

Dee & Denny Desmond

Marianne and I spent a warm, beautiful spring afternoon with Dee and Denny at their lovely home in Clayton. Dee had even made a lemon meringue pie for our visit – my favorite.

Denny is another club member who is a native Californian. He was born in San Francisco and is a graduate of St. Ignatius High School and Heald Engineering College.

Dee was born in Cleveland, Ohio, and graduated from Notre Dame High School and St. John's College where she became a registered nurse. While in high school she played tennis, but her real love was ice skating, which she continued to do until about 10 years ago. Some of you "old timers" might remember the ice rink in Sun Valley Mall, down near Penney's -- well you might have seen her skating there.

After college Denny worked as a surveyor for the U.S Forestry Service. (In fact he said that he actually would have liked to try logging.) He did that until he was drafted in 1950, for the Korean War. Because of his degree in engineering, unlike most of the servicemen on the west coast who were sent directly to Korea, he was stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

In 1951 he was sent to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for some special training. His mother asked him to stop to visit some of her relatives in Cleveland and since he had a few days he decided to do that. As fate/luck would have it, Dee was visiting that family at the same time. They met and, according to Denny, it was love at first sight – sort of. They started exchanging letters and when he visited her again, he got his first kiss on New Year's Eve.

After his discharge Denny returned to San Francisco and they both dated other people. After awhile Dee wrote him to say she was coming to Los Angeles and would come up to see him San Francisco. She started working at St. Mary's Hospital. They dated for 6-8 months and finally married on May 7, 1955. They will be celebrating their 53rd anniversary next month.

They are proud parents of one boy and two girls, all living in the Bay Area. They have 2 grandsons and 1 granddaughter and 1 great-grandson.

After his discharge Denny worked a short time for Cal Trans but finally became a surveyor for Contra Costa County. He was involved in the planning and design of storm drains throughout the county. He retired after 35 years of service.

Dee continued to work as a nurse until the children came and then for a doctor after the children were much older.

Denny has been interested in Model A's since high school, but his first car was a 1934 Buick. Just before going into the army he purchased a 1929 fordor but sold it for \$35 before going to Fort Bragg. He bought a 1930 coupe in 1959 for \$50. One day he was passing a car lot when he saw the same model selling for \$250. So being a good business man – he put his up for sale for \$300, finally getting \$275. He then went Chevy (shame on him). In fact he was the Treasurer for the Chevy Club.

In 1991 he mended his ways and bought his 1928 pickup which we all know and love. (According to Marianne, 1928 pickups are the best). They joined the Diablo A's the next year.

Another hobby that Denny enjoys is model trains. It seems that is quite common with the men in our club. He also does their gardening as well as the gardening at their church.

The Desmond's both enjoy hiking. In fact they try to get to Yosemite once a year to hike. One of the more exciting adventures was when Dee broke her ankle. They had to call for help and a ranger showed up with crutches and took them to the ranger camp for the night where the rangers even cooked dinner for them. The next day Dee road out on horseback with the ranger while Denny had to walk out on his own.

On another hiking trip to Weaverville Denny stumbled over a log which was home to a large bee's nest. He was stung over 100 times. His son hiked to town and arranged for a helicopter which took him to another area where he was transferred to an ambulance to get him to the hospital.

But one time when Denny wanted to go hiking, Dee decided she wanted to do something different so she went on a Caribbean cruise and loved it. They both said they would like to do more traveling.

We know we say this each time – but we had such a fun afternoon with this couple. There are more stories that they told us that we can't fit into the column. Thanks Dee and Denny for a great afternoon and your hospitality.

