



CONCOURS WEEK

AUGUST 18 - 24, 2017

The exotic cars are here, and so are the crowds. And to make sure you don't miss out on the excitement, be sure to check out our colorful special section this week!



The Carmel Pine Cone

Volume 103 No. 33

On the Internet: www.carmelpinecone.com

August 18-24, 2017

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SHE FINALLY seems to have settled down. Nancy Dodds has run her gallery on Seventh Avenue since 1996. But before that, there was a lot of hop-scotching. She was an Army brat whose dad was a West Point graduate.

Great Lives

By ELAINE HESSER

And he was the son of a West Point grad who served on the faculty there, as part of a 39-year career that included earning the Silver Star for valor in World War I. He later retired to Pebble Beach and sold real estate.

For Dodds, childhood was a time when she changed schools repeatedly (eventually attending 13 of them). The youngest of three girls, she lived at various times in Virginia, North Carolina, France and California. While her dad was stationed at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Belgium, she was in elementary school.

Blue or bleu?

For third grade, she studied in a two-room school in the country with a husband and wife who taught only in French, so she became pretty fluent. Which was good, because when she got to the International School at SHAPE, many of the classes — including science and algebra — were only taught in French, while others were taught in English.

“I couldn’t spell worth a bean in either language,” she said. “You spell blue and the bleu. Very confusing.” Although book learning didn’t come easily, Dodds never gave up.

Eventually, her family came to Pacific Grove. Her grandmother on her father’s side lived in Pebble Beach. Dodds went to P.G. High, where she said an English teacher encouraged her. “I got an A on a book report, and I remember I was so proud,” she said.

She completed an associate’s degree in general studies at MPC. A free spirit, she lived for a time in Vancouver, San Francisco and Los Angeles. She worked at Odyssey Records and rocked out to Earth, Wind and Fire, Todd Rundgren, and The Kinks.

There was also a year in Paris, working with a fashion designer. And of course, there was her stint at The Pine Cone in the 1980s.



Dodds worked locally in hospitality, including at the Highlands Inn as a cocktail waitress. “I was hopeless at counting back change,” she laughed. She also dished up ice cream at a drugstore in Pebble Beach, near the Lodge, where, despite being change-impaired, she had one of the great moments of her life. “I made a milkshake for Ricky Nelson,” she said. “It was the highlight of my career there.”

Then she went to work at the gallery on Seventh — it was Le Celle back then — and she later bought it from the owners by making payments over time. Her gift of charm and her willingness to learn anything from anyone who cared to teach her served her well. She knew retail and customer service, and this was just one more step on that path.

Dodds clearly stocks what she likes. Ceramic beach balls by Cindy Wilson and landscapes by Carole Rafferty. There are sculptures and paintings of beaches, flowers and plenty of cows, sheep and other critters. An animal lover, Dodds will share photos of her pets with you and look through the pet pics on your phone, too.

‘Art is bossy’

And Dodds isn’t worried about the internet with all its cheap, decorative stuff. She knows that her personal service is what matters to her customers. She has two bulky scrap- books filled with clippings of thank-you notes from cus- tomers and stories in local publications.

She said, “Art is bossy. It’s going to show differently on the internet. You need a physical shop to see if you like it.” For those who live nearby, she offers a try-before-you-buy option. Take home that bossy painting and see what it looks like on the wall. Don’t like it? Bring it back. “People want to look and see and touch things,” she said.

The only photographs she carries are by her niece, Michelle Robertson. It’s not that she has anything against photographers, it’s just that, she said, the profit margins on most photos are thin, compared with paintings and sculpture.

Nowadays she lives near the Forest Theatre, where she can just walk to work if she wants. “The town’s changed a lot,” she observed. But she still loves it here.