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"Blind date?" "Love at first sight?" "A gorgeous day at the beach?" Somehow, all the stars aligned to bring John into my life as a forever friend. Together, we have raised two blond, brown-eyed daughters, Jennifer and Sally Ann, and welcomed their chosen spouses into our home.

As members of the Chemeketans, our family has many wonderful memories of hiking and tent camping in beautiful places and spending long summer days knee deep in meadows of wildflowers. Now our camping trips include our little teardrop trailer with its outdoor kitchen and comfortable sleeping quarter!

Retiring to our summer cabin on the banks of the Little North Fork has been a blessing in many ways. The little "Keith Bargain Barn" cabin that we built in the 1970's was transformed into our dream house over 10 years! John and his trusty 1973 Case backhoe worked from "can see to can't see" on the house while I created stone paths and patios, ponds and fountains and many places to sit and enjoy it all! I toss food to Butterfly Koi, watch hummingbirds through the honeysuckle that covers our gazebo, snorkel when the river warms up and watch the stars year-round from the spa. We built a curved glass greenhouse for starting



seeds and find that is a quiet, warm spot to sit during the winter rains.

Even though time seems to fly, it never travels faster than one day at a time. And each day is a new opportunity to live life to the fullest. I have had the privilege of being a teacher of the very young and being on the ground floor to bringing public kindergarten to the Salem-Keizer School District. Most educators will tell you that they are lifelong learners! And that is so with me! Being a Master Gardener for the past 13 years has immersed me into the world of plants in a way I never could have



imagined. Our new "endless summer" home in Arizona has given me a whole new palette of plant colors, shapes and scents to include in our desert landscape.

I never tire of seeing a "new" bird at the feeder, "catching" a falling star, or capturing a perfect bloom on camera. Outings with the Native Plant Society have plunked us down in some amazingly lovely spots in the Strawberry Mountains and Siskiyou! Our sleep aboard sailboat has taken us from sandy coves and warm water high in the Cascades to rocky beaches in the Puget Sound. We have chartered sailboats in Greece and the BVI's, taking turns at the helm and sailing from one white beach to another – sandwiching in a time to snorkel and swim before dinner on board followed by a spectacular sunset.

Life has been GOOD! I have been lucky to know beauty and comfort, laughter and joy. There are still "new" things I want to see (fireflies in Costa Rica) and do (paint a picture worthy of hanging) and many "familiar" things to continue to delight me such as: watching our little dog, Mele, flounce up a green hillside, petticoats flying and rediscovering the world of nature through the eyes of our two grandchildren.