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by Ann Elsbach

To what do you attribute the joy with which you meet life?" I asked. "How is it that you make jokes about adversities instead of groaning like the rest of us?" "Well," she answered, "as I've aged, I've lost my inhibitions. I laugh more now than I did as a young person. I am never without a comment." There are some folks you just love to be around; you always walk away with a smile on your face.

Dolly Travers of Coffee Creek is such a person. What fun she is! Last October she and her husband, Lee, celebrated their 63rd anniversary. I asked them if they were still speaking after all that time and she said, "yes, but it's getting harder now that we are both getting hard of hearing. The other day, as they were out driving, she said to Lee, "Oh, see the lovely wisteria?" He replied, "I don't see any rest area." "You can't settle any kind of disagreement if you aren't even talking about the same subject," she chuckled.

Dolly was born 83 years ago in Toledo, Ohio, but her family moved to Los Angeles when she was still an infant. It was there that she met the love of her life, Lee. They met at the Pasadena Rotary Club in 1940 on "Friday, the 13th", both were 16, she an extrovert and he a very quiet person. She "fell in love with him right away; he had the most beautiful jaw line, the flattest ears, the cutest dimples, the broadest shoulders and the narrowest waist". She says that he has been the most influential person in her life.

Lee was drafted at 19, three months after their marriage. Soon afterward she followed him to Fort Knox. She was a teenager and had no idea about the rules and mores of an army base. One day she wanted to cross a road on the base. There was a convoy coming but she "was from California and knew [she] had the right-of-way", so she stepped out and stopped the whole convoy. "What could they do, here I was a teenager with saddle shoes."

At the base she worked at a tailor shop at a power machine sewing patches and chevrons on OD uniforms that hadn't been cleaned and were still muddy. One day when she had to go the bathroom, she was startled to feel the whole barracks shaking violently. She ran out and discovered that a 60-ton tank was going by. "They scared me right off the pot! Boy did I learn to swear in that tailor shop!" She had a "girl partner" at her station, "we got to swearing so bad that we put up a piece of material above our work station, drew a line down the middle, and made a mark for every swear word each one made. Whoever had more marks at the end of the week had to buy dinner for the other. I made sure I never had to buy."

When Lee was shipped off to Europe for 2 years, Dolly worked in a "dirty, stinky and filthy" war plant making self-sealing fuel tanks for B-24 Liberators and PB4Y aircraft. She saved as much money as she could and when Lee came home from the war, she presented him with the latest car on the road, a brand new Pontiac Club Coupe. In their 20s, they built, and owned outright, their first home in Highland Park, about 2 miles from downtown L.A. Their only child, son Larrie, was born in the 8th year of their marriage. He was named after the son of a friend who made it back from the war but then was gunned down during a robbery.

Lee had a friend who talked all the time about a gold mine up in the Coffee Creek area that he had, so Lee and Dolly came up for a vacation. They loved it so much that in 1975

they bought land and built their house in 1979. "Lee was very patient," she said, since they "were still married when the house got built." Since then Dolly has engaged in her two favorite activities: painting and writing poetry. Both of these skills mirror her irrepressible sense of humor. Many of her paintings are on rocks – huge rocks like the "dinosaur" rock on highway 3 over Scott Mountain, and little pebbles painted like an eagle, pigeon or ice skate. The other day I received a Dolly-made card with a picture of a hamburger on a plate complete with pickle and tomato on the front. It looked good enough to eat and reminded me that I was hungry. Except it was entirely painted rocks, all but the white onion, which Dolly informed me, came from the sole of an old tennis shoe.

Dolly has written poetry all her life, but in her youth didn't keep it or share it with anyone. These days, she has several large three ring binders full of handwritten poems. She is working to gather it all together "while I'm still here". A small taste of Dolly's poetry: *The tomatoes they raise today/Are so hard that they/Could be shot from a canon/And sink a battleship and then/Still look like a tomato.* My personal favorite of her poems is called "The Door Without A House". It tells of a gate that is still standing after the fence has come down and been removed. She chuckles that people - and even her poodle - dutifully go through the gate when they have a whole yard they could traverse. "The deer were the only ones that habit had not fooled."

She says that she needs to be with people for inspiration for her poetry. She gets her "punch line" from things people do or say and then "writes down to it in a poem". Since she is not getting out and about as much these days, it has become a challenge. She goes over to the Coffee Creek School, however, where she uses clown dolls she's made, along with painted rocks, to tell the kids stories. She sees herself as a jack-of-all-trades, and I would add, a master of many. She's such a delight to visit that I always find myself grinning for the rest of the day.

EVENTS: Saturday, April 21, is the Annual CCFD Chili Feed and Auction held in the Coffee Creek Fire Hall. The Auction preview will be at 5 p.m., and dinner between 5:30 and 6:45 p.m. The live auction will be held at 7 p.m. \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 12 and under. Be there or be square!

According to Wyatt Paxton, Director of Trinity County Building and Development Services, we may be able to save most of the trees around Trinity Center that we thought might have to be dropped to meet CalTrans' airport requirements. The slope angle west of the airport may be able to be changed from 7-1 to 4-1, and that added to a friable tree top of 15-20 feet, would mean that many fewer trees would need to be cut. We will keep you posted.