

This celebrated Pacifcan just turned 100 An interview with Mary Harris

Written by Jean Bartlett, August, 2017

(This interview was sponsored by Pacifica City Councilmember Sue Digre)



Jean Bartlett photo

July 2, 2017. Mary Harris in her Shelter Cove home in Pacifica, a few days after her 100th birthday.

"My mother was courageous," artist Mary (Crofoot) Harris begins. To illustrate this point, she pulls out the first of several old newspaper clippings from the *Oakland Tribune*. This one is dated May 25, 1924.

WIDOW SUCCEEDS IN BRAVE FIGHT

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Patrons of the children's furnishing shop of Eva Crofoot, 5600 College Avenue, may sincerely admire the correctness of the appointments and the quality of the merchandise, but few are aware of the supreme effort of Mrs. Crofoot, the mother of nine children, to make the store possible.

A little over two years ago, Mrs. Crofoot and her children were left husbandless and fatherless when Mr. Crofoot was crushed in the machinery of an ice plant at Russell, Kansas, of which he was the owner. Aside from the dependency of the nine children, Mrs. Crofoot faced an indebtedness of \$17,000 on the plant.

Turning from her home to the world of business, Mrs. Crofoot took charge of the ice plant and within two years brought it out of debt. Then she sold it and came with her children to Oakland.

Until recently, Mrs. Crofoot engaged in the real estate business, but the idea of a store catering to the trade of children appealed to her and her establishment on College Avenue is the result.

At the opening of the store yesterday afternoon, the seven daughters of Mrs. Crofoot, demonstrated how they assist their mother by appearing as (models) in a fashion review of children's clothing.

Mary Elizabeth Crofoot Harris was born on a farm in Wilson, Kansas, on June 29, 1917 to Ira Davis Crofoot and Eva Alice (Carson) Crofoot.

"My father had been a teacher and a farmer," Mary said. "But he and my mother decided to buy an ice plant. They made these big ice blocks for sale, 25 pounds or 200 pounds, etc."

Mary, who went by Betty until she was 20, was one of nine children: Gladys (who went by Pat), Jim, Sibyl, Harry, Jeanne, "Betty," Dorothy, Margaret (who went by Margie), and Miriam (who went by Mimi).

Her father died November 1, 1921, when he was doing work for the City of Russell at his plant.

"When I was 4, my father was killed on the job. He had told the City to shut the power to the plant while he made a major repair to some equipment. But someone wasn't told and they turned the power back on. My sister Pat, who was the eldest, was 12, and my sister Mimi, the youngest was just seven weeks old."

An article by H. J. Fitzgerald in the October 31, 1924 *Oakland Tribune*, offers more details.

## **WIDOW PAYS \$12,000 DEBT, SUPPORTS 9**

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Mrs. Eva Crofoot Runs Store, Keeps House, Remains Youthful, Happy; Works off \$24,000 Handicap.

The next time anyone says to you, "My problems are more than I can stand," you just tell him, or her, about Mrs. Crofoot.

Mrs. Eva Crofoot ... who for several months has operated a children's specialty shop at 5600 College Avenue, was, at the age of 30, left a widow with nine children, and a debt of \$24,000. In three years, by her own unaided efforts, without ever having earned money before, she has cleared away more than half the debt and she has not only supported and kept house for the nine children, but she has kept all those of school age uninterruptedly in school.

~ Three years ago Mrs. Crofoot, her husband and their nine children, the youngest seven weeks old, were living in the small town of Russell, Kansas, where they had moved about six months before. Her husband was proprietor of the local ice plant. It had taken all they had to purchase the property, and (it) had placed them heavily in debt. But the plant was prosperous, and held a big contract from the city government, and all looked well for the future.

HUSBAND IS KILLED.

One day her husband, while working in the plant, caught his clothing in the high-speed belt running from the motor to the compressor. He died a few minutes later. Mrs. Crofoot, who was just 30 years old, found herself at that moment with nine children dependent upon her

for support. In addition, there was a debt of \$24,000 hanging over what property they had. Mrs. Crofoot had no knowledge of any work by which she could hope to earn a large enough salary to support ten persons, let alone pay off any part of the debt.

