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**ANTONIA CIPOLLINA**

**An Oral History Interview  
Conducted by Robin Fisher and Stella Perone in 2013**

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TITLE: Oral History of Antonia Cipollina  
INTERVIEWER: Robin Fisher and Stella Perone  
DESCRIPTION: Transcript, 29 pages  
INTERVIEW DATE: October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Born to residents of Mill Valley in 1952, Antonia Cipollina grew up in Mill Valley and experienced life as a member of a well-known musical family. Her mother was a concert pianist, and her brothers John and Mario Cipollina were famous rock and roll musicians from their youths. A musician herself, Antonia began teaching piano at the age of 16, and was still teaching students in Mill Valley at the time of this interview. In her oral history, Antonia describes growing up in an Italian family, attending Tamalpais High and Marin Catholic, and going with her parents Evelyn and Gino (a beloved local realtor) to watch her brothers play in rock shows. Antonia recounts the lively family home of her youth, a home where musicians and friends of hers and her brothers frequently spent time. She paints a vivid picture of life in Mill Valley in the 1950s and 1960s, a slower time when you could ride your horse downtown and park it right at the meters.

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## Oral History of Antonia Cipollina

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**Oral History of Antonia Cipollina**  
**October 8, 2013**

**Robin Fisher:** If we could just start by you saying your name and the date.

**Antonia Cipollina:** I am Antonia Cipollina. Today's date is October 8, 2013.

**Robin Fisher:** We are here in your lovely home, is that correct?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yes, this is my home, the family home.

**Robin Fisher:** Great. Thank you so much again. If you could just tell us some of your stories of being in Mill Valley. What were your first impressions?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Well —

**Robin Fisher:** When did you move here?

**Antonia Cipollina:** My parents moved here in 1949 and then my father proceeded to enlarge the little summer cottage that it was; like a lot of homes in Mill Valley, they were usually just summer cottages from people who lived in the city — they'd have a little place, so this was really just a tiny portion of this. So my father, who really wasn't a builder, learned the skill to be able to build. He'd go around to other homes being built through, since he was in real estate, people who he knew that worked on homes. So he basically learned how to construct. This is a sound place, considering we are on stilts.

**Robin Fisher:** You are on stilts, yes.

**Antonia Cipollina:** My first memories are of childhood: my mother teaching piano; my mother also was a concert pianist. My father sang, not professionally like my mom, so I remember hearing mom accompany my father singing. They would do school functions, mom and dad would, even though Mom didn't like to perform; neither do I. I think it is genetic. My brothers, both of them — John was an avid performer, my brother Mario is a world renowned performer — but I notice when I go to gigs even now of Mario's, you can tell he gets nervous. He kind of hides himself away. But he has the art given to him that once he is on the stage, he is fine. I never was comfortable on stage and I have done various stage-type work between either classical, then some Italian music in the '80s with a man named Rudy Cipolla, who is a famous mandolinist; local, he had a group. Then I was actually in a rock band for a while in the '80s. But I have been teaching since I was 16, yeah. So you are probably going to have to ask me more specific questions.

**Robin Fisher:** Sure, sure. So you said your mom and dad would come and sing.

**Antonia Cipollina:** At the PTA and things like that. They'd kind of be the exciting moment at the end of a meeting at the Rec Center or wherever they were.

**Robin Fisher:** So was there a Rec Center that you regularly went to?

**Antonia Cipollina:** [Pointing] Yeah, there's a poster: the one that says "Dance" in obvious handwriting next to the eagle. That was at the Mill Valley Rec Center. It was close to where the new one is. You don't remember the Rec Center?

**Robin Fisher:** It's been a while. What was the original Rec Center like for you?

**Antonia Cipollina:** We thought of it more as a dance place. I mean, we didn't do — nobody did that — have recreation for kids after school. These are for the working parents who didn't get home 'til late. So it was used mainly for public social functions. But now, or at the end of my early adolescence when I would go to the Rec Center, I bet you anything, that that was not built. You probably know more than I do about that. I don't think that the original Rec Center, I recall — it may have been in construction when I was growing up. John, who started playing music when he was about 15, 16, never played at the Rec Center in the '50s. He did play at the Rec Center there on that poster, but I was already in junior high. Odd Fellows Hall, which is still there, and then there is Brown's Hall on Miller, and then there was one — there was one other one in the Santa Venetia Armory. All those places, I went to. I guess when I was about 12, 13, is when we would go to the dances at the Rec Center. That was really much different; the kids' Rec Center things. We could come and go as we pleased. It was kind of a free — of course, parents are afraid to let their kids far from their sight so they can't — but we could go in, wander in there or go outside and sit on the field — kind of, whatever. It was always, I recall, always dark, which is what made it cool. Mainly set, as I remember anyway, for music events. Now it is used constantly, that Rec Center.

**Robin Fisher:** Yes. What kind of bands would play there? Were you using music or records or bands?

**Antonia Cipollina:** My experience, of course, was strictly with my older brother. He was nine years older than I, so when he started playing in his original band from the '50s, like I said, I was already 12 or 13. Then when he joined Quicksilver Messenger Service later —

**Stella Perone:** What was his original band? Do you mind?

**Antonia Cipollina:** No. The Swinging Deacons.

**Robin Fisher:** Were those local boys?

**Antonia Cipollina:** They were all local, the neighborhood boys. Adam Forman, I'm sure you know Forman, because their father was influential. Oh, Rob Moitoza, who became a well-known bassist with Sons of Champlin, which was a local band in the '60s. As you

know or may not know, Bill Champlin went on to be one of the main — a 30-year career with the band Chicago. So, between being the girl and my older sister<sup>1</sup> was John's twin.

**Robin Fisher:** Yes, what was that like?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Well, Mario was a little younger than I, but because my father was Italian, born there, I didn't have as much freedom, by any means, as my younger brother. So, when I went anywhere other than the dances, my parents went. They went to every single one of the gigs that you see on the wall. Whenever John played in San Francisco, we would go. My parents: there is a picture of my mom [pointing]. You can see, she was not a hippie. Mom was definitely liberal. I guess for the time you could have said Bohemian, but she was very sophisticated-looking, a loving, wonderful mother. My dad, being from his background in Italy, he always wore a suit and maybe not a tie to these gigs. So my parents stood out in a room full of '60s-type people. So we got to go; we did everything with my parents. My parents took us to the shows, which is why a lot of people my age never got to experience the '60s like I did, because their parents didn't let them go and they weren't interested to go. So, it's an odd thing. If I was 12, Mario was 10, so he really got started early in the music business, too. John was, of course, his mentor, as he was mine, even though I am not a guitar player. He got into rock 'n roll when he was — boy, Mario has been a professional since high school! He was with the band Stone Ground when he was in high school; my brother John's Copperhead<sup>2</sup> in high school. He had to leave Tam High occasionally and go get the car that was waiting for him to go to the airport to go to shows when he was 15. Of course, the school system was a little looser then. He still managed to graduate. I know you passed him on your way in, but I don't know if you met.

