

POINT REYES LIGHT

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Point Reyes photographer Art Rogers sets up his large-format camera on top of Indian Hill in Nicasio on Tuesday. His photos are on display along with Thomas Wood's paintings in Stinson Beach. Photo by Jacoba Charles.

Mendoza matriarch passes away

by Jacoba Charles

Scotty Mendoza, a quick-witted and generous woman who co-founded the Western Weekend Queen contest and was a pillar of the Point Reyes ranching community for nearly seven decades, died last Friday. She was 88.

"She knew everybody, and everybody loved her. She could make friends with a mud wall," said her son-in-law, Steve Doughty.

"I've never seen anything like it," said Jim Mendoza, her son. "We would take her shopping in Petaluma, and the checkers and the baggers would come out from

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Panel to judge oyster effects

by Jacoba Charles

The National Academy of Sciences is poised to weigh in on the ongoing stalemate between Drakes Bay Oyster Company and the Point Reyes National Seashore. A nine-member committee of experts on aquatic ecology and mariculture from the East Coast, the West Coast and Ireland has been assembled. It will review the science used by the park to describe the oyster company's environmental impacts on Drakes Estero. Their first meeting on September 4 is open to the public, and a report on their findings is expected by the end of the year.

A second review, to be finished by the end of next year, will be more general and offer best management practices for shellfish mariculture to maintain ecosystem in-

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Trespassers be wary, ranchers throw Book

Camera, easel take to hills

by Jacoba Charles

As the evening light turned buttery and a bank of fog swept in from the ocean on Tuesday, artists Art Rogers and Tom Wood drove up one of Nicasio's tallest hills to practice their crafts.

With only the sound of wind and footsteps in dry grass, Wood set up his easel and oil paints on the northwest side of the hill, facing Black Mountain. On the opposite slope, about 300 yards away, Rogers positioned a massive wooden tripod onto which he fastened a camera the size of a small suitcase.

"People don't usually see painters and

photographers working together," Rogers said. "But we have a lot of fun."

The two have been friends and artists for over three decades, but only began their art expeditions in the last year. Plein air painting is inherently a speedy process, while large-format outdoor photography is comparatively slow. The result is that it takes Rogers about the same time to make a photograph or two as for Wood to finish a canvas.

Rogers' camera is about 100 years old, and when packed away seems to be nothing more than a wooden box with many

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>> Mendoza

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behind the counter and hug her." After her death, the store sent flowers for the funeral.

"She was never judgmental," said her daughter, Sharon Doughty. "She was very friendly to one and all; it didn't matter that they were rich or poor or anything."

Doris "Scotty" Mendoza, née Scott, was born on March 12, 1920. She grew up on a dairy and turkey farm in Woodland, California during the depression, but her ties to West Marin were life-long. Her family managed occasional vacations to Willow Camp in Stinson Beach when she was young.

Scotty met her husband Joe Mendoza while he was a student at UC Davis and she was working at a soda fountain in the Woodland Hotel. After the couple married in 1941, Scotty moved to the foggy, windswept hills of Point Reyes where she was to spend the rest of her life.

"I loved the climate and looking at that water," Scotty said in profile published in *Stories of West Marin*.

The 21-year-old bride immediately started cooking three square meals a day for her husband and his six ranch hands. She learned by trial and error, using a binder full of family recipes her mother collected for her. World War II was in full swing, and meat arrived in the mail truck at her kitchen on B Ranch to spare the drive to town. During blackouts, drivers had to use only their parking lights, Scotty said in a 1994 interview in the *Point Reyes Light*. "You had to roll down the window, stick your head out and try to figure where you were by the bushes on the side of the road."

Eventually Scotty stopped cooking for the ranch hands but continued to oversee them and their families. She was a champion of children, and coddled and disciplined generations. Until the end, many local kids called her "Grandma Scotty" whether or not they were related.

"The biggest thing in her life was children," Jim said. "She took care of all the kids on the ranch. When Easter came, they all got Easter baskets, when Christmas came they all got presents. They were up there everyday—she was like the pied piper."

At Easter, Scotty would sew fabric Easter baskets and fill them with candy. "I can't even imagine how many of those baskets are out there," Sharon said.

"The Mexican kids didn't really do Easter, but they'd come up and knock on the door and say, 'Has that rabbit been here yet?'" Steve said.

Education was always important to Scotty, and she made sure to send her daughter and sons to college.