Her only hope, she decided, was in the possibility that she could carry on her husband's work of running the ice plant. She had been interested in his work, and had learned a good deal about it during the six months he had been engaged in it. So she took his place. But besides running the establishment, and attending to the business end of it, she had manual labor to do that would stagger many men. There were 300-pound cakes of ice to be lifted about. Mrs. Crofoot put on men's clothes and went to work.

The article goes on to say, Mrs. Crofoot went on to work at the plant and raise her children. Her husband's insurance paid \$7,000 off on the loan, and the City of Russell paid her \$2,000 on the suit she brought against them for \$25,000. (They fought her on that suit.) A rival plant came in and the City gave their business to that plant. Mrs. Crofoot had to give up her business. At the time of this article, she had paid down the debt by \$12,000. Her children's clothing line was doing very well. Mrs. Crofoot told the reporter that for the first time in three years she had found real hope.

Photo from the Oakland Tribune, October 31, 1924.



Left to right: Miriam, 3; Margaret, 4; Dorothy, 5; Betty, 7; Jeanne, 8; Harry, 10; Sibyl, 12; James, 13; Gladys, 14; and Mrs. Crofoot, 33.

"My father's death was horrible," Mary said. "Thankfully I have a wonderful memory of my father taking me up on the Ferris wheel at the County Fair. Another memory with my dad is seeing all these beautiful buttercup plants. My mother, I am happy to say, lived to be 83. Her mom, who lived in San Francisco, lived into her eighties as well."



College photo, Ira Crofoot, circa 1903.



Eva Alice (Carson) Crofoot, circa, 1919.



Ira Crofoot and his daughter Pat, 1910, in Wilson, Kansas.

"We came out on the train to California. My mother's mother took half of us out here on the train and my mother took the other half. My mother – who would always remain very calm, very kind and very strong – had lived in San Francisco when she was a teenager. In fact, she was in San Francisco during the 1906 earthquake. She had liked the Bay Area and wanted to get away from all the tragedy and so she bought a house in the Rockridge area of Oakland. That's where I grew up.

"She worked in real estate when we first came to California but she didn't like it. She made a lot of money one month and practically nothing the next. She was always an excellent seamstress and she really enjoyed sewing. So she started her business on College Avenue and was very successful. She made all of our clothes, including the clothes for the boys."

Mary said her mother's creativity as a seamstress was one of the contributing factors to her own passion for art.

"I really started to do art in earnest when I was 7. I would draw paper dolls for my sisters and then get them to do my chores in exchange. Then there was the Palmer Method of learning how to write. That was a very big factor in my early creativity. You had to make circles, and loops and lines. I loved doing that and I still do, you can tell from my paintings. When I was 10, I discovered the artist Maxfield Parrish. Can you imagine? His art was showing in the gallery across the street from my school. I would just stand there and admire his work."



"Alternate View" by Mary Harris, 1996.

Mary began her elementary school education in Russell County, Kansas, continued in the Rockridge neighborhood of Oakland – "I'm not sure if that school is still there." – graduated from Claremont Junior High School in 1931, and then headed off to Oakland Technical High School.

"I wasn't political in my twenties when I was first married," Mary laughed, knowing this statement will stun many who know her, "though I have always been a Democrat. My husband and I, his name was Rodney Barr Brothers, would visit friends that were in their thirties and they would talk politics. I was falling asleep."

Mary and her husband co-owned Brothers Record Shop in Richmond, California. They lived in an apartment nearby. The shop was popular.

"I liked jazz," Mary said, "And I liked that we could go in a booth and put headphones on and listen to the vinyl. That was fun. I still remember one of the greatest jazz concerts I heard in person. That was jazz clarinetist Benny Goodman with his band at the 1939 World's Fair at San Francisco's Treasure Island."