**Robin Fisher:** Yes, we did, thank you.

**Antonia Cipollina:** So anyway, I know I am kind of hopping around. That's why I kind of need —

**Robin Fisher:** No, that's okay. So what was it like in the high school at that time? Were there a lot of conservative kids and then hippie kids, or what was the mix?

**Antonia Cipollina:** I went to Old Mill School for the first six years and then Edna Maguire was the middle school. Then things, socially for me — being at that age, 13, 14 — I was starting to be a little rebellious, which didn't fly with my parents, so I had to go to Marin Catholic for high school.

**Stella Perone:** How old are you? I went to Marin Catholic.

**Antonia Cipollina:** I'm 60. When did you go?

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<sup>1</sup> Manuela, who called herself "Mike"—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Copperhead was the band John Cipollina formed after leaving Quicksilver Messenger Service—Ed.

**Stella Perone:** I graduated in '74.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Oh, I graduated in '70. I forgot where I was.

**Stella Perone:** I'm sorry; you were sent to Marin Catholic.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah. So those were horrible times; I hated that school. When Mario got put there, also when he was a freshman, he barely got in with his grades, and then he got thrown out. I begged my parents to let me go to Tam when Mario did, so I finished at Tam.

**Stella Perone:** How many school years behind you was Mario?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Two.

**Robin Fisher:** So was Marin Catholic much more conservative in rules than Tam?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Oh yes, segregated, uniforms, completely opposite than I was used to. Taught usually by nuns. I have nothing against nuns, but it was just so uncool for somebody who was in my situation. You know, I would be going to gigs on weekends and having kind of a life and then going to Marin Catholic —

**Robin Fisher:** How many years?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Three years, I was there.

**Robin Fisher:** You were there for three years.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah. Because Mario is two years younger so by the time he was a freshman and got thrown out, I was going to be a senior, so my parents relented. But the other thing about Mill Valley was there was a racial problem here.

**Robin Fisher:** How so?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Which my kids, thank goodness — I call my students “my kids.” There was animosity between blacks and whites. There would be race riots at Tam.

**Robin Fisher:** What did a riot look like?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Well, I saw boys throwing garbage cans at each other, fist fights, girls would get in fights, hair pulling and earring ripping. So I was kind of happy I wasn't there for that, but I had no high school experience like kids dream of having because of the school. And I didn't know anybody, because I didn't go to private school until ninth grade. So I met a couple of people, though, that became good friends, but it was not a pleasant thing.

**Robin Fisher:** Do you think if you stayed at Tam you would have had that “dreamed of” high school experience?

**Antonia Cipollina:** No, the dreamed of experience that is now kind of going around again are all the traditional proms and football games. No, that wasn’t cool. No way! Sports, if you were into sports, you were a total nerd.

**Robin Fisher:** Really. So what was cool?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Marin Catholic was totally into all that, so I was not interested in rallies, football games. I didn’t go to any of the dances; I just wasn’t interested. The prom thing, it just wasn’t cool then. If you were or thought you were cool, that was just for the really straight kids, the “wannabe” kids. Now it is a big thing.

**Robin Fisher:** What were people wearing in high school?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Well, in my high school, they were wearing a horrible plaid skirt and a white blouse. It had to be that particular white blouse and that particular jacket. If you didn’t wear the sweater that they wanted, they would send you — make you take it off and go the rest of the day without your sweater, no matter what the weather. It was just stupid rules. And those awful white Oxford shoes — oh God — which my mom would white every day with that liquid white stuff. I was the only kid with clean — I hated it, I’d go scuff them up before I went to school.

**Robin Fisher:** On Friday night, what would —

**Antonia Cipollina:** Oh, we would be at the shows.

**Robin Fisher:** You would be at the shows? So you would be outside of Mill Valley, in the city.

**Antonia Cipollina:** In the city.

**Robin Fisher:** And what would be going on in Mill Valley, do you have any idea?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Oh, the movie theater, um —

**Robin Fisher:** The Sequoia.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yes.

**Robin Fisher:** So it was still cool to go there on the weekends?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Oh yeah, that’s all the kids did. We would walk down to the matinees every Saturday. And of course living up here, we played in the hills, made forts, slid down the hills, had that kind of fun.

**Robin Fisher:** Was it in the neighborhood? Who were the kids that you were playing with up on the hills?

**Antonia Cipollina:** There was only one family for me on one side that had a girl my age and then on the other side on Eldridge, there was Mario's friend.

**Stella Perone:** Who was that?

**Antonia Cipollina:** That was Harry Kemp.

**Stella Perone:** And who was the other family?

**Antonia Cipollina:** That was the Jameses. I'm surprised they aren't in there. They had to move only a couple of years ago. They must have been in their 80s. Dad, his wife suffered from Alzheimer's, and they had to move and be some place for her, so they moved to Washington where their kids live. She is in a, I guess, a facility; probably a nice one.

**Robin Fisher:** When you were growing up, were there lots of mixes of ages, older people, younger people, kids? Everyone mostly, their dads went to work and moms stayed home, what did it look like with that?

**Antonia Cipollina:** I was lucky, my father's office was down in Mill Valley, Mill Valley Realty, so he could make his own hours. I would see a lot of my father. He would be the one to pick us up from school if necessary, take us to school. Yeah, I had a lot of dual parenting.

**Robin Fisher:** Was that usual, or unusual?

**Antonia Cipollina:** No, unusual. You know how dads were back then. My father was Italian so he was very warm and a part of the family, but a lot of fathers were kind of that stern guy that didn't ever — would be a sitting in a chair in the living room and didn't really converse with the kids, that's what I recall.

**Stella Perone:** Was he born in Italy?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yes.

**Stella Perone:** What part?

**Antonia Cipollina:** In Genova, Italy.

**Robin Fisher:** And he came here in —

**Antonia Cipollina:** Well, he was a liberal and at the time, Mussolini was in power, so my father basically left Italy to get away from the regime and came here.

**Robin Fisher:** Came to Mill Valley?

**Antonia Cipollina:** He came to Redwood City. That's where my mom met him. She was looking for a home and he was at a place — he was working in Redwood City and they got married and bought this place.

