

The King makes a trip to the Land of Oz

By EARL WATT • Daily Leader Doris Maeder loved Elvis. So much so that she had a portrait of the King hanging in her home.



The value was hard to determine. It wasn't a velvet Elvis, and cracks and scratches show the wear the portrait has endured. When she passed away, the Elvis portrait took up residence with Doris' son Steve.

About six months ago, Steve, too, passed away, and his wife Robin didn't know what to do with the portrait that her husband and her mother-in-law prized so dearly.

at she discovered was no one else wanted it.

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Robin headed from her home in Mariam to Centralia to try and unload Elvis on her sister-in-law, and on the way, she decided to have a little fun with the iconic rock star.

"We decided to take pictures along the way with Elvis at different tourist sites," Robin said. She and her cousin, Robin Smith, took the King to the Plaza in Kansas City, and that's when Robin Maeder got the idea.

"We thought it would be fun to take him with us and take pictures along the way," she said. "I'm making a scrapbook for the family."

The two Robins were headed to Palm Springs, and they had plans for Elvis — a visit to the Petrified Forest, the Honeymoon House in Palm Springs, and a definite stop was to the place Elvis performed the most — Las Vegas.

On Friday, Elvis had already had a picture of his picture taken at the Largest Hand Dug Well in Greensburg, the Dalton Gang Hideout in Meade, and then he took the whimsical journey down the Yellow Brick Road to Dorothy's House.

"My husband loved the 'Wizard Of Oz,'" Robin Maeder said. "He would watch it over and over when it was on TBS."

Robin and her cousin looked on Google to set their route to Palm Springs, and they chose to stop at the places with historic and tourist attractions.

At Greensburg, the staff at the hand dug well told the two Robins that they didn't want to miss

Dorothy's House in Liberal.

And the King didn't offer any objections, so they continued down Highway 54 and took their own journey through the Land of Oz exhibit.

By the time the trip is over, Elvis will have made appearances at many of the attractions between Mariam and Palm Springs.

"This gives us something to joke about," Robin Smith said. "It makes us feel good, and it's brought the family closer together."

Robin Maeder also found a way to leave a little piece of her family in Liberal as well. She purchased a brick for her late husband to be placed on the Yellow Brick Road.

"He would love that," Robin Smith said.

Satisfied that the King had done what he came to do, the two cousins gathered back in their vehicle, carefully placing Elvis in his seat, and the tour continued.

"We wanted to do something to make it fun," Robin Maeder said. "It's a long drive."