



Artichoke

Kathy Lynn Johnson was born February 1, 1955, in Baltimore, MD, to Gloria Lorraine Johnson (née Elliott, 3/6/1929~11/19/2010), Alvin Peery Johnson (5/30/1927~5/8/2020), and sibling Charles Nelson Johnson (B. 1950). The young family moved to Los Angeles in 1957, when Kathy's father was recruited by Hughes Aircraft to join the burgeoning aerospace industry. They bought a duplex, on a cul-de-sac, in the cultural melting pot living under the flight path of LAX. Al

came home daily for lunch, and Gloria's parents relocated from Baltimore to live in the back house.

Kathy attended Center Avenue, Jefferson Elementary, and Felton Intermediate schools. Her local claim to fame came in sixth grade, when her essay for the American Legion's "What Is Patriotism" contest won the state prize.

In 1973, she graduated from Lennox High School, where she had joined the Drill Team, in part, to avoid P.E. class. Her attempts at being a Southern California blonde luckily ended by her senior year.




*Merry
 Christmas*
 and a happy new year!

She drove the family's Toyota north to Arcata to attend then-called Humboldt State University. It was in this redwood forest of a setting that she was able to explore herself and a world beyond the confines of an upbringing in the Nazarene Church that she had quietly turned away from at 16.



Shared households, side jobs, and food stamps meant she could remain in Humboldt County for the duration of her studies, and could avoid returning to her childhood bed during summer breaks.



Rent - 35 00
Utilities 10 00
Food 40 00
gas 25 00
Extras 20 00
\$130 00 expenses/month
Now if I only cleared \$1.00 an hr., I would still make \$100.00.
Food expenses should be cut by food stamps.
Expenses I didn't include:
1. Car tune up
2. Car insurance

She graduated in 1977, with a BA in English Literature and a desire to work in publishing. The 60+ WPM speed that she'd retained from high school typing class, and a CETA training grant, landed her at a tiny publisher in nearby Eureka. The company soon began to fail, but the experience secured a line on her résumé to take to other publishing houses.

Seeing lots of listings under "Publishers" in the yellow pages, Kathy thought she was doing something unique in moving north to Seattle, only to find two other Arcata alumnae living in her apartment building. She was a word processor/typesetter for Peanut Butter Press and the Seattle Business Journal, and was a customer service rep — typing up the book order invoices — for Madrona Publishing, a general trade book publisher. For that job, she could start her day by walking from her apartment on Capitol Hill, to downtown, and through the Pike Place market, with a full view of Puget Sound. This was Seattle before gentrification and Microsoft hit the area big time— a perfect place to be in one's 20's.

Kathy took a vacation to fly back east, for the first time as an adult, to see NYC and the two sides of her family roots in Baltimore and Appalachia's tiny Pound, VA. She returned to Seattle, and also to David Nieskoski, a soft-spoken, animated redhead whom she'd started seeing recently after he served her a drink at her corner restaurant/bar. It was 1979, the drink was a Grasshopper, and he still chose to see her despite her choice of cocktails. After dating for several months, they made the hard decision to part as Dave decided to move to Miami to pursue work in the film industry.