**Stella Perone:** Was she Italian?

**Antonia Cipollina:** She was Portuguese. Her father was born in Portugal. Portuguese and Irish, my grandmother was, what do you call that color hair, chestnut? So if I'd had children, I could have had a redhead.

**Robin Fisher:** Wow. Did you walk by your dad's office sometimes and walk in? What was that like?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Oh yeah, everybody did. My dad was so friendly. People still come up to me and say, "We still miss seeing your dad downtown." It was 171.

**Stella Perone:** East Blithedale.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah. It still looks the same; it's a little brick place. It was really for a long time. There is a hair salon next to it and it may be a salon now — isn't everything a salon right now?

**Stella Perone:** He passed it on to Rocky Von Welcek.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah, he did.

**Stella Perone:** Did he work with Rocky?

**Antonia Cipollina:** He did. It was not pleasant.

**Robin Fisher:** What were the politics like in town?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Politics?

**Robin Fisher:** Yeah. I assume you were referring to — what were you referring to that was unpleasant?

**Antonia Cipollina:** I don't want to go into it, yeah. Oh, okay. Yeah.

**Robin Fisher:** So next to your dad, was there a salon then?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah, there was, one of the typical, you know, bubble hair — do you remember the term “bubble hair?” Like your Barbie doll had the bubble haircut. So it was an old-fashioned — older ladies. You wouldn’t go there if you were — I never did go to it. I was never that kind of girl, “salon girl.” But now, the kids, when they are 10 years old, they go for nails, hair done, and eyelashes dyed, it’s just amazing.

**Robin Fisher:** Yeah, you are right.

**Antonia Cipollina:** I am showing my age when I talk like this. I have seen Mill Valley transform from something that was so pleasant and loving — I used to ride my horse downtown with a girlfriend bareback, sometimes with just a halter, and we would park them at meters. Three, four, five girls would have horses and we’d put them at a meter. That tells you how parking was!

**Stella Perone:** Where did you keep your horse?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Various places. At the Brewsters’ across the canyon for a while. Over on Ralston.

**Stella Perone:** Where on Ralston?

**Antonia Cipollina:** The very end. I’ve always wondered what happened to that.

**Stella Perone:** The Ralston and West Blithedale end?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yes, yes.

**Stella Perone:** Okay.

**Antonia Cipollina:** It was off Ralston, though. There was a little lane that they lived; I guess maybe it was Ralston.

**Robin Fisher:** Was it a place where more than one horse was kept there and they had lessons?

**Antonia Cipollina:** They had two. This was all private. When I got my horse, they allowed her to stay there.

**Robin Fisher:** Were there other animals, like chickens or anything?

**Antonia Cipollina:** No. You know, we had a couple of chickens, always a lot of companion animals in the home, including an owl, which my brother and I found on the hill, a baby screech owl. We didn’t even know what it was and we called WildCare, which was then called something else — it would come to me if I thought about it long enough. They said, “Sounds like you have a screech owl. You should bring it in because it would never survive out there.” It was so little. We learned how to feed and take care of

this screech owl and my father built this huge cage and he would fly around. John used to love him downstairs in his room; the owl would be his kind of partner. So we kind of had some odd animals. I was the only one into horses. Some girls are just horse crazy. I still am. I won't ever be able to — I would love someday — but I won't ever be able to because I am so attached to this home. I would love to have a farm-ish kind of place in the country and have, you know, large animals too.

**Stella Perone:** So where else did you keep your horse besides the Brewsters'?

**Antonia Cipollina:** The Tennessee Valley stable, which was horrible — just, not well maintained, creepy weather, it just wasn't very pleasant. A lot of kids had horses there, lots.

**Stella Perone:** That was when you were a young teenager.

**Antonia Cipollina:** I mean, people kept — a lot of girls had horses then. There wasn't a lot for kids to do. Mario was always into electronics and he met an older, like quite a bit older, elderly man who lived on Corte Madera Avenue who worked with short wave radios and Mario would spend a lot of time there and he had a little motor bike when he was about 11. I would ride my horse and he would ride the scooter, which wasn't really allowed on the fire roads up here.

**Robin Fisher:** So that's kind of how you would get around: you would take your horse; he would take the scooter.

**Antonia Cipollina:** That was for fun. Getting around, getting to school, we would walk. There was a bus that came to the bottom of King Street. Then, in middle school, my father would drive us and high school, yeah, I took Greyhound. How did you get there, to Marin Catholic, did you get driven?

**Stella Perone:** Well, my older brother and sister drove me around as a freshman, and then we had carpools.

**Robin Fisher:** How long did the bus take? Did it go directly or did you have to take a lot of stops?

**Antonia Cipollina:** No, no. I think we stopped maybe once on Blithedale or twice?

**Stella Perone:** Was it officially a school bus or just went there?

**Antonia Cipollina:** No, it just dropped us off at the bus stop; we'd just cross the street.

**Robin Fisher:** Would you get a monthly pass?

**Antonia Cipollina:** I think dad and mom paid probably. I don't remember. No, I do

actually remember. The school bus, of course, no, when we were little. But I do remember always having to put money into the thing.

**Robin Fisher:** Yeah, having exact change.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah, what could it have been, a quarter?

**Stella Perone:** You obviously played piano from when you were a little kid, right?

**Antonia Cipollina:** I did. I started when I was about six.

**Stella Perone:** Did your mom teach you?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah. She was my teacher, which was pretty amazing.

**Robin Fisher:** You never had formal lessons?

**Antonia Cipollina:** She was a formal teacher.

**Robin Fisher:** She was a concert pianist.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah, and a teacher. She gave up concertizing years before and was a teacher.

**Robin Fisher:** You said at 16, you started teaching. What was that like?

**Antonia Cipollina:** I fell in love with a little Fiat which is now — well, it is so different there now; next to where the bungalow is, there was a car dealership.

**Robin Fisher:** Really?

**Antonia Cipollina:** A little car dealership, dealt with German cars, mainly, but there happened to be this little Fiat that was my first purchase and first credit that I got. My father paid the down payment, which I think was \$300, in those days. The car wasn't brand new. So I would drive my Fiat to people's houses when I first started teaching. I had a little ad that I put in the *Mill Valley Record* and then I would get clients from the newspaper and then perhaps word, you know, the word got out and I use word-of-mouth now, of course; for years I have.

**Robin Fisher:** How have students changed from that time when you started teaching at 16?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Well, it mainly was in their home. Kids really haven't changed; probably better behavior is all I would say.

