme, Carole King showed people once again that "You've Got a Friend."

When asked about "A Natural Woman," her recently released tome covering her 50 years on top of the pop world, she prefers instead to talk about those who helped her pen it.

"One of the key forces in my having been able to produce a memoir that I think was good, and

evidently other people do



Singer, songwriter and activist Carole

King has a 128-acre secluded ranch on

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too, was [former Community Library Executive Director] Colleen Daly," King said.

Despite no formal book tour, "A Natural Woman has garnered rave reviews since its April release and is on Oprah's must-read list for May.

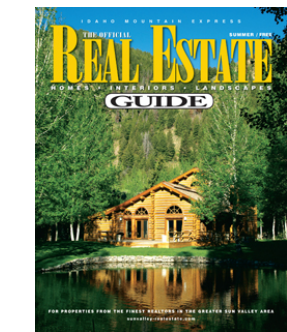
the north bank of the Salmon River. Former Blaine County resident Elissa Kline, who captured images of the wild mustangs near Challis for a Sun Valley Center for the Arts exhibit "Herd but Not Seen," also managed King's ranch and served as her personal photographer. Courtesy photo by Elissa Kline

Daly left the library earlier this year for an opportunity to work as development director of the American Academy in Rome. She has said that "books are in my DNA," which made her a perfect match for King, who felt that nearing 70, it was time to document her life.

"Colleen was my guiding light," King said. "When she took me on as a project, she made it her priority as my editor, she made it her mission to always protect my voice, and that is very clear in the book. She achieved this by patiently asking me, 'What do you mean by this?' and pushing me to 'go a little deeper.'"

King, a four-time Grammy-award winning singer/songwriter who has co-authored some of pop music's most enduring songs, including "Natural Woman" and "Will You Love Me Tomorrow?" was raised a city girl in New York, but a chance encounter with Idaho led to a lifetime of a contrasting existence here that included seclusion and primitive conditions at her ranch northeast of Stanley where she chopped wood, tanned hides and made bread.

It is here that she held on to her inner foundation as natural woman while becoming a mother, wife and international hippie icon, part of the core contingent of musicians like James Taylor, Carly Simon and Aretha Franklin who defined an era.



King's memoir was a case of having been told time and again that she lived such an interesting life and that she should write about it, and having not only the economic security but the support of the genuine people in her life, those far removed from her rock star domain of "yes" people, who convinced her that it was a story whose time had come.

"It took its own time," King said. "I started in 2000, but I wasn't even going to take it to a publisher until it was pretty much what it was supposed to be. It was good to have that, I wanted it to be as close to something I would feel comfortable with as possible, and I'm glad I had that luxury. I didn't have that time pressure and I didn't have anyone's agenda but mine."

Her connection to people in the Wood River Valley, like Daly and Chapter One Bookstore owner Cheryl Welch and Iconoclast Books owner Sarah Hedrick, helped her when it came to the marketing of the book, or, rather, the lack of marketing. She said she is doing limited interviews and limiting her exposure to signings at the two independent bookstores.

"I know the owners of both bookstores very well," she said. "They are both great and serve a slightly different function in the community. It's really nice that the two owners can be in the same town and that they can compete. But they can work together for the betterment of their community."

King doesn't just enjoy Idaho, she defends it through her work with the Alliance for the Wild Rockies, which she stresses needs to stay a priority.

"I know right now that with the economy so many people are, of course, focused on how they're going to feed their families, and rightly so. But we need to get the word out to people who aren't worried about their families that we still need to protect

those habitats and that wildlife for all of us to enjoy and have as a resource when things do improve.

"We can do both. we must do both."

We can do both, we must do both.

King said she looks forward to summering at her ranch, soaking up Idaho, which she said has been "very central to my being for so long." She said that since 1977, she has felt that the area nourished and informed her in many ways. And though the ranch has been and still is for sale, she is waiting for the perfect next owner, or to stay there with her locally adopted shelter dog, a coon hound mix named Maya.

"I would be perfectly content to have the universe say 'you go ahead and stay there,'" she said, which is what she is planning to do for the next several months. "Coming home, taking a break and spending time with my dog at the ranch—just sit and enjoy things for a while and see what comes in."

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