Mary's husband, Rodney Barr Brothers, friend Harry Colborne, and Mary's brother Harry Crofoot at Brothers Record Shop in Richmond, CA, late 1940s.

In her twenties, Mary discovered modern art.

"It was when I was living in Richmond. I remember walking down the street and seeing this shop on College Avenue in Oakland with these paintings and I thought, 'Oh! I really like this guy.' It turns out he was giving a high school class and so I took that class. His name was Basil Marros."

Basil had studied in Paris under celebrated French painter Fernand Léger, who personalized the Cubism movement with a style so his own that it was labeled "tubism."

"Basil Marros was a wonderful teacher. He said to me, 'Every blade of grass is different.' Doesn't that phrase just blow your mind? I have never forgotten it. It opens your mind to all the variation of design in the universe. Nothing is exactly the same. It makes the world so interesting and certainly this phrase of his, and its truth, has inspired me I think every day since I first heard it." Other artists who have inspired Mary include: Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee.

"When my marriage to my first husband ended, a friend told me that I could go to college for nothing. So at the age of 32, I decided to major in art and headed off to the College of Marin, which in those days didn't cost anything. It was a good school. The next year I transferred to San Francisco State College, now San Francisco State University. I got interested in politics when I was in college and really the world. I wanted to learn."

Mary switched her major and earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education. She worked at an art store in San Francisco during those college years. She met her second husband during that time, Thomas Harris, and they married in San Francisco in 1954. The marriage didn't last long.

"Both of my husbands were wonderful people, really nice guys, and the breakups were very amicable. But I was too naïve and self-centered. I believe my second husband is still alive. My first husband died when he was in his sixties and I really grieved him. He was such a good man."

After she received her degree, Mary accepted a teaching job in Hanford, California.

"That's where I needed to go to get that first job. I taught first and second grade. The biggest mistake of my life took place then," Mary laughed. "I asked 26 kids to do finger painting all at once. Didn't repeat that one twice! I stayed in Hanford for two years and then moved to Pacifica in 1957."

Friends of Mary's from San Francisco State took Mary on a picnic near Shelter Cove. At the time, Mary didn't yet drive, so another friend took her back to get a better look at the Cove. The 17-acre beach neighborhood, privately-owned, is situated below Pacifica's Pedro Point Neighborhood. Mary notes there are 18 "rustic" buildings there, most are cottages; several are duplexes.

"Number 11 was empty and I moved in. I got my driver's license after that. Of course that was when there was still a road that led to Shelter Cove."

The road washed out in 1982, due to the El Niño deluge. The pedestrian pathway fell apart when Mary was in her early nineties. Now it is a climb of 162 steps in and out.

"My first year in Pacifica I taught at Sharp Park and Vallemar, and went on to teach at the Sanchez School. I taught mostly kindergarten. I loved kindergarten because I could give them a lot of art and music. I took a course on the piano at SFSU, classroom piano. I could play songs for the kindergarteners though I wanted to play Gershwin! I do so love kindergartners because they are so open to new things and they want to learn, and it's all interesting and fun for them."

A teacher in the school district had gone to Japan. Mary decided that is what she wanted to do. But at that moment, there were no vacancies in Japan so she accepted a first grade teaching assignment in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. She taught there two years and loved it.

"In Taiwan the realization that people are just people, really took hold. It's not that I didn't realize this on the surface prior to this, but it became a tenet for me and really shapes my life and my views of the world."

Mary came home for a year and studied Japanese and Japanese art at SFSU. She then received a first grade teaching assignment in Japan. She lived in Sasebo, in the Nagasaki Prefecture, for two years. By then she had really immersed herself in the study of Japanese flower arranging, music and dance. She also learned to play the koto, a traditional Japanese stringed instrument resembling the zither. Later she and a friend would play kotos at San Francisco's Miyako Hotel during Cherry Blossom festivals.



Japanese Landscape by Mary Harris, 1963.

Mary left Japan for a teaching assignment in Germany, stayed a year and lived "in the beautiful very historical little town of Scharfenberg," Then she headed to Paris.

