

# PETALUMA PETE

## Only a Week More

by Richard Somers



Pete and Nurse Patt have had a wonderful time on Kauai. There is only one week left as Pete writes this column – too soon, but then Petaluma is a remarkable place to which to return.

In just a week John Rooney will arrive with Bob the Swede's Gulfstream G550 to pick up Pete and Nurse Patt and take them home.

David Bennett wasn't able to get his Hovercraft running, so Pete wasn't able to visit with the founder of The Petaluma Post this year. David's newspaper, The Paradise Post, is doing well according to him, and David still lives on the Big Island on an estate that is covered with exotic fruit trees.

Pete and Nurse Patt had a great time with P.J. and Lisa on their 10-day visit. And it was fun seeing Larry Rivera and his family again. Larry is the "Heart of Kauai" as the governor dubbed him – he's an entertainer extraordinaire, as is most of his family. Pete and Nurse Patt have known them since 1974, and have seen the children grow up from tykes to adults, all making their dad and mother very proud.

The Brownes were on Kauai again this year, so Pete and Nurse Patt played several rounds of golf with them and sure enjoyed seeing this exceptional couple from British Columbia.

The White-Rumped Shama Thrush has sung every day – before dawn and just after sunset. Pete and Nurse Patt

are sure he will arrive on the day they depart to not only sing a few of his songs, but to actually show himself for the first time. He always does.

Doug and Dee, a ukulele-playing couple who live on Kauai and also play golf, played for us many old and new Hawaiian tunes that remind one of all the beauty that abounds on this remote isle. There were also a few rounds of golf to be played where, once again, Doug showed off his golfing skills.

Pete and Nurse Patt spent Valentine's Day, their anniversary, at the same restaurant they have eaten at since their 10th anniversary. In 1974, this restaurant was in a sugar cane field found only by counting the telephone poles on the gravel road that led to this fantastic place. Now, of course, the area is filled with condos, townhouses, hotels, golf courses, and who knows what else?

Pete and Nurse Patt have been coming to Kauai for 36 years, so they have seen the changes take place gradually. This is much easier than if all the growth happened in a short period of time.

Remember when there wasn't an international airport in Cabo San Lucas? Well, on Kauai in 1974 there was just a grass hut at the Lihue Airport and one walked from the plane to this so called terminal after changing planes in Honolulu and getting from the big airline to the inter-island flight via Wiki-Wiki transit.

Soon, Pete and Nurse Patt will be home. A hui hou for now!

# PIECES OF MY PATH

## Slope and Slide

by Zoe Tummillo



Pheasant Hill Farm was a 150 year old New England farm house when my father bought it in 1942. It was a work in progress for all the years I lived there while growing up.

If it was not a repair, it was a reconstruction – and it had to be done by someone who could restore or re-create the original condition, or my mother would not permit it!

However, some anomalies just never got corrected – maybe they just weren't serious enough to move up on the list. Often, there simply was no craftsperson available to accurately restore some detail – so Mother would not let anyone touch it!

Well, the kitchen floor always sloped, the attic door did not quite fit in its frame, the West bulkhead doors didn't match, and the stairs to the second floor tipped East. Mother believed that only massive reconstruction by builders skilled in wooden pegs and square nails could correct it. It was sound, so, NO!

There were many peculiarities, but the kitchen was unique. In our sloping kitchen, if you spilled — I a r g e — you had an immediate wipe-up race of monstrous proportions. You better be fast, because whatever you'd spilled would rapidly travel NW toward the stove and the adjacent cupboards to mysterious regions under and beyond. If you spilled pasta or spaghetti sauce, you had a fighting chance — but mine-strone? milk? That was panic button stuff.

Few things could steam mother faster than the prospect of anything making it to-and-under her stove! If she was "on the scene", she would grab a hand full of dish towels (or laundry, or newspapers!), bunch them up and sling them across the room at mach speed like a Red Sox pitcher

— just ahead of the flow, with incredible precision!

If she hit the mark and stopped the horrible prospect, she'd turn to the offender, who'd receive a barrage of information about the consequences of spaghetti sauce oozing under the stove!

Remember, in "those days" appliances weighed a ton, were attached by heavy networks of large and small pipes, and in our case still had a recessed section that once burned wood. Don't even dream of simply swinging it aside to clean up an unfortunate spill!

One evening my sister, Glo, made the mistake of wisecracking about my boyfriend when we were doing the dishes. She was drying plates at one end of the kitchen while I was scouring a big iron skillet in the hot soapy water at the other.

It was just one wisecrack too many! Out of the water came the skillet, and with a backhand swing I threw it! It was heavy, hit the floor at high speed, flew downhill toward sis who'd heard the crash, and skillfully leaped in the air allowing the skillet to bang into the baseboard, with enough force to head it back uphill toward me! I dodged it as it hit again! And, we both watched it slide slowly back downhill on the soapy floor, heading for the end of the slope --

Old houses have so many secrets! Because the old place tilted, the attic door didn't fit. When Mother would "lock" it with one of those long slender

old keys, it was a snap to just slip a butter knife in the crack and push the bolt back because it was against the frame — not in it!

The attic was a forbidden and mysterious place – it had no flooring, just planks across the beams. The butter knife secret presented opportunities; the attic became a favorite hideout. The Dormer windows afforded cozy look-outs with great views down across Pheasant Hill; I could read, write and draw for hours up there.

The stairs to our second floor leaned to the East! Going up you worked harder because you were tilted; going down, you felt like you were sprinting! (A friend proved it with a level!)

Over the years, Mother and Dad made our home and gardens very beautiful. On a visit East in the 1990s, I discovered it bore a plaque as a restored historical landmark. Mom would have liked that.

I've occasionally had a melt-down in my own kitchen, once dropping a big pot of tomato gravy on the floor! I was amazed for a few seconds — frozen in time -- expecting it to start moving -- but it just sat there in a big mess!

It didn't travel, and Mom did not materialize armed with a wad of something to hurl ahead of the flow! My floor was level.

(It was much more fun at Pheasant Hill Farm!)

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