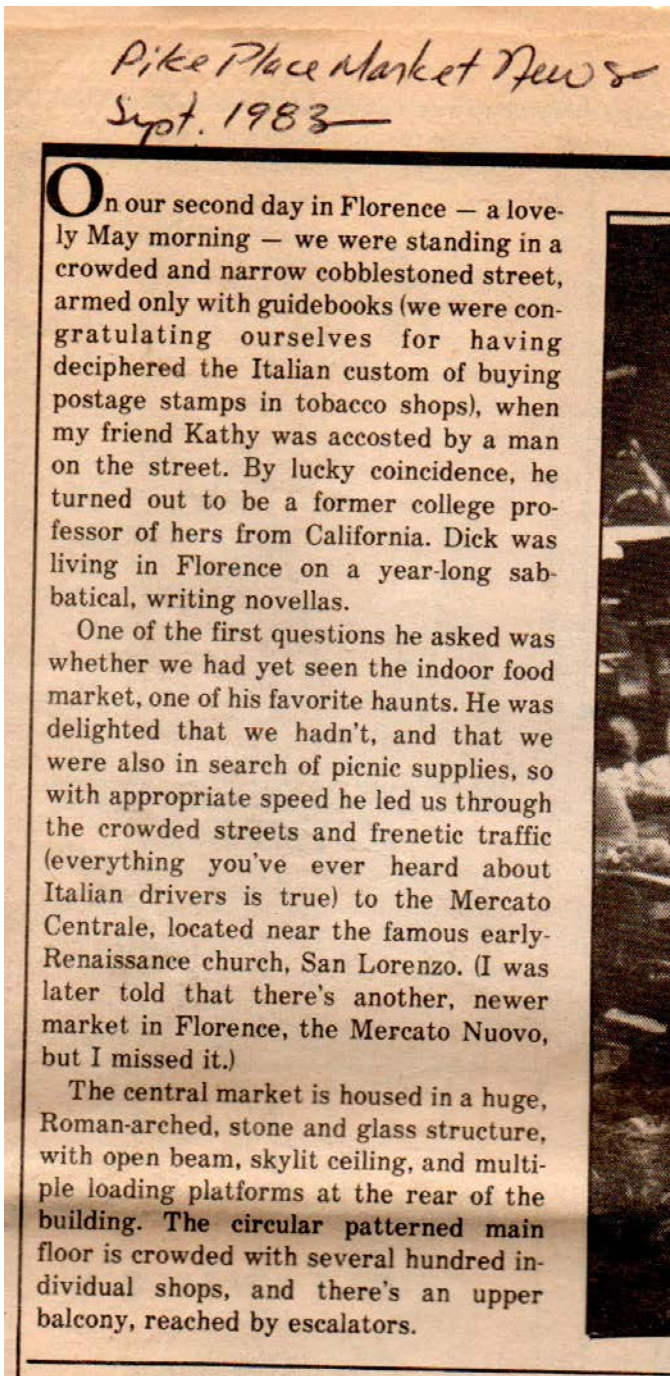
The 80's were a blur of work and travel. Following months of cross-country letter writing, Kathy announced her intention of moving to Miami. Dave met her half way on her drive across the South, and caught this Super 8 footage of her dancing on the streets of New Orleans. <https://youtu.be/RVdHKgQjlp4>



Miami offered little opportunity in publishing, so Kathy took a job with P.A.C.E. (Performing Arts for Community & Education), a non-profit agency that paid area musicians scale to play free concerts that P.A.C.E. produced in South Florida. Kathy was so disoriented by the ocean being on the east side, that — more than once — she took the freeway going the wrong direction driving to work.

While in that part of the country, the couple took a 90-minute flight and wild taxi ride to vacation in the relatively undeveloped town of Negril, Jamaica. Kathy soon stopped requesting iced drinks once she saw that it required staff to take an icepick to the block that the ice truck had delivered that day.

By 1983, the couple had tired of Miami life. So, while Dave boxed up their stuff and visited family, Kathy joined friend Peg World for a month of train-travel and country-hopping in Europe. Peg had wanted a traveling partner as she wrote a series of articles on markets for Seattle's Pike Place News. The opening of Peg's piece on Florence begins by describing a moment of kismet.



Kathy & Dick Day at the Mercato Centrale. **When in Florence**, his book of short stories, came out on Doubleday three years later.



Amsterdam's Vondelpark, one of many stops through several countries on the trip.

Another trip highlight was visiting Seattle friends Nancy Walz and Lawrence Roberts in Madrid, where Lawrence was covering Spain's post-Franco awakening democracy for UPI. (Nancy's photos from the era are posted at <https://nancywalz.com/spanish-portfolio/>). Nancy drove Kathy and Peg four hours northwest to spend a couple of days exploring the historic countryside of Old Castile.

Once Kathy returned to the States, she and Dave loaded up the Toyota and car-camped the trip west to live in San Francisco.

A concert volunteer from her P.A.C.E. days helped Kathy make a connection with The Rosebud Agency. Starting there in 1984, Kathy became the fifth member of a team that booked gigs and organized itinerary arrangements — in and out of the U.S. — for a quality roster of 13 musicians/bands. She was able to walk from her apartment in the Haight-Ashbury district, through Golden Gate Park, to Clement Street, where she had a choice of eateries where she could grab a café au lait on her way into the office.



NRBQ, Nighthawks, Los Lobos, John Hammond In November!

Rosebud Artists Featured At Berlin Jazz Festival

Rosebud artists should figure prominently in the makeup of this year's **Berlin Jazz Festival**. **NRBQ** and **The Nighthawks** will be making their European debut at the festival. **Los Lobos**, who had a very successful debut tour of Europe this Spring, will be making their first appearance in Germany. **John Hammond** (a veteran of numerous German and cross-European tours) will perform with **The Nighthawks** in addition to presenting his own solo acoustic set. **NRBQ** (who enjoy a strong cult following in Germany) will bring **John Sebastian** on after their set to perform with them the **Lovin' Spoonful** hits he made famous. Each of the artists will surround their festival appearances with tours spanning most of Europe.

A Quick Sketch

The Rosebud Staff



From left to right: Rick Bates, Kathy Johnson, Mike Kappus, Pat Coray, Curtis Reinhardt.