**Robin Fisher:** Now?

**Antonia Cipollina:** No.

**Robin Fisher:** Oh. [laughter]

**Antonia Cipollina:** No way. They are not nearly as egocentric as a lot of kids, you know. They are so padded and overly-praised, I think, that they — I have to kind of sit on them and make them see the real world, you know. They do live in Mill Valley. All they have ever known is affluence, and all their friends, all they have ever known is affluence. We were not affluent. My father built the house; he was a realtor; there weren't big bucks or anything in the family. But he'd have money if we'd — my horse, that was between \$20 and then I finally moved her to Marin Stables. That is probably the best place I had ever had her.

**Stella Perone:** Where is Marin Stables?

**Antonia Cipollina:** It's still there, in Fairfax.

**Stella Perone:** Oh wow, that's a long trek!

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah, but I was at Marin Catholic, so Dad would pick Mario and me up, and he would take me to the stable and drop me off and then go either see a house or whatever he had to do and then come all the way back. But it didn't take an hour to get to Fairfax then; Fairfax was like going into the country. Novato was the country, yeah.

**Robin Fisher:** Did you have family dinners every night at home?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Oh yeah, absolutely, every night. My grandmother, my mom's mom, lived here.

**Stella Perone:** Were you born in this house?

**Antonia Cipollina:** I wasn't born in the house, but I was raised in the house. I was born at San Rafael General.

**Stella Perone:** Where was your family living when you were born?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Here.

**Stella Perone:** Oh, okay. That's what you meant.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Oh, I thought you meant that my mom had delivered me here, no. However, the house was still the little tiny house and the twins, mom's children from previous, were already 9 years old. Actually, I take that back, pardon me. They were 6. John was born with a horrible lung disease, which is why we lost him so young. He had asthma from the time he was an infant. Mom was only — I mean, John and my sister

were only — I didn't mean to not use her name, her name was Manuela but she called herself Mike, and I thought it would confuse you if I said John and Mike because she was very feminine. But Mom, when she first bought the house, had not married my father yet. There was no driveway; dad built this driveway, and she didn't drive, so she'd have to take a cab with the kids wherever they went, and drop off at the bottom of Shady Lane. She would walk up here with two kids, twins, and sometimes have to carry John.

**Robin Fisher:** And groceries and everything else.

**Stella Perone:** How old were the twins again?

**Antonia Cipollina:** I was 9 when they were born. I mean, they were 9 when I was born.

**Robin Fisher:** Your mom moved in here when they were how old?

**Antonia Cipollina:** John and Mike were about 6. That's why my earliest memories would have to be when I was 4; I don't think I remember much before 4. They moved in '49, I was born in '52.

**Robin Fisher:** Was it her mother who was here too?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah. She didn't move in originally. It was when she became elderly that my parents moved her in. My father built a room for her. Actually, it was probably the first room he built onto the little house, the cottage, they were summer homes. Then he realized, "Wow, my family is getting bigger. I need a bigger house." He always wanted to have a room that would house two pianos because mom played with friends.

**Robin Fisher:** Two grand pianos, by the way.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Right. So you kind of have to have room for that. So he built this room. You can kind of see, this is the big music section, the dining section, the living section. He liked to entertain, so he wanted to have a large enough room.

**Robin Fisher:** What did it look like when he would entertain?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Well, there would be my parents' friends. He was a great host; mom was a good cook. She was social, but not as in social tennis, ladies' club, not that kind of social, but just a very — dad was more outgoing than she.

**Stella Perone:** What were your parents' names?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Evelyn and Gino. Gino, that's kind of how I thought you found me is through my father because he was so well-loved in Mill Valley. He would take a daily

jaunt downtown and, you know, say hello to everybody. Greet all the girls. All the girls loved him; he'd always have a couple girls that would stop and say hello to him.

**Stella Perone:** How long ago did he die?

**Antonia Cipollina:** He died in 1980.

**Stella Perone:** At what age?

**Antonia Cipollina:** 77.

**Robin Fisher:** And was it something he did or just who he was that people loved?

**Antonia Cipollina:** It was just who he was. He was just an outgoing — very much of a gentleman. Liberal, but a gentleman. I guess people who say he — what's a word that I hear all the time still? — the women he worked with in real estate are still in real estate. If you know Carrie Sheriff and Margarita Fliegauf —

**Robin Fisher:** Did he talk much about what it was like? You would have homes like your home, which is one of the original summer cottages, and there must have been other kinds of homes, what were they?

**Antonia Cipollina:** There weren't other kinds of homes.

**Robin Fisher:** It was all summer cottage-type homes?

**Antonia Cipollina:** West Blithedale, because the train used to come up Blithedale, they were all the same amount, not as many, but when you drive down Blithedale, you can tell which ones are original. They may be freshly windowed and painted, but you can tell which ones were built a long time ago.

**Robin Fisher:** How can you tell?

**Antonia Cipollina:** By the style of the home, by the size of the home.

**Robin Fisher:** Which would be small?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah, two to three bedrooms, but reasonably, you just — not like the tract homes, those were down off of Blithedale; that was kind of the low-end part — and Tam Valley in those days. That was kind of like the ghetto, not that we ever use that word, but that's how kids would, and some still think of Tam Valley as being “wow, that place over there!” But it was so far away for us.

**Robin Fisher:** Right, right. There must have been some big houses that started moving in. What was that like for your dad?

**Antonia Cipollina:** No, there weren't big houses. There were young couples that needed homes that moved here because it was so cheap compared to the city.

**Robin Fisher:** Really? This was the '50s?

**Antonia Cipollina:** This was '50s, '60s. They were like — it was a place of opportunity for people who — a lot of artists, a lot of musicians, a lot of that type of people who couldn't afford high rent, so they moved to Mill Valley. When I went to Marin Catholic, kids thought I was the kid from the ghetto because I lived in Mill Valley; that's one reason I didn't have very many friends. They kind of scoffed me because "who lives in Mill Valley? That's a hick town." They all lived in Ross and Kentfield and you know, that whole scene.

**Robin Fisher:** You know, the "Serial", Cyra McFadden, and the whole Mill Valley with the peacock feathers and hot tubs, how did that transition through your eyes?

**Antonia Cipollina:** That happened from money: people moving in and being trendy and able to afford stained glass everywhere; modern; take the paint off the walls, or paint the walls that were wood. That's one thing that is different about this house: Dad never wanted, obviously, to paint.