"Someone once asked her if it was hard that her daughter had more education than she did," Sharon said. "Mom

just said, 'She'd better.'"

Scotty also encouraged many other kids in their educations. She helped them find financial aid and co-founded the Inverness Garden Club scholarship. She insisted that B-grade students be eligible, since they might not get funding elsewhere.

Scotty took particular care of the kids on the ranch. She knew all their birthdays and gave them presents, but she also prodded them to attend school.

"They didn't come around my house if they stayed home from school, and they didn't get a candy bar for unloading groceries if they didn't speak English," Scotty said. She also taught at least one young man on the ranch how to set a formal table setting, Steve said.

Sewing was an important part of Scotty's life; she taught the skill as a 4-H leader for 40 years. Whenever someone had a new baby, she would sew them a crib set in the color and fabric of their choice. The sets had sheets, a quilt, bumpers and a teddy bear dressed in an outfit of matching fabric.

"She had a huge sewing room and no matter why you were visiting she'd always take you into there," said neighbor Nichola Spaletta. "The first thing that she'd do was show you the latest project she was working on. Then she'd take you down memory lane—their hallway full of pictures—and show you the latest grandchild."

A champion of the ranching and dairies, the vanity plate on her car read, "MILK00." For wedding presents she always gave a sterling silver butter dish with a note inside that read, "For butter only." Margarine was not acceptable.

"She was like Santa Claus," Sharon said. "It wasn't just the clothes or the money. She gave of the heart."

Although she spread her abundant energy and generosity across West Marin, Scotty was devoted first to her own home. "Her family is probably her greatest legacy," said her daughter-in-law Linda Mendoza. "Her children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren all thought the world of her."

Scotty's house was always immaculate. "If you set something down in the wrong place she would surely let you know," Jim said. "When we were kids we'd joke that if you got up to go to the bathroom, your bed would be made when you came back—and it wasn't exactly a joke. She did it a few times."

She was also known among her family for her habit of affectionately pinching rear ends. When the family flew to watch Marvin Nunes receive the Dairyman of the Year Award at the World Dairy Expo in Wisconsin in 2005, she greeted him not by saying hello but by walking up behind him and dishing out the signature pinch, Sharon said. Without turning around, Marvin knew it was her and said, "Aunt Scotty! You're here!"

Until her stroke three weeks ago, Scotty had her hair done at King's Beauty Salon in Petaluma every Friday, and then



Scotty Mendoza moved to the Point Reyes Peninsula as a 21-year-old bride, and lived there for the rest of her life. Photo courtesy of her family.

took everyone in the family who was nearby to lunch at Mary's Pizza.

"She was always a pretty woman and a classy woman," Jim said. "She never went to town—even to Point Reyes—without looking like a million bucks. You had to be presentable. She said, 'You're a Mendoza and you're going to look like one.'"

Throughout their 67 years of marriage, Scotty was proud of being a devoted wife. "She always told me, 'Your husband comes first,'" Sharon said. "If there's love in the relationship, then the children will do well."

The couple traveled a lot together, particularly in the years when Joe was the president of Challenge Dairy Cooperative. When she couldn't go, Scotty would pack his suitcase full of neatly folded and color-coordinated outfits—one for each day he was gone—and a love note as well.

Until this year, they would spend two or three days each week at a duck hunting club on Grizzly Island near Fairfield during duck hunting season.

"She would drive him and cook for him and take care of him and anyone who was a guest there," Steve said. "They were always together, and he hunted all the time."

As Scotty's health declined, she taught the woman who was hired to take care of her how to cook for her husband. "Joe always eats all game—ducks, doves, pheasants, salmon, deer and abalone," Steve said. "And all that stuff has to be cooked a certain way."

Scotty was lucky enough to know

about the love and appreciation that her lifetime of hard work and generosity earned her. "On her eightieth birthday, I said to her that I never had to worry about being a good friend or being a good mother or wife," Sharon said. "I just had to follow the example given me."

Scotty is survived by her husband Joe Mendoza; daughter Sharon Doughty and her husband Steve; son Joe Mendoza and his wife Linda; son Jim Mendoza and his wife Luci; grandchildren Kathleen Von Raesfeld, J.V. Mendoza, Karen Bianchini Taylor, Jamie Mendoza, Teresa Hatcher, Jolynn McClelland and Jarrod Mendoza; eight grandchildren; and many friends.



Dressing elegantly was one of Scotty's trademarks, along with her generosity. Photo courtesy of her family.