"I lived in Paris for two years. I freelanced, teaching both art and conversational English. My apartment was on the seventh floor and there was no elevator. I really loved Paris. I came home when I got down to the price of an airline ticket."

Mary came back to Pacifica and to the Pacifica School District – then called the Laguna Salada (Union) School District – in 1970. She also found, immediately on her return, another place just waiting for her to rent in Shelter Cove. She has lived there since. Along with the Pacifica schools previously mentioned, Mary taught kindergarteners at Cabrillo, Ocean Shore, Ortega and Linda Mar. Every one of her students did art.

"Why is art so important for kids? Because I think it is fundamental. The things you have to go through to make a work of art. You are working with your hands and your brain at the same time as you develop ideas."

In 1983, Mary retired from teaching elementary school. That same year she also graduated with an MA from the California Institute of Integral Studies. She noted that she went after her MA, it was not for financial gain, but because she wanted to learn.

"After I retired, I was in the SWAP program, Schools with Artists program. I remember a teacher saying these kids really learn something through art, because their other academics are going higher."

Mary taught the SWAP program for 20 years all over the Pacifica School District and out of her art studio in the old Sanchez Art School building in Linda Mar, now the Sanchez Art Center. In exchange for teaching SWAP to kids in the District, the arts educator was given free use of her studio. She also taught art to adults. In addition, and as always, she did her art. She has sold numerous pieces over the decades, and has been multi-exhibited. In 2000, the Sanchez Art Center in Pacifica established the Mary Harris Arts Education Room for art classes and summer art camps.

"How would I describe myself as a painter? Definitely modern with lots of nonfigurative art. I work in acrylics a lot. (She is also famous for her collages.) People like to see what they saw out in the sunset. I like to have a blank canvas and then organize it into a painting; whatever comes into my head while I am working on it is what I like to do."



Bend by Mary Harris, 2008.

There is something else about Mary, something that has been a huge part of her life since 1978. Mary is a dedicated member of the Democratic World Federalists.

The Democratic World Federalists is a nonprofit, educational organization which promotes the concept of "good global government" in order to "address the global problems of war, civil conflict, poverty, disease, environmental damage, and to uphold human rights." Supporters for "good global government" have included such world figures as Winston Churchill, Albert Einstein, Harry S. Truman and Mikhail Gorbachev. By the age of 95, Mary had served more than 20 years on the local board of the nonprofit. Meetings are held anywhere from one to three times a week. For Mary, every meeting she attends also means: climbing the 162 steps out of Shelter Cove; walking from the back of Pedro Point to Highway 1, about two miles, then taking the bus to BART; BART to New Montgomery in San Francisco; and then reversing that route to return home. Now she climbs the stairs and takes a taxi to the meetings.

"I absolutely believe the world should be governed by a single legal body. I believe there has got to be representative international law, because until we have it there won't ever be harmony on the planet. Can you imagine if every country brought together their ideas for prosperity and fairness and then put them into action? I don't like to think of this as just a dream but as a real possibility. I guess that's the definition of hope."

In Mary's art-filled cottage, she also has a great many pages she has written in support of peace, art and harmony. The following, "Peace Notes" by Mary Harris, came in one sitting. Like her art, Mary just let her thoughts flow, without plan, from her to the paper canvas.



Peace Notes by Mary Harris



DETAILS:

Thoughts about details came to me while I was taking care of the usual early morning details: showering, brushing teeth, suncreening, dressing, fixing breakfast, etc., etc. I realized that we are slaves to our daily routines and details.

What about other routines and details?

After pondering many kinds of the details of human living, I have come to the conclusion that the real enemy is details. Think about the paperwork involved with getting armies together; designing horrific weapons, as well as the more ordinary items of ordinary living. What about the details involved with actually producing (and using?) these terrible weapons of mass destruction? The madness produced could equal the madness of designing and building the monsters in the first place. No wonder that the ordinary human refuses to even think about these details. They, too, would go mad.