**Robin Fisher:** Were most of the houses — when you were growing up — they were the darker wood inside?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah. There was dry, what do you call it, drywalls? Or stucco or paint or a lot of wallpaper. You must know the Jessup family, yeah. Lyndlie was one of my best friends.

**Robin Fisher:** What would you do that you really have fond memories of with her?

**Antonia Cipollina:** With friends? It was usually at one house or the other. We would draw. She was an artist and I was horrible, but we would sit and draw horses for hours, or play with our Barbies, which I took kind of not so seriously, but they liked it, and I, of course, got into it a little bit.

But there wasn't all this "House of Air"<sup>3</sup> places. Maybe if you were lucky once a year — my parents weren't into those kinds of family places like bowling alleys, and you know, we would go to the movies but we did everything together. My father, being in that business, often worked weekends, so it would be dad going to work seven days a week. Maybe it wasn't a solid eight hours every day, but it was sometimes 12 hours. The real estate business — you never know when somebody is going to call and go, "I think I changed my mind." But one reason people loved my father is because he was so fair. It's funny because you use the word "realtor" and most people go, "Oh God, they are all sharks." But my father was the type of man who, if he saw a couple that was interested in a home that they couldn't afford, he would really dissuade them and say, "You know, you

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<sup>3</sup> An indoor trampoline park in San Francisco—Ed.

are just going to get yourself in over your head, don't do it." They still come up to me, somebody recently, literally within the last month, came up to me and said, "You know, your father sold us the house that we still live in and my parents used to live in and we now do." Kind of like I live here.

**Stella Perone:** Who was that?

**Antonia Cipollina:** It was — I could think of — it wasn't anybody I remember, no.

**Robin Fisher:** What was it like when the rock band and music and your brothers started really getting into that? Was that part of Mill Valley or all San Francisco, what was that like?

**Antonia Cipollina:** It was definitely San Francisco, mainly. John was fortunate enough to gain enough notoriety reasonably quickly with that band, that he did play The Fillmore and Avalon Ballroom, and Winterland.

**Stella Perone:** That was Sound Hole?

**Antonia Cipollina:** No, that was Mario.

**Robin Fisher:** That was Quicksilver.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah, Quicksilver. But I'm glad you know who Sound Hole is; you don't remember them, do you?

**Stella Perone:** They played at one of our — well, they were supposed to play at Marin Catholic and then we had that tragedy and they cancelled. I don't know if you want to talk about that, probably not.

**Antonia Cipollina:** I don't mind.

**Stella Perone:** Okay, why don't you go into it?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Mario's guitar player, Dan Schallock, lived up at Summit, and there was another family that lived down in Alto, they used to call it. Do they still call it Alto?

**Stella Perone:** Yeah. What family was that?

**Antonia Cipollina:** The Bedayans. There were two Bedayan brothers. One was a friend of Mario's band and the other brother was kind of a quirky — he was a couple years older and seemed like he had some kind of jealousy about his brother. His brother wasn't a musician like mine; wasn't in a professional band. Mario, as I said, was doing it at a young age. He got a schizophrenia, he was schizophrenic and ended up thinking that Dan Schallock was the devil and should be expired and he in the middle of the night,

went to the Schallock home, lined up the parents and Dan, took them outside blindfolded, and shot them point blank, then set their house on fire and killed their cat and went home.

**Stella Perone:** You didn't think you'd get this in this interview, did you?

**Antonia Cipollina:** It's a Mill Valley story I haven't thought of in awhile.

**Robin Fisher:** What was that like for the town? And school the next day, everything?

**Stella Perone:** The hard thing, if you don't mind me interjecting, is Bedayan, he was a lifeguard at the Mill Valley Tennis Club, so all the kids knew him from the Tennis Club, so that added another angle.

**Antonia Cipollina:** No, that's right. He was a straight kind of kid who did the water sport thing and we didn't. None of the musicians were into sports or that kind of stuff.

**Stella Perone:** Lifeguarding at the tennis club.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah. Certainly we weren't club members of anything. So at three in the morning, we got a phone call and were told. Mario, I think, today is still suffering from that whole thing because the boys all had to go there. They didn't have to see the scene, the actual death scene, but they had to see the house that was burned.

**Robin Fisher:** Why?

**Antonia Cipollina:** They questioned everybody; they didn't know who did it. Every car coming in and out of Mill Valley that early morning, including my brother, John, who was coming home from a gig — they stopped everybody. It was the big thing right at the exit there. They were all asked questions.

**Stella Perone:** The band members, there would be lots of suspects.

**Antonia Cipollina:** That's right. So all the boys had to be questioned, identified, and everything else. Did Brent finally admit it? Is that how they found out?

**Stella Perone:** I don't remember. All I know is within a day or two —

**Antonia Cipollina:** They had him, yeah. I think he did confess.

**Stella Perone:** Did Sound Hole ever perform again after that?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yes, they did. They replaced Dan with a friend who is now deceased for another reason, Brian Marnell.

**Stella Perone:** Who else was in Sound Hole?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Bill Gibson, who is still with Huey; John Farey, who was my 12-year-long boyfriend/girlfriend relationship, still very dear to the family. Kevin Hogan, or was it Brian? I guess, I don't know, it was one of them — they both, I guess. I don't know.

**Robin Fisher:** So many musicians, it seems like, were part of your life. In Mill Valley, did it feel like this was a real creative —

**Antonia Cipollina:** Oh yes, besides music, there were a lot of artists.

**Robin Fisher:** What kind of artists?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Um, the family on King Street, the father was a potter. Actually, that's funny because I see them every day; they still walk downtown and back every day. There were the fathers who went to the city and then there were the families with parents — well, I guess that's not really fair to say. I was surrounded as a teenager with young people that weren't parents yet, but they were married or living together, when it was still taboo to be living together.

**Robin Fisher:** Were they neighbors? When you say you were surrounded, what do you mean?

**Antonia Cipollina:** There were neighbors. The drummer from Quicksilver lived on Eldridge. You know, this interview, we are not going to have time. I feel like I am talking about stuff that is so, I mean, it is interesting for me to think about, but I don't know how good it is as an interview.

**Robin Fisher:** Oh, it's such a rich — yeah, this is awesome.

**Antonia Cipollina:** You think? It's hard, when you ask me a question, I can visualize Mill Valley, but I am not getting it. Mario is not here and he is so good at interviewing.

