

Memories of Jan Emmons, 1929-2021 – by George Emmons

When Jan and I were approaching ninety years of age and both daughters were living a long day's drive away, it seemed to be time to sell our home at 585 Main Rd and move closer to both of them. We had put our heart and soul into renovating the vacant cottage there, by moving it to one side, then digging a full basement, reinforcing all the structural beams, and then moving it back onto the original foundation. Jan had done a phenomenal job of decorating the new basement walls with cartoon characters of our four grandsons misbehaving. The whole house had become a truly picturesque landmark that we treasured. Bill Brockman had been the agent for selling it to us and said we should list it with his new man Chapin Fish, who he said was the smartest he had ever met. And sure enough, he found a buyer after just two weeks. Then we were quickly gone, leaving behind perhaps the best twenty years of our lives together.

Jan died a short time ago and my memory of happiness together is now mixed in with our move to Fairhaven, just around the corner from our daughter Elizabeth. The illustration on this page is a drawing for my column for Wanderer Magazine showing Jan sitting in our living room at Christmas time, looking out of our picture windows toward the coastline wildlife. The drawing shows her needlepoint pillows and a decorated tree, waiting for a gathering of family together. Like in Monterey, she had planted and landscaped all around the property, just as she had planted gladiolas around the Monterey Church, town hall, post office, store, and library. With her talent, she had been chair of the Bidwell House Museum gardening committee and on annual clean up days in the flower beds, she served lunch and Bloody Marys to volunteers.

Jan was also a very talented artist and illustrator, designing and painting the cover of invitations to the first Bidwell fundraising parties, one of which was at Trustee President Bob Duffy's house at Rock Ridge, with cartoon drawings of Lowland Farm vehicles and antique automobiles (see below). She was well known as a very creative member of the Quilting Club run by her best friend Barbara Tryon at Lowland Farm. And as a new resident at the corner of Main Rd. and Bidwell Ave., she was a popular person to visit around the neighborhood by Marie Maxwell, Betsy Camp, and Paula Moats with her mother who was also a Bidwell. Paula also moved near us in Fairhaven and we were very happy the friendship closely continued. Other Monterey residents that lived further down Main Rd like Bonner McAllester, Joe Baker, and Ray Coddington always thought of Jan when they drove by into town, tending her gardens.

She had been a long-suffering and supporting wife for all of the time and energy I spent at the Hatchery and on the buildings and grounds committee at the Bidwell House Museum, not to mention a monthly column and drawing for the Monterey News. Editor Steve Moore visited us in Fairhaven and Jan soon became his best friendly critic after receiving every monthly issue. Both he and his wife Wendy suggest that I remember Jan planting flowers everywhere and when Spring comes they will come to life and bloom in honor of her green thumb that brings her memories in Monterey and Fairhaven to live again like the reincarnation spirit of her love for gardening.





HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN