

50th ANNIVERSARY SURPRISE PARTY

Pinehurst, NC December 3, 2005

By Rod Dawson



Sybil and I received a "secret" message from Karen and Alan Kratz. Karen's mom and dad, Anne and Art Dykeman, were about to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary! Karen and Alan were planning a surprise celebration for them and we were sworn to secrecy. Neither actually told us our tongues would be removed if we let the secret out, but it was made pretty clear that something drastic would happen!

Later Laura and Angel Kavanaugh and Deb Spinetta told us the name of the hotel in Pinehurst where everyone would be staying. After reserving our room, Sybil and I called Jeanne McCain and made arrangements to travel with her and Edie Etheridge. We talked to Anne a couple of times before we left and the most difficult thing then was to keep from letting the cat out of the bag.

Jeanne and Edie arrived at our house on Friday morning December 2nd. We loaded the van to the top. It looked as though we were going for a week! An uneventful drive took us to Pinehurst. We stashed our bags in our rooms and met the rest of the group in the lobby of the hotel for "cocktail" hour. Everyone had their own "fixings" as we managed to take over the whole lobby! Later Mary Evelyn Hubbard and her brood arrived and joined us.



Saturday morning after breakfast in the lobby, we went shopping. Now when a bunch of women get together there must be shopping! Since I was the only male, I tagged along. We were afraid some of our group would bump into Anne doing the same thing we were doing and since we were spread all over Pinehurst and Southern Pines, she would surely have seen some of us. Fortunately she stayed home that day.

After shopping we went back to the hotel and got ready for the big event. More family had checked in while we were downtown. We all arrived at The Carolina Hotel early. The Maitre D (I think his name was Genghis Kahn) didn't want us in the dining room five minutes early. After some discussion, he relented. I think Deb threatened him with bodily harm!

Then, a few minutes before the guests of honor arrived, everyone stood back from the doors to the dining room. As Karen and Alan brought Anne and Art into the room, they looked as though they wondered why the room was so empty. Then Anne saw Emmaly. She thought it was some kid that looked like Emmaly because Emmaly was in Michigan. Anne almost fell over when she saw daughter Donna. Then the whole room burst into welcomes and congratulations. Anne and Art were completely overwhelmed! We milled around chatting with each other for a while and then had a marvelous dinner. Karen and Alan really outdid themselves! What a grand party it was!



As we left the dining room a small band in the next room played the *Marine Hymn* for Art. After that they played *The Anniversary Waltz* and Art and Anne danced. Now the special music was over and the band broke into some swing music. Art grabbed Sybil and they proceeded to jitterbug. They were the only ones on the floor and all the diners in the room broke into applause! At 91 years old, Art still is a great dancer and he and Sybil deserved the applause!

Sunday morning Anne met us at our hotel for breakfast. Goodbyes were said and we checked out of the hotel and were on our way home. What a marvelous and very successful weekend!