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Jerry Swanson - The Flying Gardener

by Mary Glover



Jerry with his beloved girls, Lilly and Poppy. Jerry says, "Poppy is the cute one and Lilly is the smart one, but Poppy gets by because cuteness has its advantages."

Jerry Swanson was born in Illinois and out of four siblings was the only one born in Illinois the others were born in Minnesota. Jerry's grandparents were dairy farmers and stated his father did not want to follow their footsteps, so he struck out with a traveling adventure for their family of six. When he was seven years old they moved to North Dakota, one year later they were in Montana, one year later they were in Colorado, one year later they were in Southern California and finally ended up in Oregon. He finished grade school and high school in [Brookings, Oregon](#). According to Jerry, Brookings is the "garden spot" of Oregon.

After high school Jerry joined the Navy and went to boot

camp. "You're not learning. Consequently, I have learned a lot. If you didn't come to learn, you might as well be a rock or a spruce tree."

Jerry says that Seldovia is a great place to spend the summer. He thinks it is a good place for a garden and has wonderful hiking areas. He loves living on the slough and says there is more to it to observe than if one was just walking by. He loves to watch the eagles soar beneath his windows. Sometimes he gets a visiting bear in the summer or maybe a turkey or two. It is quiet, peaceful and so beautiful. Jerry enjoys gardening and says, "Gardening is either in you or it isn't". He started gardening around age five with his

years with ACS which was owned by the Air Force. He transferred to the FAA upon sale of ACS to RCA, worked in the Air Traffic In Route Center until an opening came up with the FAA at the Flight Check Division and transferred there for the next 2 years.

From Alaska , Jerry went to Frankfurt , Germany for five years with Flight Check and got to visit most all of Europe both for pleasure and for work, flight checking airway facilities and navigational aids. But the allure of Alaska called, and he came back to Anchorage for two years.

An opening showed up in Japan and Jerry again left Alaska for seven more years working for the FAA as a Maintenance Supervisor for the Flight Check aircraft covering the Far East. During this time in his life, he visited a good share of the Asian countries and Islands in the Pacific.

Then in 1987, Jerry came back to Anchorage and was in charge of the FAA Flight Check Aircraft maintenance assigned to Alaska . When asked how he got to Seldovia, Jerry said that he and Judy flew down for a day, fell in love with it and the day after they got married bought the house he now owns (Swan House B&B) in 1994 for a “party house”. Jerry said it needed lots of work and they started a major remodeling job. Judy’s parents said that if they would make it into a B&B they would come up and manage it in the summer months, so Jerry and Judy got to work and created a truly beautiful showcase of a B&B with many spectacular views of the Seldovia Slough. The cost was many hours of hard work. Jerry stated that Judy was advertising “views” so he felt obliged to build viewing decks and add sitting rooms with the bedrooms and then they built a cabin below the B&B so they would have a place to stay when the house filled with guests. As it turned out, the cabin was a very popular place to stay for guests and even that place was not a sleeping

experimenting with growing a commercial grade blueberry which has not been very productive. He said that currents would be a better commercial product as they grow very well in this zone.

Regarding fishing, Jerry likes to go out when the fish are biting, but not if he just has to wait all day for a bite in a bobbing boat. He feels like he has so much to do at home, that this is a waste of time. He likes to fill his freezer with the fish, not to fish for the sport of it. He has his own way of processing the fish to gut, bleed, ice and freeze them as fast as possible. This insures their quality. He says, “Fish should not smell when getting them out of the package and no fishy taste when cooked.” He makes his own caviar from salmon eggs, and does hot smoked and cold smoked salmon. He even has his own yogurt making machine!

Jerry’s favorite thing in Seldovia is the freedom it affords its residents. He said we have the freedom to do the things we want to do, everything from taking his dogs on a hike without a leash, to fishing wherever he wants to, or “building onto my house without a lot of cumbersome permitting and inspections”. He also enjoys the people here. Even though no two people may agree on one thing, when someone has a need, everyone comes to aid. He said, “There is so much talent here and so many nice things that they can do and what they are capable of.” He also said, “The kids get much more nurturing than anywhere else and it is a great place for kids”.