How many people think about details and options such as: education, justice, health, and truth instead of ignorance, world hunger, oppression, and human devastation? **Too many details?**

Perhaps a reason people strive and live for more and more financial resources (money), is so they can turn over their details to someone else. Lie in bed or on a lounge beside a pool or on a yacht or on an ocean liner, in a comfortable chair in a mansion and let someone else take care of the details. Some males let their wives or partners do the search and scratch work. Sometimes wives or partners do the slave driving. Unfortunately the details go on and on no matter how much we try to rid ourselves of routines, rituals, and details.

So now that we know who the enemy is, what to do? Make war against details, not people? Live a simpler life with fewer details? Focus on friendship, love, visual art, music, dance, and other entertainment? John Cage showed us that everything can make music, that music is everywhere. Mark Rothko taught us that expressing basic forms is fundamental to expressing beauty. Love is simple and direct. Hatred is messy and chaotic with too many details. That is not to say that complexity is not ever useful or necessary. Some chaos is even useful or beautiful, but not chaos that is the result of oppression, invasion, and human destruction.



Peace Notes by Mary Harris

The human race is slowly moving toward a simple, orderly solution to the many grave problems that humanity faces today: Global unity, not through invasion and oppression but through government and law, accepted and utilized by all of the world's people. It's simple: instead of going to war to try to solve global problems, we could go to court, more details? Yes details - but on harmony, not chaos. Just as some people are devious and murderous, most people are law-abiding. Some details are debilitating and destructive and most are useful and necessary. So the enemy is really **SOME** details.

Changing the details of our lives by eliminating or rejecting those details that produce violence, ill health, or environmental decadence and turning to details that produce individual and global harmony could also change the world.

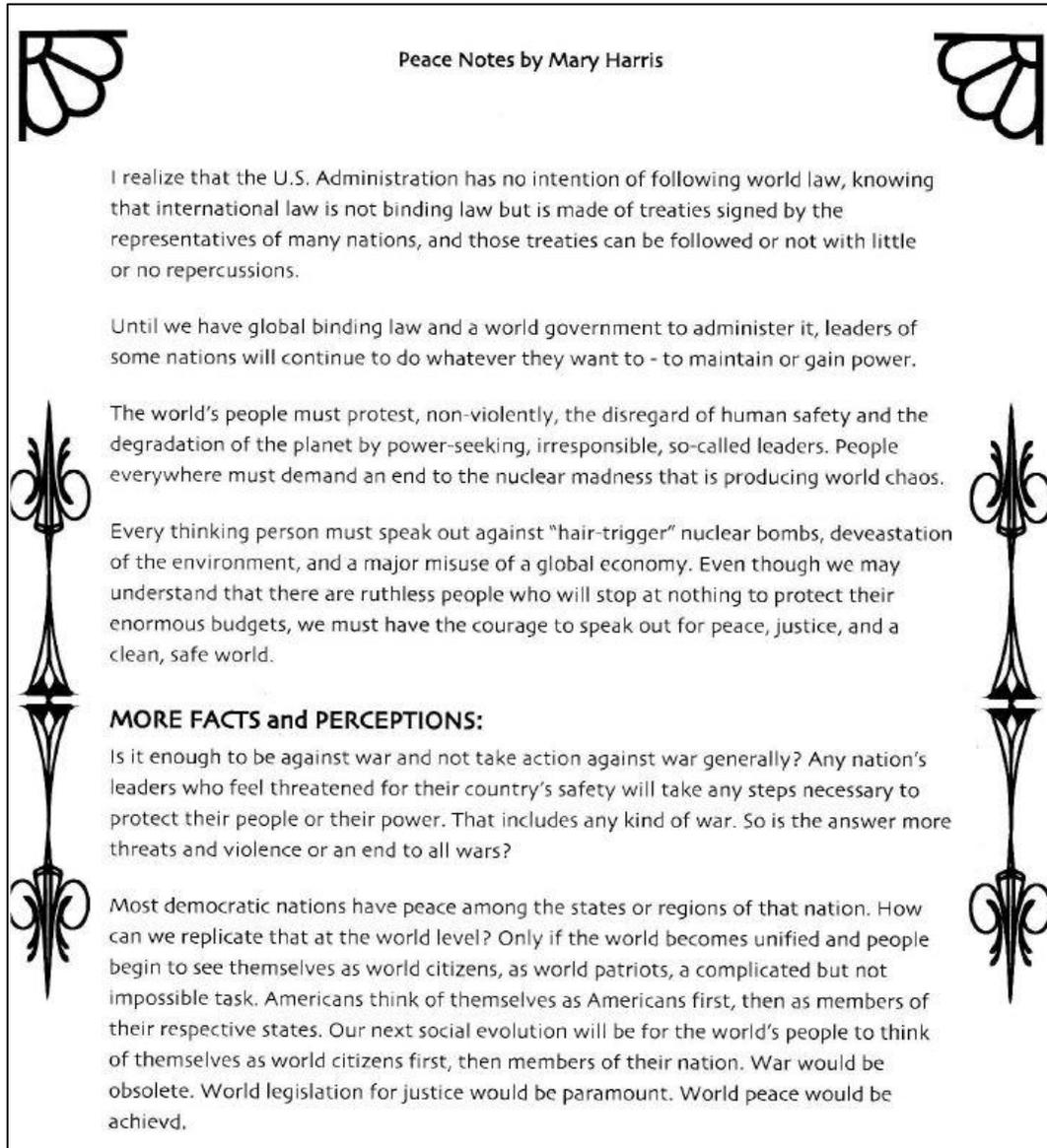
The world's power-seekers probably reject the details of global unity because they seem to see a loss of power for themselves and their country. However the kind of unity that they are rejecting is the same unity that brought strong democratic nations into being.