**Stella Perone:** You are great. Huey Lewis, how does he associate with Sound Hole?

**Antonia Cipollina:** He was in the rival band, Clover.

**Stella Perone:** Oh that's right, he was in Clover.

**Robin Fisher:** What do you mean by the rival band, what was going on?

**Antonia Cipollina:** One had a gig one night and if they had a gig that night and the other band had a gig in another place the same night, you knew which people were going to see Sound Hole and which were going to go see Clover.

**Robin Fisher:** How did you know?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Certain kids just were, by age or because Huey was a little older. Mario and his friends were Mario's age, which was young.

**Robin Fisher:** What was it about Mario's sound that really —?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Mario or John?

**Robin Fisher:** Mario and John, tell me.

**Antonia Cipollina:** They both are known for their tone, but John was the innovator as far as electric guitar. And electronically, [pointing] because he created that amplifier stack that he was known for, that is in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame now. But that's what he took to every gig. That is, like, an outrageous —

**Robin Fisher:** Is that a photo or an oil painting?

**Antonia Cipollina:** That is a photo.

**Robin Fisher:** Wow, that's amazing.

**Antonia Cipollina:** That is a photograph and that is no lie. That is 12 feet high; those are the horns.

**Robin Fisher:** He didn't ever have that at home, did he? Where did he keep it?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah.

**Robin Fisher:** He had it here?!

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah, well he didn't live here then, but he had it here for a time when he was either, you know, storing it. He took it on the road with him. That's one thing: He had a very piercing treble tone and he used the whammy bar on the guitar — which most people didn't like to use — which is a device that bends the strings and makes it kind of sound like a “wah wah wah” but most guys didn't like it because it made the guitar immediately out of tune by stretching the strings. So you'd constantly have to keep tuning. John was able to do both. Yes, he was known for being out of tune at times, but his style was so unique. A lot of it was his own actual way he played the instrument, and a lot of it was his tone.

**Robin Fisher:** I think, is it *Rolling Stone* puts him in the top 100 guitarists ever. What was it like having a famous —?

**Antonia Cipollina:** You know, that's the thing. The first time I ever saw it — I still talk about — I can still picture. “We are going to see John tonight, Sheesha — Sheesha is my nickname — and Mario.” And it would be like, “What? We are going to see John play? Okay, cool.” We went into the Avalon. It was the first time I had been in one of

those music halls, and it was dark and strobe lights and fluorescent lights and lots of hippies, lots of LSD, lots of obviously high young people.

**Robin Fisher:** What were they doing: falling, talking in a slow way, what was it? What did you see that you knew they were high?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Well, they'd be anything from, you know, walking by them and them pointing at you like this or sitting on the ground painting with fluorescent paint on the actual floor of the place.

**Robin Fisher:** Right. So you are how old right now?

**Antonia Cipollina:** 60. So I was 12, 13.

**Robin Fisher:** No, I mean when you saw them painting the floor.

**Antonia Cipollina:** I was 12 or 13 when they started.

**Robin Fisher:** So this was young in this world.

**Stella Perone:** So he was 22; 10 years older than you.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah. He wasn't a youngster, really. John was, you know, he lived at home until he was 19. He was that oddball artist kid who liked to draw and create, very bright but not a great student, like it usually is.

**Robin Fisher:** Who taught him guitar?

**Antonia Cipollina:** He went to —

**Robin Fisher:** Was it here in Mill Valley?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yes, Will Thorpe was the guitar teacher. I know his daughter really well, but I know I am only thinking of — this is horrible, because that was a big — he started John. And then he started branching out. Dad wanted him to stick with a kind of a more traditional style of playing and mom is the one, always the one, who said, "That is not his thing. You have to let him do what he wants to do." And he would sit in his room for days and practice.

**Robin Fisher:** What would you hear?

**Antonia Cipollina:** I wouldn't hear.

**Robin Fisher:** Oh, you couldn't hear him practicing?

**Antonia Cipollina:** He would play his electric guitar without the amplifier down in his room. By his room, I mean, on another level, underneath that other room. He was quiet, a very quiet person. If I went in there, I could hear him doodling around, but he wasn't a big part of the upstairs world. We were little kids.

**Robin Fisher:** I think I read Mario still likes classical music.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Oh yeah, we all do.

**Robin Fisher:** Was it mostly classical music that would be in the house?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Well, with my mom, yes, and my father, yes. But John changed that pretty abruptly. Mario, too.

**Robin Fisher:** The stereo would be playing songs?

**Antonia Cipollina:** We started out with carrying around record players. I remember when stereo came out.

**Robin Fisher:** So you mean those little suitcases with the 45s.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah, I still have mine.

**Robin Fisher:** What color is it?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Beige.

**Robin Fisher:** Beige, all right.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah, mine was beige. You tape a nickel or a quarter on it so the needle went around.

**Robin Fisher:** Oh really!

**Antonia Cipollina:** How old are you? 22?

**Robin Fisher:** Thank you, I am 56.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Are you really? Oh my God!

**Robin Fisher:** But tell me, when you went to your friends' house, was there classical music playing there, were they playing rock, were they playing there?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Nobody was like this house.

**Robin Fisher:** Nobody was like this house? Tell me about that, the differences between them.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Well, gosh, I don't even know how to put it in words.

**Robin Fisher:** Well, give me a picture.

**Antonia Cipollina:** A picture — I can't —

**Robin Fisher:** Was it quiet and restrained there, and here there were smells of food and music?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Here it was food and music, yeah, of some form or another.

**Stella Perone:** What was that pool?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Oh, that was our swimming pool dad built. He started the swimming pool; that was enough rock in there that he could put something with that much weight of water. He couldn't dig down because it was solid rock.

**Stella Perone:** Did you play in there as kids?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Well, we did. It was mainly dad's little relaxing thing. Pools are a pain in the butt, especially if you are against the wall on one side. No matter how you tried to cover it, stuff would always come down. And being in trees, unless he cranked, he bought an old pot belly, literally gas pot belly stove that heated it. He was — dad was not one to be extravagant with energy. He was European; they weren't that way, so it wasn't like we had an 80 degree pool all the time. I think when Mario got old enough, he figured out how to crank that little pot belly stove up and get some heat going, but dad would not keep it warm all the time. So it had to either be an unusually warm day, because the sun only hits — now even less than then — maybe for 40 minutes at a time before it moves somewhere else. But we used it a lot.

**Robin Fisher:** One thing I was wondering about too is did you ever go out to dinner in downtown Mill Valley?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yes.

