

Warm Christmas Greetings from Rancho Tak-it-eze

As the saying goes: A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since 2022. I've gained a new daughter-in-law, but lost a few dear friends. I've doubled the size of my modular by adding porches and decks. Family and friends have helped with the trenching and laying of (what seemed like miles) the pipe and wire for irrigation. We've planted fruit trees and more sycamores, roses, and iris. Valerie and Sharon put in a fish pond. Cousin Ray framed the new bath in the garage. The area around the house and garage is now fenced and gated. No, I cannot just sit down and watch the grass grow. The Tak-it-eze part of the ranch is just a thought, as it was with my dad's Rancho Tak-it-eze on the Colorado River. I do hike some of the mountain trails behind the house, and I do a lot of cooking, weeding and planting. I've enjoyed visits from lots of friends and family and played guide to those who wanted to see more of our "Islands in the Sky".

The big event of the year came when Dan announced that he and Alicia were getting married at my house. Within a week the bride had found a dress, hired the caterer, hired the band and ordered the flowers. The details and the fun part were up to Sharon and me. We hired a young man, age 11, to shuttle guests from parking area at Sharon's house to the wedding venue in my golf cart. We hired a 9-year-old student of Sharon's to drive the flower girls with cart and pony to the ceremony. We remembered the Greta Green story of the Scottish weddings and brought out my dad's anvil, over which the bride's Auntie from British Columbia performed the unique marriage ceremony. Dan's college roommate, Art, regaled us with the wedding toast and the guests were free to eat, drink and wander the garden paths or dance to the music of the night.

Sharon has taken her love of horses to a new level with her non-profit corporation, Pony Tales. Sharon's calm, patient way of teaching builds body strength while building self confidence in troubled young children.

Valerie and her husband Mike live in Texas where they enjoy their children and grandchildren. They build and race vintage cars and entertain in their enormous shop which is decorated with Mike's collection of vintage signs. Valerie has turned her interest in macramé to making skirts, plant hangers, purses and wall hangings which are sold at street fairs.

Dan and his wife, Alicia are both living with all aspects of WATER. Alicia is a lobbyist for Orange County Water District while Dan still owns the Ventura Water Store. They both love sailing and scuba diving and plan their leisure time around water sports. They took an early honeymoon diving in the Red Sea.

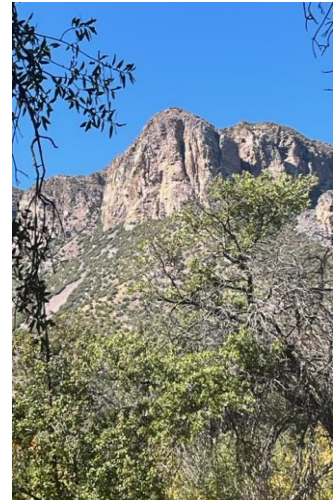
My brother, Richard, has been a fabulous contributor to Rancho Tak-it-eze with a gift of the big gate emblem. He has sculpted and tamed the Manzanita and designed the right bends and artistic twists to the garden paths. His gift of a "Covina" camellia is a treasured memory from our childhood. The Covina Historical Society published my article about this camellia and its origins.

Now that I have recapped, the year 2023, I hope to hear from the outside world. Even though I am living the earthy life I am still interested in what each of you are doing. Please write.

I send love and well wishes to you for 2024



Rancho Tak-it-eze



Trails to high places



Camillia Planting



Side entrance



The fish pond



Dan and Alicia saying their vows