I believe the creativity that has resulted in enormous industrial power was aided by the freedom of unified states in many nations of the world. When the United Nations was born, many strong details in the U.N. Charter were weakened by power-seekers who feared the loss of their power. They kept the U.N. as an organization or forum instead of a strong world government that could secure nations from invasion and oppression and ultimately replace war with justice worldwide.

Some would say that there isn't enough trust among nations to make a world government work. True, but trust is not enough. A viable, workable rule of law is needed for a functioning world government as well as trust in and appreciation of differing cultures. Productive, illuminating, healing, advocating details are not the enemy. They are methods of assuring and insuring a world system that functions well for the world society, a world of harmony and justice.

FACTS and PERCEPTIONS:

The pentagon is engaged in building new nuclear weapons that not only frighten many people in many other nations but are illegal.



Peace Notes by Mary Harris, 3 of 3

Interesting to note, these "Peace Notes" by Mary, were rolled up into party favors, tied with a ribbon and handed out at the "fantastic" 100th birthday celebration her Shelter Cove (current and former) neighbors threw for her on the beach where they live.

Along with the Democratic World Federalists, Mary remains very active with the A.C.L.U., Greenpeace, the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Sierra Club, KQED, KPFA, the Sanchez Art Center and the Art Guild of Pacifica. She likes the fact that her politics challenge locals who have been known to complain about her views in *Pacifica Tribune* Letters to the Editor. "Good change does not come without conversation, including disagreement."



When Mary turned 100 this year, on June 29, 2017, there were multiple celebrations in her honor, including an Artist's Retrospective Art Exhibition at the Sanchez Art Center.

Pacifican Nancy Russell – a member of the Art Guild of Pacifica, a Sanchez Art Center studio holder, and an abstract painter who works in acrylics and oil sticks – got to know Mary back in 2003, when Nancy began volunteering as administrative assistant at the Art Center. The two have been great friends since.

"Mary is one of the most committed and inspiring women I have ever known," Nancy said. "Besides Mary's dedication to art education, she is still very involved in the Democratic World Federalists, volunteering in their San Francisco office every week."