Jerry has a daughter who lives in Anchorage and works as a Project Engineer for the Alaska Rail Road . He also has a step-daughter in Palmer who “is a great gal married to a great guy and have everything going for them.”

When asked what Jerry would like to see in his future he said he “would like to work towards getting a smaller place”

option for Jerry so it was back to the futon.

Today, Jerry is a bachelor and he jokingly says he still gets along with all his "Xs" and "X mother-in-laws". Jerry believes, "We come here to learn and if life is too easy,

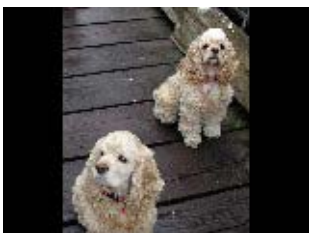
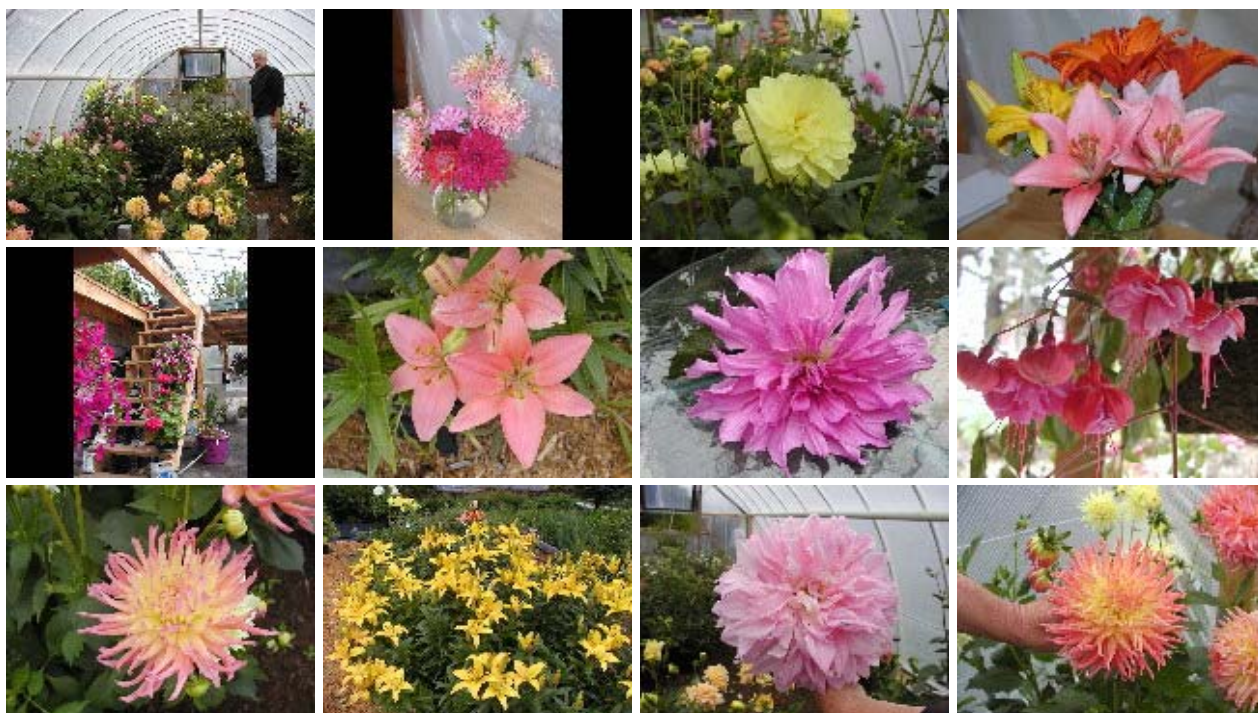
where he would not have to work so hard and he would like to play a little more golf! Overall, Jerry loves his home in Seldovia, his garden, and just likes to enjoy life. He says, "The longer I stay single the better I like it, you sleep when you like, watch ball games when you like, come and go when you want; it's dangerous!"



Jerry with his beautiful flowers



Jerry and his friend, Lew Dickenson, on a great day fishing.
(Photo of two famous guys!)





Jerry's "Peonies with Onions and Oranges" painting by Jerry's sister-in-law.

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