

July, 2009

ROBERT AND KAREN READ

Robert Corwin Read was born on Halloween in 1941 at Enloe Hospital in Chico - the second generation of native Chicoans in the Read line. Robert graduated from Chico High in 1959 and joined the US Navy a year later where he served until 1964. Upon discharge, Robert was first employed by Teichert Construction and then began his 29-year career with Pacific Gas and Electric in 1964, retiring as a Customer Service Representative. Every new home or business had to go through Robert to have the gas meter set after proper inspection, so our family always knew who was building what and where – we now just look at new construction and have to wait like everyone else to see what's coming.

Karen Susan Wallen was born on January 24, 1945, while her father was serving on a ship in the South Pacific. Karen's father first met her when she was three months old, having returned from the war uninjured and with the "fly up" to rank of officer, and the family began a long-term military career with her father retiring as a Lt. Cmdr. from the Navy at BUPERS in Virginia, and returning to college in order to become a school teacher. That is how the family ended up in Chico in 1957 – her father graduated from Chico State the same year Karen graduated from Chico High, 1962. He then taught at Chico Jr. High until retirement.

Robert and Karen were introduced by mutual friends who were dating. Karen's friend, Judy, was dating Robert's Navy buddy, Willy, and those two decided we should meet. Robert first came to Karen's home for his blind date when she was 17 years old, in the summer of '62, while on leave from his ship, but Karen was not informed of this meeting and was out with "another sailor". In the ensuing months, they corresponded while Robert's ship made a trip to Japan, and then in January of '63, Karen and Judy went to meet the boys as the ship returned under the Golden Gate and was opened to the public for viewing. Thus began a long courtship and we were married on January 29, 1966 in the Bidwell Presbyterian Church where the Reads and Karen had been members for several years – Karen actually knew Robert's parents, and brothers, through the church before ever meeting him.

Upon graduation from Chico State, Karen began working as a social worker in Sutter County, commuting daily for 100 miles round trip and when she left the agency, was supervising six people and pregnant. Their son, Erik Anthony Read, was born on March 9, 1971. After staying home for 15 months, Karen returned to work as a secretary in a one-girl office for Donald Smith of Shasta-Cascade Insurance Adjusters. In 1973, there was a major exodus of personnel from county welfare departments into the federal positions available at Social Security since the federal government was taking over three programs from the states and renaming them SSI (Supplemental Security Insurance)

Benefits. Karen began her 24-year career with Social Security in the Chico office, but retired as a Claims Representative from the Oroville office in 1997.

Since retirement, the Reads have kept busy with their volunteer work. Karen joined the Durham Junior Women's Club in 1978 and with on and off periods of membership, due to age requirements, maintains her membership with what is now called the Durham Women's Evening Club. This is the first year since 1979 that she has not been active on the Durham Parade and Picnic Committee. Karen is treasurer for the Durham Woman's Club and the Durham Friends of the Library. Karen was Durham's 2008 Woman of the Year and could not have achieved that honor without the help of Robert who has always supported her endeavors, like stringing the rope every year for the annual Easter Egg Hunt. Robert is a member of S.T.A.R.S., the Durham American Legion and has been active on the Memorial Hall Renovation Committee.

The Reads moved to Durham in 1972 when Erik was just 18 months old. Erik graduated from Durham High in 1989 and is currently employed by Zenith Administrators in Seattle, WA. He was his class president and is looking forward to coming home later this month for his 20 year class reunion. Erik married Rebecca Hale in 1995 and they have two children, Maia age 8 and Ryan age 6. Robert and Karen are now very anxious to sell their home in this deplorable economy and get moved to Washington State to be with those grandchildren.

Robert and Karen joined the Good Sams at the suggestion of Doris Lucas. Doris and Jack were going to sponsor us, but by the time we had the ability to join (due to taking care of ill parents), they had had an accident with their trailer and given up being active campers, so Caralee and Ivan Sohnrey were kind enough to step forward and sponsor us. We think we joined in 2004. However, in about 2002, we joined the Travel Nuts at a campout at Woodson Bridge, where we met Clara and Lowell Stringfellow, who found out we could play pinochle and we have played monthly with them ever since. We have come to regard all the Travel Nuts as close friends and will miss each and every couple when we finally get relocated. So, we would like to extend an invitation to travel to Washington and visit with us. Maybe we'll even have RV space available.



12/9/07
Good
Sam
Christmas
party