

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

THE PETALUMA POST
A READER'S MONTHLY

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“The person who influenced me most...”

EDITORS' NOTE: In celebration of Women's History Month each March, we ask some of the women who contribute to the culture of our area to answer a question. In past years, we've asked what they were most proud of—and what they would do if they had more time in their busy lives.

This year, the question was: “Who influenced you most in your life and how?” You'll find the responses we received on this page, on page 8, and on page 18. We thank all who replied sincerely for their thoughtful answers. We loved reading them, and we hope you will too.

“As a child I adored my grandmother and was extremely close to her. It was not until I was an adult that I realized how much influence she had over me.

“She came to the U.S. in 1920 from Poland for a pre-arranged marriage to a man (my grandfather) who already had 12 children. At age 20, it is hard to believe the responsibilities she was immediately thrown into. In addition to being a mother to 12 stepchildren, she herself bore 10 children. What a household that

must have been.

“She cooked in my grandfather's restaurant and was president of the Polish woman's society for 39 years. She studied U.S. politics and learned about our political system so that she was always informed and she voted in every election after she obtained her U.S. citizenship. She always told me that I should never forget the value of voting and to never take voting for granted. It was not until I visited her for the last time that I even knew she had only finished the third grade in Poland before she was forced to go to work and help her family.

“I never once heard my grandmother complain. She taught me to love, to be independent and self-reliant, and to be the very best I could be. My grandmother was my inspiration and there is not a day that goes by that I do not think of her.”

-- Karla Schikore, Owner, Haus Fortuna

“My mother taught the lesson, ‘If you have kids, you gotta love ‘em.’ She showed me that working with your

hands is a good thing. As a result I can sew, knit, crochet, set tile, lay floors, mud dry-wall, operate almost all power tools and paint, paint, paint. My mom showed me that it's never too late to change course. When she was 45 she went to work outside the home for the first time. She rented a typewriter, checked out a book on shorthand from the library and started practicing. She was hired by the State of California and worked for the next 15 years. My father -- the love of her life -- passed away 16 years ago. My mom is now 83 years old, living in the home she's been in for 44 years, and requires full-time care. She has the symptoms of Alzheimer's, but it's actually due to a series of strokes. She is kind, ladylike, and -- on the days she can speak -- still talks about ‘taking care of the children.’ She is still setting an example.”

-- Sheri Lee Miller, Director of Marketing and Education, Cinnabar Theater

“There isn't one person who stands out. I think my whole family as a unit has influenced me most significantly in my life. Because of them, I have the morals, values, and beliefs I do today.”

-- Joanie Benedetti, Direc-

tor of Public Relations, Clover Stornetta Farms, Inc.

“My life has been shaped and influenced -- and still is -- by travel. Travel has opened my eyes to different life styles -- encompassing foods, relationships, religions and history. When you explore another country with an open mind and embrace it, you learn what really makes a difference. I then incorporate whatever I have seen or learned into my own life. This has led me to gardening, cooking, trekking, kayaking, historical research and -- most of all -- friendships all over the world. I never take the same route twice. I am always looking for a new adventure.

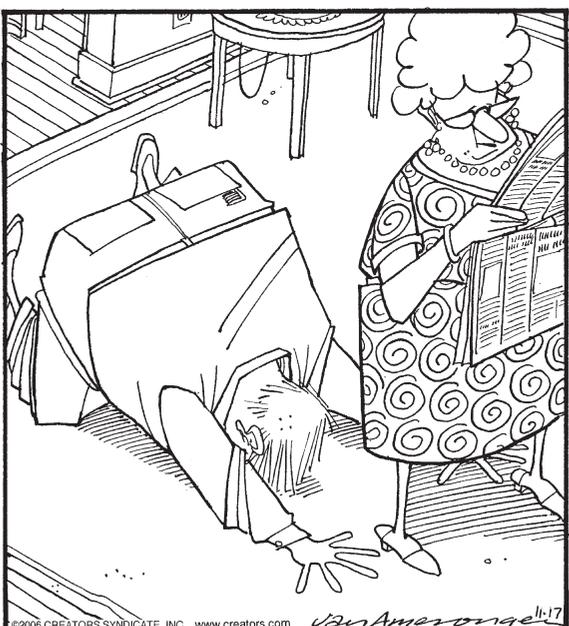
-- Susan W. Villa, Petaluma Historical Library and Museum

“Dan and Carolyn Torliatt, my parents. They showed me by example how to work

hard for what you want in life. They have supported me 110 percent to achieve whatever I set out to do and I try to do the same for Petaluma.”

-- Pamela Torliatt, Mayor of Petaluma

BALLARD STREET by Jerry Van Amerongen



Darrell assumes a passive attitude in the presence of an alpha figure.

Happy St. Patrick's Day!



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