Absolutely impressed, Nancy offered a short summary of her friend's accomplishments.

"Mary taught kindergarten in Pacifica until her 'first' retirement, and then volunteered teaching art in classrooms all over the District as part of the SWAP program for an extended period, until her 'second' retirement. Then, Mary coordinated the volunteer gallery attendants at Sanchez until just two years ago. Guess that could be considered her 'third' retirement. The gallery attendants allow the Sanchez Art Center to open its doors to the public, so it is a really critical job coordinating the staffing. Mary served on both boards of the Sanchez Art Center and the Art Guild of Pacifica. Huge groups of people came to the Art Center during Mary's art exhibition celebrating her birthday in June. Her artist talk and party at the end of the show brought the largest turnout we've ever had."

Parties to celebrate Mary's 100th also included a dinner party thrown by her nieces and nephews – one flew out from as far as New York – at the Salada Beach Cafe in Pacifica's Sharp Park neighborhood. On her actual day, she was treated to Greens Restaurant, the award-winning vegetarian restaurant in San Francisco's Fort Mason Center. Then there was the party thrown for her in Shelter Cove. There is no one who lives in Shelter Cove who does not know Mary, and no one who has ever lived in Shelter Cove since Mary has lived there, who does not know this world-thinking, world-giving, gifted artist.



Mary Harris enjoys her 100th birthday celebration thrown by her Shelter Cove family on July 1, 2017.

Husband and wife, Pacificans and former "Cove-ites" Mitch Reid and Shelly Reider, first met Mary when they moved to Shelter Cove in 1992.

"We always enjoyed our Cove get-togethers where we had potlucks, fires, music and good talks," Shelly said. "Mary was always there. Mitch remembers the time we had to chase a seal out of Mary's garage after one of those big storms where the water came up to the houses!"

"Mitch and I have always admired Mary's interest in world politics and activism with the World Federalist Movement. We've also enjoyed her many enlightening letters to the editor in the *Pacifica Tribune*. Between her art and activism, Mary has been an inspiration to us and to everyone that knows her. The two words that describe her best are World Peace."

Mitch made Mary this 100th birthday card, which has been mentioned by many to this writer, as a lovely representative portrait of Mary and her mark on the world.



Mary's 100th birthday was a Shelter Cove potluck and the Cove-ites welcomed the crowd of Mary celebrants, with vegetarian Chinese food from a local restaurant and two sets "of very large and wonderful gold balloons spelling '100.'" There was a Mazzetti's cake and Mary was toasted with champagne. Cove-ites and some friends outside of the Cove, shared stories about the guest of honor, sang songs for her, read poetry, and read writings of Mary's.

Kids from the Cove entertained everyone with singing, drumming and rapping Hamilton. At one point the guests broke into groups to answer trivia questions all about the year 1917. The incentive, besides just plain fun, was to win one of Mary's paintings.

"You know at all these events, it seems like I was asked to offer some kind of words of wisdom that come with living 100 years," Mary laughed, pointing out that first and foremost, she is just a person like everyone else, and like everyone else, she has good and bad.

"But you have to concentrate on the good. It makes life easier. And be yourself. Be your best self."

Other quotes from Mary, these specifically jotted down during our recent interviews and phone chats, also help define the portrait that is Mary.

"When I divorced my first husband, I remember thinking this is horrible. But later I thought, 'What a blessing. I might not have gone to college otherwise!'"

"I've never cared about whether someone is pink or rainbow. My second husband, who was adopted, believed he was of Egyptian descent which someone later sort of applauded me for, or maybe they applauded him for. He was also nine years younger than me. I've always thought it is wrong thinking when people think they need to identify with people about their skin."

"If I get the chance to travel to outer space, I'll take it."

"Time travel? Sounds like fun."

"I believe there is a place in the universe where we go, when we leave this life. I don't believe in zero after death. I believe I will see my family and friends, whenever I leave here."



Jean Bartlett photo

Taken at Mary's home in Shelter Cove during a 2012 interview for the *Pacifica Tribune*, on the occasion of her 95th birthday.

