

Preface

During the time I lived in the mountains several things had yet to be invented by Al Gore. The Internet, cell phones and that coffee place with the mermaid logo were all in our future. Personal computers were just emerging on the horizon of our awareness. No digital cameras or social media. And can I have a big amen for that because Lord knows what I might have posted in my youth. (I could have been a Congressman.) Telephone access in this remote area of the mountains was also quite limited. The first five years of mountain life was sans phone line to my cabin. The only telephone service available at the time I moved there were “toll stations”. The last of the toll stations in California were in the San Gabriel Mountains and those have now passed into history. Toll stations were similar to something you would see on the old Andy Griffith Show. The caller would be connected to an operator upon lifting the handset from the cradle of the payphone. Even at this writing, payphones and phone booths are vanishing from our American landscape. Change such as this does not sadden me as something lost. It makes me enthusiastic about the future. I envision a day when all superheroes will change clothes in the comfort of their own homes or SUV’s.

The brief tales in this collection are culled out of an existence now gone from its place in time. All the events depicted in this book are true stories, although some of the names have been changed. This narrative takes place within the environs of the Angeles National Forest of Southern California mostly in the area of the East Fork of the San Gabriel River and not necessarily in chronological order. The time period is 1982 through 1988, when I was between the ages of 23 and 29. Having heard these tales over the years, my family encouraged me to jot them down, probably because of my failing memory.

This book is dedicated to my wife Patti, my partner in the mountain adventure and my life adventure.

- J. B. S.