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Georgia Adrian, Proprietor / Innkeeper Heritage Inn Bed & Breakfast

By Robin S. Dudley

This is the story of not one, but two charmingly gracious "ladies" of San Luis Obispo who seemed destined to find and help each other get a new start. One is a kind, soft-spoken woman who found a new calling after surviving the loss of a love. The other is her century-old Victorian home and business, the Heritage Inn Bed & Breakfast at 978 Olive Street, which survived two physical moves and several incarnations to become the "home away from home" it is today. Together, they have spent over a decade nurturing and caring for the needs of each other and their guests.

Georgia Adrian was born and lived most of her life in Downey, California. She married the love of her life, Bill, who enjoyed a successful career with the Los Angeles Police Department. They were blessed with three children – two sons and a daughter. A stay-at-home Mom while her children were young, Georgia volunteered at their school and in scouting activities. She re-entered the working world when her youngest was eight as a teacher at St. Raymond's Catholic School. Life was good and full and comfortable.

Then Georgia's world turned upside down when she lost her husband of 26-years to cancer. Devastated, but with the continuing responsibilities of her job and raising their then 16-year old daughter, she pulled herself together the best she could, and followed advice to avoid major changes in her life for at least a year.

But life has a funny way of tapping us on the shoulder – sometimes literally – and providing direction when we need it most. While browsing through a bookstore a few months after Bill's passing, a book unexplainably fell from a shelf hitting Georgia on the shoulder. Picking it up, she was amazed to find it was a story about a widow with a 16-year old daughter who started a Bed & Breakfast – something Georgia had often thought about doing. She couldn't help but feel it was a sign, indicating the new direction she was supposed to take.

In 1993, Georgia decided she needed a change in both career and scenery to help her to move on. She began looking for a Bed & Breakfast to buy somewhere in California, with Morro Bay as one strong possibility. On the way there, she stopped in San Luis Obispo for the night, and by sheer happenstance ended up finding and staying at the Heritage Inn. The next morning at breakfast, she found out the Inn was actually for sale. She bought it, and has lived in and run the charming B&B the past twelve years.

Adding her own touches along with Victorian period furnishings over the years, Georgia created a new home for herself, her menagerie of friendly felines like Miss Kitty (the "house cat") and Blue (the "garden cat"), as well as providing a home-like respite for travelers. From family photos and personal mementoes sprinkled throughout the main living areas, to robes and select toiletries thoughtfully provided for guests in the bathrooms, it's hard not to feel Georgia's genuine caring and personal warmth infused into every aspect of the Inn. Greeting arriving and returning guests with her warm "welcome home," she invites them to unwind from the day with a glass of local wine or soothing tea by the cozy fire in the parlor. Or they can relax in the garden

overlooking Stenner Creek. In the morning she sends them on their way with a hardy and artfully-presented breakfast. Once again, Georgia's life is good and full and comfortable.

And what of the grand Victorian "lady" herself? Originally built on Monterey Street as a residence for the Herrera family in approximately 1905, the house was moved to 977 Santa Rosa Street in 1930 when the original property was sold to Standard Oil to build a gas station. At the new location, it was first a privately owned all-male boarding house (popularly known as "The Bachelor's Club"), then a YMCA, and finally served as the County's Facility Services Office.

In 1980 the house was purchased and moved a second time to its current location on Olive Street by local couple Kathy and Rob Strong to avoid its demolition when the County Annex Building parking lot was built. The Strongs renovated and converted the house into San Luis Obispo's first Bed & Breakfast.

Conveniently located at the intersection of Highways 1 and 101 within walking distance of downtown, the Heritage Inn is now frequently "home base" for parents visiting Cal Poly students, family of patients in nearby Sierra Vista Hospital, and travelers to San Luis Obispo who prefer the homey atmosphere. Georgia loves visiting with her guests and hearing their stories. However, she says the best part is seeing the friendships that develop between guests, and often continue over years and repeated stays.

When not attending to her duties as Hostess and Innkeeper, Georgia's favorite activity is being outside, working or relaxing in her garden. She also plays volleyball two to three times a week (a sport she has played for 30 years, and coached for six years at St. Raymonds School) and takes various classes as time allows. In the past she volunteered with Cuesta College doing historical archiving, and participated in the local Mardi Gras activities.

In 2000, Georgia purchased the lot next door to the Inn. She will break ground this Spring on a new, separate home to enjoy in her retirement years. While still not certain whether she'll sell the Inn "to someone that will respect and care for the house," or hire an Innkeeper to manage it, she is looking forward to having more time and freedom to travel and visit her children, and – not surprising – to finally experience the fun of staying as a guest at other B&B's.

Georgia Adrian can be reached at (805) 544-7440 and heritageinnslo@sbcglobal.net. Or visit the Inn's website, www.heritageinnslo.com.

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Attached Photos for article as needed:

- Georgia Adrian - headshot
- Georgia standing in front of Inn
- Georgia with pastries