"I'm just a person and like everyone else, I have good and bad. You have to concentrate on the good. It makes life easier. And be yourself. Be your best self."

The following page represents SOME of Mary's awards and recognitions.

MARY HARRIS AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS, THE ABRIDGED VERSION

Proclamation from the City of Pacifica, titled "A Colorful Life: Mary Harris at 100," dated June 15, 2017.

"Whereas Mary Elizabeth Harris has been a resident of Pacifica, California, since 1957; and Whereas Mary Harris began teaching school in Pacifica in 1957 as a kindergarten teacher; and Whereas Mary Harris has taught at Sharp Park School, Vallemar School, and Sanchez School, all in Pacifica, California; and Whereas Mary Harris continued teaching in the Pacifica School District, then known as Laguna Salada School District, until 1983; and Whereas Mary Harris retired with distinction and honor from her position as a teacher with the Pacifica School District, then known as the Laguna Salada School District, in 1983; and Whereas Mary Harris was an active participant and facilitator of the Schools with Art Program instituted by the Pacifica School District, formerly known as the Laguna Salada School District, during the 1980s and 1990s; and Whereas Mary Harris was an original studio holder at what is now known as the Sanchez Art Center; and Whereas Mary Harris was one of the original founders of what is now known as the Sanchez Art Center; and Whereas Mary Harris has worked tirelessly to bring about the viability of what is now known as Sanchez Art Center; and Whereas Mary Harris has continued to hone her craft and share her artistic vision through exhibiting her artworks in shows presented by the Art Guild of Pacifica and Sanchez Art Center; and Whereas Mary Harris has dedicated her life to the betterment of humanity through her work with children and her work with various nonprofit organizations that promote world government and world peace; Therefore, the City of Pacifica is proud to issue this proclamation honoring and celebrating Mary Elizabeth Harris on the occasion of her retrospective art exhibition at Sanchez Art Center and her 100th birthday, both occurring in June 2017, to demonstrate our sincere and abiding admiration and gratitude for all of her contributions to Pacifica and to the world.

On January 16, 2016, the Art Guild of Pacifica, recognized Mary Harris, lifetime member.

"In appreciation of your invaluable service as Gallery Attendant Coordinator for years too numerous to count."

On June 26, 2006, the City of Pacifica gave Mary a Proclamation titled: "Mary Harris Day."

"Whereas the City of Pacifica celebrates the arts and their role in building and maintaining a culturally rich and vibrant community; and Whereas, Mary Harris has traveled the world in the pursuit of intellectual, spiritual and artistic excellence; Whereas, Mary Harris has generously, unflinchingly and continuously shared a vision, expertise and guidance in the classrooms of every Pacifica elementary school, as well as throughout the community, the county, the state, the nation and the planet; Whereas, Mary Harris co-founded Sanchez Art Center, serves on the Board of Directors of Sanchez Art Center, the Art Guild of Pacifica, and the Democratic World Federalists; and Whereas, on this, her nearly 90th birthday, Mary Harris embodies beauty, intelligence, compassion and talent. Now, therefore, we, the undersigned, commend Mary Harris for her dedication, commitment, accomplishments and artistry, all of which she has brought to improving the quality of life of Pacifica residents through her artistic activism. We extend to Mary Harris best wishes for her continued success, and we encourage all citizens to participate in the celebration of Mary Harris' contributions to the arts, culture and social fabric of our community throughout the coming year. We hereby proclaim June 29, 2006, as Mary Harris Day."



Jean Bartlett photo

Mary Harris, 2012, at the Coastsides Farmers Market in Pacifica.

Democratic World Federalists, First Annual World Patriot Award given to Mary Harris on April 3, 2005. *"For many years, artist and activist Mary Harris has provided an invaluable record of proceedings as secretary on the Board of Directors. Her care for all of humanity shows in all that she does, no task too large or too small. Hers is an intangible influence not easily measured, but felt from the heart."*