



Her Story Thus Far

Jane Fonda heads to
Santa Cruz, memoir in tow

by Christa Martin

Editor's Note: Good Times spoke with Jane Fonda over the phone while she was recently staying in Washington DC. The actress/activist will be in town on April 24 at the Rio Theatre, reading from her memoir, "My Life So Far," and answering pre-submitted questions.

Love her or loathe her, Jane Fonda is a downright American icon: A two-time Academy Award winner, the daughter of entertainment royalty, a workout queen, "Hanoi Jane," a feminist, a mom, Ted Turner's former honey. In 67 years Fonda has packed in a lifetime of achievements, tragedies and some admitted mistakes. And her life is, if she lives to be in her 90s, two-thirds over. It's at this marker as she enters the last third of her existence, that she's chosen to write a whopping 599-page tome—a real encyclopedia—to her life, aptly titled, "My Life So Far." Not a page goes unnoticed. The lengthy autobiography is appropriate for telling her story. Fonda takes her reader on a fascinating journey that includes growing up with legendary actor-father Henry Fonda, her mother's suicide, an insecure adolescence, bulimia, marriages, children, a trip to Hanoi, her activism, a spiritual journey and her return to the movies. Whew. No wonder the book is so thick.

Santa Cruz fans, and even foes, will be able to hear Fonda speak about her life and read from her memoir at 7 p.m. Sunday, April 24 at the Rio Theatre. The event is hosted by the Capitola Book Café and Bookshop Santa Cruz.

Fonda has lived an extraordinary life, as we already know, but it's revealed even more so in "My Life So

Far." She's been married to a billionaire, hobnobbed with the world's elite, taken acting classes with Marilyn Monroe and fought bloody hard for political and women's rights issues that she steadfastly believes in. This last passion got her in some dirty water during the Vietnam War, for that infamous photo that has plagued her with the name "Hanoi Jane."

In an excerpt from her book, Fonda writes, "My only regret about the trip was that I was photographed sitting in a North Vietnamese antiaircraft gun site. What that image suggested had no relationship whatsoever to what I was doing or thinking or feeling at the time, as I hope this chapter will show. ... Someone (I don't remember who) leads me toward the gun, and I sit down, still laughing, still applauding. It all has nothing to do with where I am sitting. I hardly even think about where I am sitting. The cameras flash. ... It was my mistake and I have paid and continue to pay a heavy price for it."

Fonda explains in depth the controversial trip and the seating mistake that has haunted her. It's just one of the numerous glimpses into her life, revealing a multi-faceted Fonda, a woman who has chosen to let the world in on her heart, her loves, her losses, her pains and her seesaw life of up highs and down lows.

The writing is clean, with choice sentences constructed throughout. The book is a quick, easy read, a bona fide page-turner. It's divided into three sections, coinciding with the thirds of Fonda's life. The actress toiled over this autobiography for five years, resulting in a profound look at one of our revered and ridiculed women. *GT* asked if writing the book was cathartic.

