

OBSERVATIONS

from the Sidelines
By Kathryn Hall Bogle



Pete Monroe and his wife Alda Ruth discuss merits of new variety of rhododendron.

Pete Monroe climbs down from the saddle seat of his big power lawn mower. He's been cutting the grass on the terraces of his garden behind his sprawling tile-roofed house in the southwest hills of Portland.

Its early springtime, the day is cool and bright. Trees are putting out tender green leaves, azaleas and rhododendrons are bursting into bloom in the time-machine of the sun.

Pete welcomes a visitor with just a brief look back at the mower and his unfinished work. A slow smile spreads and he admits that this year's springtime has intertwined a double happiness for him.

One happiness is that Pete Monroe has been made a board member and a director of the prestigious Men's Garden Club of Portland. The term is for the years of 1981 and 1982. The board meets monthly at the official home of the Portland Garden Club on S.W. Vista Avenue.

How did it happen? Of course he was chosen - he's a nice man.

Home and garden mean a lot to Pete. He is now in the process of "revitalizing" his entire garden. He planted the garden himself - every tree, bush and posy, some ten years ago when he and his school-teacher wife, Alda Ruth, built their home on their 1 1/2 acres of hillside property.

This springtime time-slot ticks off an "anniversary" of a sort, according to Pete.

"Exactly twenty years ago, physicians gave me five years to live," he said. Diagnosis was cancer of the larynx. Surgery removed the voice-box and Pete was left silent and speechless, a special kind of

personal hell for this big powerful man.

A period of withdrawal from outside social contact followed as a not-unexpected sequence until Pete could get his bearings.

Monroe had been a Master Sergeant in the U.S. Army - "the 2nd Infantry Division 503 Field Artillery Battalion in WWII," he tells you precisely. "I was in North Africa in Tunisia and Algiers; I was in Italy, France and Germany when there was a lot going on. Seventeen days after the Korean conflict opened, I landed in Pusan, Korea.

"In Korea I was wounded. That was in 1951. They sent me home to recover. But it was back again to Korea in 1954 - this time in a non-combatant status. They called me a "movement control specialist." That means I operated the army's railroad for the section I was in. I made up the trains and routed them with available cars." Monroe paused and adjusted the slant of a pane of glass in the sheds jalousie windows, and then pinched back a tiny geranium plant.

"A year or so more in Korea," he continued, "and I was again transferred to Germany.

"Then came the battle against the "big C." I lost my voice and could only whisper. And they said five years was all I had to look forward to. I was all mine - my own personal battle. I am still here! This spring marks my fourth five-year celebration!"

Monroe learned esophageal speech, the very difficult and slow process of speaking with swallowed air.

His family and building his house were his life line and his therapy.

From the ground level flooring to the tiling of the roof, from the brick and Arizona stone facings of the walls to the inside cabinetry, every rod every beam, every nail of the house were selected by Pete. He studied, he learned, and he practiced speaking out of necessity.

Of course landscaping went with the house.

Pete first entered the master gardening program of Oregon State University to learn. Now, Monroe is a participant. He assists in the program's clinics by helping laymen gardeners to select plans for planting and care of flowers and vegetables.

Monroe joined the "Home Orchard Society" which deals with fruits, nuts and berries. This group holds clinics to encourage householders to grow their own crops. Monroe is there to demonstrate grafting and to discuss the habits and needs of the various trees and bushes. A clinic in which Pete recently participated drew 400 persons in West Lynn.

Pete now has no need to be shy when addressing an audience for his speech comes easily to him and his articulation is pleasant to the ear.

The Monroe rose garden shows healthy foliage and growth and the flats of geranium seeds have sprouted well in the potting shed. The vegetable garden reflects Pete's 1981 interest in the onion family. He has planted green onions to be sure, but there are red onions and yellow ones, and there are shallots and leeks, too.

Here's to the 1981 double happiness of Pete Monroe - and especially Happy "Fourth Anniversary" to all the Monroes.



Pete Monroe in his potting shed.

(Photos: Richard Brown)

Conservation for renters books' goal

A new publication from the Oregon Department of Energy can help renters save both energy and money. "Energy Tips for Renters" tells how to reduce space heating, lighting, cooking and laundry energy costs through simple, no-cost and low-cost actions. Most renters pay utility costs directly and that can amount to as much as 25 per

cent of the monthly rent.

Most of the booklet's tips are common sense conservation advice such as weatherstripping around doors and windows and caulking around the outside door and window frames. Other, not-so-well-known tips include blocking cold drafts under a door with a "draft dodger" -- a cloth tube filled with sand.

The free booklet discusses how to work with landlords in making energy efficiency improvements, home safety and how to read electric meters.

The book is available from the Oregon Department of Energy, 102 Labor and Industries Building, Salem, Oregon 97310. (1-800-452-7813)



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From the Front Door

By Tom Boothe

THE KEY

The wisdom, the knowledge and the understanding of purpose -- preparation -- Direction and Consistency is the KEY to the development of a responsible, Respectful and Constructively Productive citizen. This KEY opens the door to the proper spirit of being, the proper mental attitude toward self and others and the proper physical values of self and others.

With this KEY comes the power to overcome prejudice, to recognize opportunities and to secure and maintain your right to live a Responsible Productive life on Earth.

Without this KEY you will not be able to recognize opportunities or open door to self fulfillment. You will become a victim of those who have found their KEYS.

Herein is the incentive and motivation to seek out your purpose, prepare yourself, and know your Direction and be Consistent.

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