**Stella Perone:** When you did, where did you go and what was that like?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Well, mom ended it. It's funny. I said she was a great cook and she was, but she didn't really like to entertain. It's not like we had people here all the time for dinners. We did that a lot for birthdays and things like that, but there were always people here because this family, either kids liked to come and just talk to mom or they wanted to come and snoop around because John or John's cronies, so to speak, were here a lot. Half the band lived here when the band was starting to get going. They came from Merced;

they didn't have a place to live. Dad found them rentals all around here that were cheap, like \$320 a month for a big —

**Stella Perone:** Who all was in Quicksilver?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Greg Elmore, Gary Duncan, David Freiberg, and John. And then a couple years later was the downfall when Dino Valenti got out of jail and joined the band. It wasn't that John and Greg wanted him to, but Gary Duncan, who is kind of a tough guy said, "Well, if you don't let him join, then I am going to quit."

**Stella Perone:** Why was that a downfall?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Well, he is a little Italian pistol. Grew up in the circus; literally, he is an aerialist, so he had a really hard tough guy demeanor and it didn't blend, certainly, with my lifestyle, which was pretty much "peace and love." Mom was not a hippie, but I am just using that term; she was just such a mothering person that people felt comfortable being here. And my father, being Italian, didn't want me to go anywhere, at least as a teenager. All my friends were able to come here but I couldn't go on dates or go hang out with kids downtown.

**Robin Fisher:** Could your brothers do that?

**Antonia Cipollina:** They had kind of an out, being in the music business. They had gigs to do, rehearsals to go to. I was a concert player, so I had to practice at home.

**Stella Perone:** Did you play in concerts?

**Antonia Cipollina:** I did.

**Robin Fisher:** Where?

**Antonia Cipollina:** At the Outdoor Art Club. I didn't do concertizing, but I did recitals.

**Robin Fisher:** What was that like at the Outdoor Art Club?

**Antonia Cipollina:** It looks the same, it does. It is so great; it is one of my few places left.

**Robin Fisher:** Really! And who would come?

**Stella Perone:** But you never played in a band?

**Antonia Cipollina:** I did, in the '80s. Not in my brother's band.

**Stella Perone:** A rock band?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah.

**Stella Perone:** Who did you play with?

**Antonia Cipollina:** I played with Darby Slick, who was the brother-in-law of Grace Slick, who wrote the extremely famous song — this has got to be, everybody knows this song, it comes to me — I'm not good at doing this, I'm really not.

**Robin Fisher:** Names and things are so hard for me, you are doing great.

**Stella Perone:** Wait, Darby Slick was Grace Slick's — how was he related?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Brother-in-law.

**Stella Perone:** So that means he was —

**Antonia Cipollina:** He was married to, I mean, he's the Slick. She was married to his brother.

**Stella Perone:** Okay, right.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah.

**Robin Fisher:** What was the song?

**Antonia Cipollina:** *Come Together.*

**Robin Fisher, Stella Perone:** *Come Together!*

**Antonia Cipollina:** He wrote that song and was poor until he realized — well, he got money in the beginning, but that was before copyright licensing had come into being, so when he finally got money, royalties, for the use of that song, because who was it, the old Brummels — somebody made it a big AM hit and they gave him a flat fee for the song and he signed a contract, I think, and said, "Yeah, go and ahead and use it." Nobody knew that it was going to become a universal theme song.

**Robin Fisher:** A ballad of the times, yeah.

**Stella Perone:** So who were you in the band with, it was you and Darby, and what was it called?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Slik, it was actually called, we spelled it S-L-I-K.

**Robin Fisher:** Who else?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Nobody that you would know.

**Robin Fisher:** You traveled around with it?

**Antonia Cipollina:** No, we did San Francisco, just local. I think the farthest we ever went was Santa Rosa to the Luther Burbank. I mean, it was, Darby is an innovative song writer, let's put it that way, but at time, like for instance, that song. We did that song, you may not understand what I mean by this, but he arranged it in seven-four time, which is not a regular time, tap your foot, time signature of music, so it would throw off every listener who heard it because there was this weird extra beat in there. And then finally we all kind of ganged up on him. It was kind of like working for a Nazi, actually. Darby was really, yeah, everything had to be his way, nobody else's songs, nobody, it was, you know, I look back on it, I made some really good friends in the band, still am in touch with them all.

**Stella Perone:** How old were you when you were in that band?

**Antonia Cipollina:** This was '85, I think 30-something.

**Robin Fisher:** I realize we are at an hour and I am fine with the time but I want to be respectful of your time.

**Antonia Cipollina:** I have until about 3:15 pushing it.

**Robin Fisher:** Would you rather stop now or do you have a few more minutes?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Well, I can go a little longer, I just feel like I am totally blowing this.

**Robin Fisher:** You are not blowing this, please!

**Antonia Cipollina:** Thank God you are taping this, because I don't know how, actually now that I think about it, how would you ever talk about going around and back and forth. Whose job is it to transcribe it? Is that your job?

**Robin Fisher:** No, don't worry about it.

**Stella Perone:** A girl that the library hires.

**Robin Fisher:** Somebody who does it for a profession; they know to do it.

**Antonia Cipollina:** She is going to think I'm nuts!

**Stella Perone:** She's going to love hearing it.

**Robin Fisher:** Please! It's like a whole tapestry of memory, it's beautiful.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Oh, God, yeah, bad and good, all of a sudden I got a flash of the funeral. I don't know why. I don't know why. I just flashed on that.

**Robin Fisher:** What happened at the funeral?

**Antonia Cipollina:** The boys carrying the caskets, three caskets.

**Robin Fisher:** Where was this?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Down at the Rec Center, that's where, no, I'm sorry, the Methodist Church, how could I say that, the Methodist Church.

**Stella Perone:** That's the one by the middle school, right?

**Robin Fisher:** Right.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Anyway, like I said regarding the Schallock thing, it twisted Mario to this day.

**Robin Fisher:** How could it not, yeah.

**Stella Perone:** What is Mario known for, guitar playing?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Bass, yeah.

**Robin Fisher:** Well, you didn't really talk about the '80s, the '90s, the 2000s. There is so much —

**Antonia Cipollina:** Well, you know, John died in 1989 and that is kind of the end of my story. My mom lived not a long time after he passed away.

**Stella Perone:** How old was she when she died?

**Antonia Cipollina:** 73.

**Stella Perone:** Young.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah, she didn't smoke or drink or do any drugs ever in her life. She died young, but I think that is the bloodline of the woman's side of the family.

**Stella Perone:** Can I ask what she died of, or is that personal?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Breast cancer.