The Rosebud staff has been drawn from various backgrounds in concert promotion, nightclub booking and management, college and festival buying and production, as well as radio programming. For your reference, the current Rosebud staff is outlined below:

MIKE KAPPUS—Head agent and founder of Rosebud in 1976; Kappus handles accounts of all sorts nationwide, television and video and all international touring. Kappus started in the business in 1971 and has been a manager, promoter, club owner and talent buyer.

RICK BATES—Agent for the Southeast and colleges in the West, Rick has been with Rosebud since 1982. Prior to Rosebud he produced concerts in San Francisco and was concert chairman at San Jose State University.

CURTIS REINHARDT—In charge of accounts in the Midwest and South, Curtis has been a club manager and talent buyer for the past 8 years, coming to us directly from **Rockefeller's** in Houston. Curtis graduated from the University of Kansas, with degrees in music and business, where he also booked and promoted shows.

KATHY JOHNSON—Responsible for artist services (itinerary, travel, interviews), finances and other duties, Kathy came to Rosebud in March of this year from P.A.C.E. concert company in Florida where she was public relations assistant for 2½ years.

PAT CORAY—With Rosebud for 4 years now, Pat is responsible for contracts and all communication with the musician's union as well as a myriad of other administrative duties.

John Lee Hooker, Robert Cray A Japanese Triumph!

"King of the Boogie," **John Lee Hooker** has just returned from a triumphant debut tour of Japan. Joining John and **The Coast to Coast Blues Band** on the tour was **Robert Cray**. Hooker was given the accolades due him as a living legend while **Robert Cray** had the Japanese almost equally in awe as they predict legendary status for him there. An excellent package, the two groups toured the South last Winter and will be joining forces in various other cities throughout the year.

Mose Allison Australian Debut Set

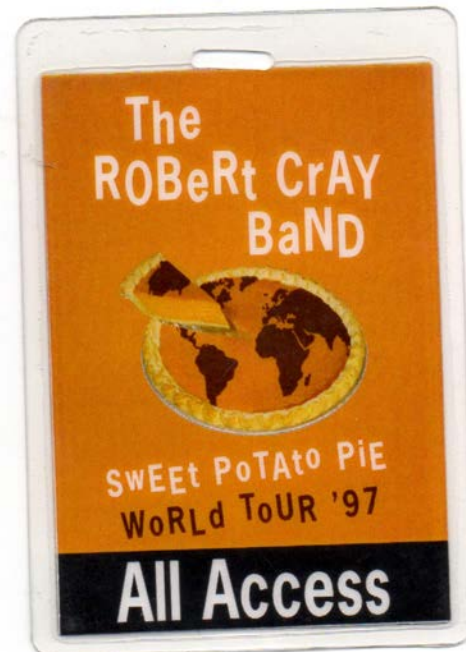
Mose Allison has set a busy schedule following his nomination for a Grammy this year as best jazz vocalist. In addition, heavy touring throughout North America, Mose was featured at several European jazz festivals this Summer. In October, he flies to Australia for his debut tour there. His calendar for 1984 is basically full but limited dates are available and we are prepared to set dates for 1985.

Willie Dixon: On The Road Again

Willie Dixon hit the road again in support of his new album "**Mighty Earthquake and Hurricane**" on Pausa Records. The tour winds from the Midwest to the South in September and October with West Coast dates planned for November. Willie's reputation as "**The Blues/Rock Catalyst**" and "**The Master Storyteller**" is well earned considering that his songs have been covered by **Elvis Presley**, **The Rolling Stones**, **the Doors**, **Led Zeppelin**, **the Grateful Dead** and countless others including virtually every blues artist. No one argues with Willie when he states, "I Am The Blues."



Backstage Green Room
Madison Square Garden



In 1986, Kathy and Dave made time for a three-week car trip through Ireland and Scotland. They seemed to have the run of the isles, maybe because others were more cautious about possible radiation drift to that part of the world from the recent Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

Back home, five years of San Francisco living started to feel more about looking for parking than enjoying the bright lights.



The Burren in County Clare, on the western coast of Ireland.

When Mike Kappus, Rosebud's owner, heard of Kathy's plans to leave for a more rural lifestyle, he suggested that The Robert Cray Band could use a part-time assistant. Kathy jumped at the job. She was able to work from an extra room in the creekside cottage with a wood-burning stove that she and Dave rented, 50 miles north, in Glen Ellen. They shared 20 acres with neighbors in five other cottages, and it was not unusual for a neighbor's free-range chickens to be pecking at the screen door while Kathy was on the phone to a music promoter or journalist.



It was 1989, the same year Kathy received the Muscular Dystrophy diagnosis that explained why the many hills in Arcata, Seattle, and San Francisco had never gotten easier to climb.

