

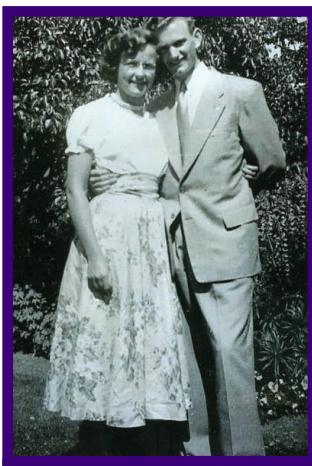
Diablo Honors.....

Egon Pedersen

By Alyssa Phillips

Egon is so grateful for his life, family and history here in Diablo. He's humble and kind, interesting and funny.

Egon was born July 18, 1928 in a little town called Henne in Denmark on his grandparents' farm. Shortly after, his parents moved to an apartment in Esbjerg. In 1940, when Egon was only 11 years old, his father—a marine engineer sailing on a ship between Denmark and England—was killed when the Germans bombed the ship. Three months later, the Germans occupied Denmark. It was a hard time to grow up, with no water or electricity, curfews, and staying home by candlelight for five years. Later, Egon completed a machine shop apprenticeship, went to school to become a marine engineer, and graduated from Odense Machine Technical University in 1953 as a mechanical engineer.



Inger and Egon

In 1952 Egon met his future wife, Inger. She was a kindergarten teacher and had more family in the US than in Denmark. "I went to a small party and met this cute girl. She had a date, don't know what happened to him, but we ended up talking about her life and how much we both loved to travel. I asked her to the movies the next day." Egon and Inger married in 1954. In 1956 they moved to California. He began work at Marchant Developing Calculators in Emeryville - a complicated and interesting job. When the project finished after five years, he moved to Friden Calculators in San Leandro. The owner lived in Diablo. Singer bought out Friden and it became SBM (Singer Business Machines), where he worked for almost 15 years. That boss also lived in Diablo. Egon was a true innovator. He was awarded 6 US patents for inventions in airplane manufacturing with Boeing and Airbus France high precision parts.

In 1958 his first daughter, Vibeke, was born and they bought their first home in Pinole. Three years later, daughter Sandra was born. His father-in-law asked Egon to take over his machine shop in Denmark, so in 1963 they returned and son Christian was born in Denmark. They tried

to keep their promise to live in Denmark, but were drawn back to America, living in a walnut orchard in Pleasanton. Daughter Vibeke wanted a horse and they fell in love with a lot on Bella Vista in Diablo. They purchased the lot at auction on the steps of the courthouse in Martinez for \$13,000.

After designing his dream home, on April 16, 1972 they moved in. "I was so delighted to move into a beautiful area and I loved the history. At that time there were no fences separating the lots and my kids would ride their horses up Mount Diablo. I designed the house so all the rooms have a window and all the important rooms have a view – they told me it was impossible, but I knew it could be done. We wanted a peaked ceiling, a kitchen and dinette in one room, and seeing nature." When they moved in, Egon remembers all his neighbors having big BBQs with live bands.

His family had two horses that Sandra and Inger rode.



**Inger, Sandra, Vibeke,
Christian and Egon**



**Egon at the award ceremony for
Mount Diablo Park as a state
historical landmark**

While busy with his career and raising his family, Egon also was integral to the founding of Save Mount Diablo, serving as a Vice President at its inception and then becoming President. He is largely responsible for the park becoming state historical landmark #905 and for focusing on expanding the park from its original 6,000 acres to more than 120,000 acres today. His oral history of that work was recently captured in the book "The beginning of Save Mount Diablo" by the Bancroft Library and UC Berkeley and is available for loan at the library. He loves open space, camping, nature, hiking. He and Inger traveled the world, camping in tents until he retired and then buying an RV that he still owns.

After 60 years together, and 58 years of marriage, Inger passed away. But they created a legacy together: his children, 12 grandkids and 13 great grandkids (with twins on the way). Vibeke married David and they are parents to Jennifer, Daniel, Natalie, Kelly and Tara. They live in Clayton. Sandra married Rick and they raised Bradley and Kelsey. Rick recently passed away and Sandra lives in Concord. Christian married Kim. They have four daughters—Brittany, Alyssa, Tiana, Kara and son Tyler, and live in Rancho Murietta. The entire family gets together for Egon’s birthday and holidays plus an annual reunion in Mendocino.



Egon met his present partner, Cheri, on September 25, 2012. He liked to go to parties, meet people, have fun and “ask nice ladies to dance”. So after hearing from friends about an event at Pleasant Hill senior center, Egon said “God told me I have to go there. I walked across the dance floor, wiggling to music, and a nice lady popped up asking if I liked to dance. I said, ‘yes’ because I love to dance and no one had ever asked me to dance before.” Their next date was a dinner dance at Round Hill Country Club. Cheri is an “old-fashioned” girl that wanted to take it slow, but their love grew until they finally decided to live together...and they have been dancing ever since.

Egon enjoys so much about our community. From helping to preserve and make Mount Diablo a landmark, to being the biggest contributor of photos and historical information for Diablo and our Country Club books, to serving on the DPOA board, to his own memories of making a life here and building memories with his family – Egon has contributed so much to build our community and feels so blessed by how much it’s given him. “I was so lucky to find a lot and build our dream house and be in love with the beauty and history here – and the fascinating stories.” Ever active, he is now writing a book about his life and “praying to God to let me finish it”.

Thank you, Egon, for being such a great neighbor and community leader and for sharing your own fascinating stories with us!



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