**Stella Perone:** I'm sorry.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Complications from metastases, yeah.

**Robin Fisher:** So was that when you started being the only person in the house?

**Antonia Cipollina:** No, John lived here when mom was diagnosed and had the surgery. She was in no shape for surgery and ended up with toxic shock and lived in Marin General. John and I lived there basically round the clock. This will tell you the times, we kind of took over a waiting room at night. People got used to us; we had our tape decks, cigarettes, everything else. You smoked anywhere in those days.

**Robin Fisher:** This was when she was dying?

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yes.

**Robin Fisher:** I thought John died first.

**Antonia Cipollina:** She didn't die, though. They thought she was going to die but she lived. I think a big part of that was John telling her, "Mom, if you make it home, I will tape every single Hawaii 5-0 for you that there is." And, damned if I don't have those still, all in his amazing lettering! Anyway, not that she didn't love us all, but John was a sick kid. He got special attention, not that he enjoyed it or thrived on it or asked for it, because he was a very humble man. You know, I wonder if you should borrow the DVD<sup>4</sup> I produced about this family. It may help you with all this stuff, and you'd certainly know a lot more in a more organized way —

**Stella Perone:** Could the library get a copy of that?

**Antonia Cipollina:** No, it could, but I have a million of them.

**Robin Fisher:** Oh, you have one that we could just have? Oh, my gosh, that's fantastic!

**Stella Perone:** It would be awesome if the library could have that on file with your history.

**Antonia Cipollina:** I would love it. At one point, that came up, and I bet you people go to look for it. Anyway, this was a five-, six-year project. This was a big part of my life prior to three years ago. This was released three years ago.

**Stella Perone:** When you say released, where was it released?

**Antonia Cipollina:** It was released, well, the way anything is, it wasn't taken by a big distribution company or anything, so it sells on John's website, it sells at Two Neat, it

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<sup>4</sup> *Recoil: John Cipollina in Music and in Memory* is available in the Lucretia Little History Room, Mill Valley Public Library—Ed.

sells at Mill Valley Music, it sells by order. But this was my, not my creation, but I was a big part, I was the producer of this. So I am pretty proud of it.

**Robin Fisher:** That's fantastic!

**Antonia Cipollina:** This is about John, but there is a lot of family history, especially in the first DVD, which are all marked, you'll know which one. If you want to see John performing live, that is disc three. If you want to hear only interviews of people talking about John and the family, that is disc two. Anyway, enjoy, it is my pleasure.

**Robin Fisher:** Thank you so much.

**Stella Perone:** That is so amazing.

**Antonia Cipollina:** I had some of the most wonderful people dedicate their time to this. This was not a profit venture. It did take a year to sell enough to make up what I invested.

**Robin Fisher:** Wow, but it did. That's amazing!

**Antonia Cipollina:** It made a few hundred dollars for each person.

**Stella Perone:** Wow, that's a testament.

**Antonia Cipollina:** But that wasn't the intention and certainly not what five, six years of hard work on everybody's part will ever recoup, but everybody loved John. People involved, Randy Chavez was the, is the artist who did the Photoshop work, the colorizations and so on. Randy Tuten is a famous poster artist who did the lettering and the font that runs throughout. So I had real pros. Jesse Block is the director and videographer of it. These were all fans, originally, of John's. I didn't seek them, they sought me. I didn't really know what I was in for.

**Robin Fisher:** Of course not, it's a lot of work.

**Antonia Cipollina:** It's a lot of work, but those were five years of my life that we can say in an interview, "she dedicated to this."

**Robin Fisher:** Before we wrap up, I know it's time, but is there something, particularly since the time that you did that video, and something maybe in anticipation of this interview, that you were thinking you wanted to say, you wished you'd said in that DVD, something that maybe —

**Antonia Cipollina:** Well, that's an interesting question.

**Stella Perone:** Let me just say, we can come back. You want to turn that off?

**Robin Fisher:** Yeah, sure.

[Pause in interview]

**Antonia Cipollina:** I said, I think what I expected you to say, I was going to go chronologically, decade by decade, which I kind of did, but we kind of went back and forth. But I didn't get to say, the moment I'll never forget is going to that first Avalon Ballroom concert and seeing John on a big stage for the first time. That was a big stage for them. They didn't have the big huge arenas, you know, like they do now when the music business became a really big money maker. I'll never forget seeing John. That's when I said, I say it in this, the very beginning, in the intro, but that's how I still feel. It was a magical moment seeing John with his amp that I had only seen at a rehearsal hall or here. I had never really heard him at volume, I had never really heard the band. It was an amazing moment to see my brother looked upon like a superstar. He looked like a superstar, even to me as the sister. It was a moment I still have etched in my mind.

**Stella Perone:** Where did the band practice?

**Antonia Cipollina:** They practiced at a woman's home in San Francisco for the first couple of years. Then they had, you remember, there used to be a house, a stucco house on the knoll in Corte Madera which they have leveled now. There was a little white stucco house sitting up, going north on 101, before the first exit, look to your right, which is now flat. There used to be a knoll. Before Corte Madera exit.

**Robin Fisher:** There are all those new houses along the freeway.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah, there used to be just grass and marsh and a knoll and this house sat on the knoll. That was their rehearsal hall for years. There are stories of that in here too. I think this first disc will be helpful to anybody. It is long, take it in sections.

**Robin Fisher:** Hey, sounds great. If, by any chance, after a little bit of time and you have looked at this and I've been able to read it and watch it —

**Antonia Cipollina:** I think I would do better if you just had your questions to ask me, than me think, "I have to talk about that" because I'll always assume you don't want to hear that.

**Robin Fisher:** Oh, you just don't understand; the story, everyone's story, it's just the best. I would love for you to think about whether it would be okay if we took a picture of the wall with the posters and maybe took a picture of this, it would be —

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah, everybody does.

**Robin Fisher:** It would be great, I really appreciate it.

**Antonia Cipollina:** I'd be honored. Thank you.

**Robin Fisher:** Thank you.

**Antonia Cipollina:** I'm glad you came, actually.

**Robin Fisher:** Yeah, really nice that we were all here together.

**Antonia Cipollina:** Yeah, and it helped me feel that I was directed in not only one spot.

**Robin Fisher:** Great.

**Antonia Cipollina:** And I got to sit out where I am every day, where I am about to be for the rest of the day.

**Robin Fisher:** Your piano bench.

**Antonia Cipollina:** My piano, well, that's my chair.

**Robin Fisher:** Oh, they sit there and you sit in this chair. Then we probably should get in a picture of this chair.

**Stella Perone:** Maybe next time we could talk about some of your students. I'm sure you have had some memorable students over the years.