

Diablo Honors.....

Leslie Forman

By Jan Novak

A horse named Porky brought Leslie Forman and her late husband Peter to Diablo.

Leslie was born in Berea, Ohio and raised in nearby Rocky River. After graduating from Miami University, and much to her parents' dismay, she joined United Airlines as a "stewardess". Back then, that was a very glamorous and exciting job. Traveling the world, with luxurious layovers in exotic places, it was a dream job. She was based in Chicago for three years, sharing an apartment with three other flight attendants. Hugh Hefner lived in the Hefner Mansion three doors down the street. One of her roommates moved to San Francisco and convinced Leslie to join her in an apartment on Nob Hill. Another roommate set Leslie up on a blind date with Peter Forman, who was in his final quarter of dental school at UCSF. Peter was an Oakland native but spent his summers in Grass Valley where he fell in love with nature. Peter was "charming" and "loads of fun", and after a short engagement, they married in 1966.



Leslie, Mouse and Porky

At the time, female flight attendants could not be married, so Leslie had to leave that job. She worked with Peter at his new dental practice until their son Andrew was born in 1970. They lived in Cameo Acres in Danville back when the town had one stop sign and one restaurant. While there, Leslie fulfilled a lifelong dream when she purchased Porky. The horse appeared to be fat, hence the name. Alas, the mare was pregnant, and Mouse was soon born. Porky was boarded at Dick and Ann Haward's South Gate Farm on Mt. Diablo Scenic Boulevard. Peter and Leslie became great friends with the Haywards and they agreed to sell them the four

acres of pasture. They designed and had built a rustic mountain home, saving room for Porky. Yes, they moved in with their horse! They sold one acre of their property to Leslie's parents who were happy to escape the harsh winters of Ohio. They built a house where they lived until their passing, and where her sister, Laurie, now resides.

Diablo in the early 70's was really an equestrian community. Many homes had horses. Leslie loved to ride with "old-timers" Jack Imrie, Pete McCoy and Bill Hale, who regaled her with stories of gatherings of horses and riders for events and picnics in the area below the lake. She also rode on Blackhawk Ranch (now Blackhawk), the open space across the street (now Diablo Ranch) and up on El Nido before it was developed.

Andy had an idyllic childhood in Diablo as he roamed the open spaces and hung out with Porky and later with Amburlee, Leslie's next horse. Andy was a typical boy, busy with scouting and soccer. After attending Los Cerros, Green Valley, Monte Vista and Fresno State, he followed in his mother's footsteps and is now a pilot for Delta, living in Folsom. His wife, Becky, is a teacher. They are parents to Leslie's grandchildren, 12-year-old twins Anna and Josh. Leslie treasures her time with her Forman family.



Leslie and her Cub Scout, Andy



Peter, Leslie, Anna, Becky, Josh & Andy: Christmas 2021

Leslie stayed very busy, volunteering with the Cub Scouts and in Andy's classroom for six years. She worked in an art gallery and for the San Francisco Convention Bureau. She served on Diablo's Architectural Review Board during the development of Diablo Ranch. She volunteered with ARF and with Xenophon, a therapeutic riding academy for children with disabilities. She also spent years serving meals to the homeless with an inspirational crew at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church.

In 1968, federal courts ruled that requiring female flight attendants to retire upon marriage was gender discrimination, clearing the way for Leslie to eventually return to flying in 1984. Her husband and son strongly

supported that decision. She was required to attend a court hearing to prove that she had wanted to continue to work after marriage, and her work at Peter's dental practice was crucial evidence. She flew for another 17 years, until 9/11. She retired from flying shortly after. In the latter part of her flying career, she began volunteering with Hospice of East Bay, and she recently completed 15 years of service to that organization.



Nice catch, Peter!

Peter also stayed busy. In addition to a thriving dental practice, he was an avid hunter and fisherman. He was also an accomplished gardener, known particularly for his tomatoes.

Leslie loves her neighbors on upper Mt. Diablo Scenic, which they affectionately call "the outback". It's a cohesive group and they make it a point to have a block party every year. She also loves her home, which she calls "The Refuge". It's on a beautiful site with amazing views. It remains rustic, as she designed it to be. It holds a lifetime of memories. That makes it worth putting up with the wild pigs that tear up her lawn. As she says, Diablo has changed, with more noise, more development. But it has retained the natural beauty, the charm, and the friendliness that she found when she moved here 50 years ago. She has no plans to leave this little slice of heaven.

Thank you, Porky, for bringing Leslie to Diablo. And thank you, Leslie, for sharing your stories and for being our neighbor for 50 years!