The couple worked and played at California wine-country living for 11 years, until the fact that they were barely breaking even, and the lure of homeownership, triggered their next move.

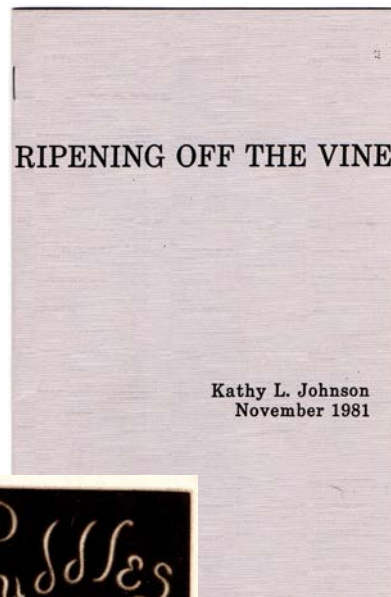
In 2000, Dave's mom Lillian joined them in purchasing a home 75 miles north in Ukiah. Kathy worked out of the living room while Dave helped Lil move west. The following year, Kathy said goodbye to the music biz and took a job at Community Care, a local non-profit care management agency that supported the independence of those who needed help with the challenges of aging or living with disability. Her work as a community resources



specialist, running the agency's Senior Information & Assistance call line, allowed her to become connected to her local community in a way that she had previously felt lacking. The job grew to cover two counties, and Kathy spoke with thousands of individuals in the almost-20 years she ran the department. Later she used her knowledge of local resources on a project with Mendocino County Public Health to support the county's 2-1-1 call center.

Travels now were closer to home (wheelchair air travel = not great), mostly spent on visits to family or beach getaways on the California coast.

Kathy found the local poetry group's monthly readings and open mics, reinvigorating in her something she had toyed with on-and-off since college.



WRITERS READ

UKIAH PRESENTS

KATHY JOHNSON



Kathy's notoriety as a writer peaked in sixth grade at the winning of an American Legion essay contest. A half-century later of sporadic public readings and inclusion in various stapled printings, her poems have yet to top that early \$25 prize money and publishing in the local *Daily News*. Informed by years lived in places from Baltimore to L.A. and Seattle to Miami, she continues to reach and pull across the page the lines that allow her to pin up and air dry her patches of damp inspiration. She has spent the most time in Northern California, including college years studying English at Humboldt State University and now Ukiah—her home since 2000.

ART CENTER UKIAH

THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 2018

7 PM: FEATURED READING

8 PM: OPEN MIC

Art Center Ukiah: 201 South State Street, Corner of Church Street, Ukiah, CA 95482
 (1 block south of Ukiah Court House on opposite side of the street)
 Suggested donation: \$5 Refreshments provided
 For Information, contact Writers Read Ukiah MC Michael Riedell, inisfree@pacific.net
 Writers Read happens on the last Thursday of most every month and has been happening in Ukiah since 1999.
 This reading series is sponsored in part by Poets & Writers, through a grant from the James Irvine Foundation and the Hearst Foundation.
 Additional support provided by an anonymous local writer, Colored Horse Studios, Michael Riedell, Bill "Jabs" Churchill, the Poet Laureate Committee of Ukiah, Art Center Ukiah, and donations.

One poem she wrote during her Glen Ellen days continued to resonate for her in later years.

Artichoke

Slow lunch
bract by bract
dwindling

It goes on down until there you are
a heart
a brainstem
a hair shirt for a mouth

All gets pulled away
and still this afternoon
taste of green
lingers intact so near
a dish of leavings

Prickly banquet
grown from the plot
where later, or soon,
a wild and sturdy thistle
makes a purple bloom

In October 2023, the once-dynamic Lillian died after a seven-year decline. Conducting the business that followed her death, Dave and Kathy — after 44 years together — decided it would be a good idea to get married. They married on January 13, 2024, in a short, tearful ceremony at their home. Two weeks later, with no warning, Dave died of a heart attack. It was 99 days from Lil's death to the Dave's, changing Kathy's world forever. She moved to an assisted living center in town, sold the home, and spent the following year sorting and shrinking the paperwork of three lives into what could fit into the nooks of her new 410-square-foot living space. It became an odd assignment of asking the heart and brain to say good-bye, while, oddly, re-enlivening their younger selves and life arcs as she combed through old photos and letters. It was with a sense of limbo that she took on her 70's, wondering what would come next and where her curiosity and health might take her.

Kathy and Dave once mused about what they'd want to appear on their imaginary tombstones (they didn't necessarily plan to have real ones). Dave's was **Wry**. Kathy's was **Enough, Already**, and she later worried whether the imaginary comma should be there.

It should.

August 12, 2025