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Cheers to 'Jinx'

At the Crosby Bar, conversation still surrounds late county commissioner

By MIKE O'ROURKE
Associate Editor

CROSBY - Heads uniformly swivel toward the front door when a newcomer walks into the Crosby Bar.

Built in 1946 by John "Jinx" Ferrari's father, the establishment boasts of being "where old friends meet" and the close-knit family atmosphere persists even after the death of the longtime Crow Wing County commissioner on April 19.

The 72-year-old Ferrari's death set into a motion a 12-person scramble for his county post that will be narrowed down to two contenders in Thursday's primary for the District 5 commissioner's seat.



Sue Gordon, the late John "Jinx" Ferrari's niece and a bartender at the Crosby Bar, reflected on her uncle's legacy.
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Rick Ferrari, the owner of Range Manufacturing who also does the books for the family bar, said politics was a staple of conversation at the Main Street location throughout the 26 years his father served on the county board. That tradition has continued during the abbreviated campaign in District 5, although Ferrari said most of the talk has been about the people and "not so much issues."

He and his mother, Joyce Ferrari, seated with friends and sipping soft drinks in a booth last week, had no concrete theories as to why a dozen candidates are seeking Ferrari's job. Neither of the Ferraris

disclosed their choices for the seat nor offered any prediction as to who the primary

winners would be.

"He was hard to beat," Joyce **Ferrari** said of her husband, offering one possible reason why so many candidates surfaced for the special election.

She recalled that it took her husband a few times to win a seat on the board and said he was always willing to talk when people had a concern about county government. The notion to run for county board came from people who thought **Ferrari** would do well at the job.

"Some people approached him because they knew he had good business experience," she said.

That business experience took place in a town that has seen both boom and bust cycles associated with the fortunes of the mines and the Scorpion snowmobile manufacturing plant. Through it all, **Ferrari** owned or co-owned the Crosby Bar, both on-sale and off-sale, Dee J's Floral, Range Manufacturing and the former Snow Hut.

Joyce **Ferrari** expressed pride in how Crosby has reinvented itself over the years.

"They've always survived," she said of Crosby's residents. "We're not like the other range towns. We've rebuilt."

Although the bar displays photos of the town's mining heritage Joyce **Ferrari** noted that in recent years the town has developed a reputation for antique shopping.

"Some people don't like that," she said. "Who cares? It fills a store. It brings in people."

None of the patrons of the Crosby Bar on a late Tuesday afternoon identified who they wanted to win the District 5 county board race, but almost everyone commented on how **Ferrari** would be missed.

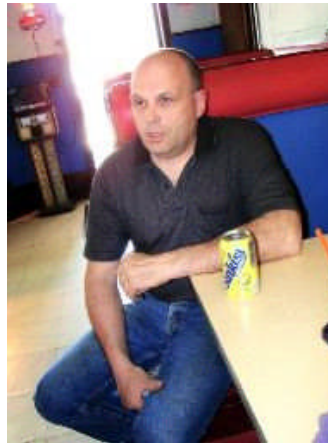
"I think they're all envious of him and would like to fill his shoes," Jerry Hammier, a retired machinist from Deerwood, said.

A similar sentiment was expressed by bartender Sue Gordon, **Ferrari's** niece.

"I think they think that they can just step in and it's easy," she said.

A Deerwood man who declined to identify himself said no one wanted to run against **Ferrari**. He said many people were dissatisfied with the county's high taxes.

Rick **Ferrari**



Taxes and over-regulation were also identified as a problem by an Ironton area man who declined to give his name.

"This is the worst county in the state as far as rules and regulations," he said.

Geoff Arseneau of Crosby said the late commissioner was honest and related well to people.

"I think the guy who was in the seat did a very good job and it's going to be hard to fill his shoes. He wasn't a talker, he was a listener. **Jinx** was a real people person. I only knew him for four years and I miss him."

MIKE O'ROURKE may be reached at 855-5860 or mike.orourke@brainerddispatch.com.

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-Geoff Arseneau, Crosby, on John **Jinx Ferrari**





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