

POINT REYES LIGHT

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The Coastal Commission stopped work on a trench that was dug to repair an electrical conduit at Drake's Bay Oyster Company because the project lacked proper permits. Photo by Jacoba Charles.

Commission fines oyster farm for ditch

by Jacoba Charles

Kevin Lunny, owner of Drake's Bay Oyster Company, learned the hard way that digging a ditch in the coastal zone is considered development – even for a repair.

“The definition of development under the Coastal Act is broadly defined,” said Christine Chestnut, an analyst with the California Coastal Commission (CCC). The commission was called in by the Point Reyes National Seashore (PRNS) when Lunny obtained only a county permit, but not a coastal development permit.

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Boat Works owner dies

by Justin Nobel

John Edward Vilicich, who grew up in a Yugoslav community on Pierce Point, plied the Pacific from New Zealand to Iwo Jima in a destroyer during World War II and spent his adult life in Marshall where he co-founded the boat works, passed away last week. He was 88.

John's father, Nickola Vilicich, left the island of Hvar on the coast of Yugoslavia and arrived at White's Gulch on Pierce Point in the early 1900s, where he set up a fishing community along with several other Yugoslav immigrants. John Vilicich was born there, on October 5, 1919. He was the second youngest of six children.

There were Portugese and Italians and even several Japanese who lived on the

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It's a White Christmas so count your blessings

Land saga leads to suicide

by Justin Nobel

Ron Perrin, a Nicasio father of three who explored California on a Harley with his wife Maria and once adopted a sick raven found in the backyard of the dream home he built for his family above Lucas Valley, passed away last month. He was 54.

For the past eight years Ron had struggled to keep the home, which was built on property belonging to Maria's father, “Chilo.” After Chilo's death, his will disappeared, leaving no clear heir to the 800-acre ranch and forcing court-appointed trustees to take control. Beset with grief by the impossible fight to keep the land and his

home, Ron took his own life.

“He had a great heart, and would help out anyone in need, whether it be an animal or a person he didn't even know,” said good friend Dan Olsen. “He would give you the shirt off his back.”

Ron was born April 21, 1953, in Woodland, California. He grew up in San Anselmo with his handicapped brother Brian.

“That's where he learned his compassion,” said Maria. “He was taking care of him up until the day he died.”

Ron made numerous friends in San Anselmo, and played the role of rebellious suburban teenager.

>> Suicide

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One of his best friends was Dan Olsen, whom he met when Dan and his brother confronted Ron aggressively at a local hangout called the Third Rail.

"We cornered him in the staircase and the dukes went up," said Dan. "I don't know if it's something he said, but seconds later we were best friends."

The two attended Drakes High School. "We got into a lot of little mischief," said Dan. "We did a lot of roaming around."

Once Ron dropped a stink bomb down a sewer grate downtown. "Green smoke came up out of every manhole in San Anselmo," said Dan.

Ron idolized a cousin who was a Marine and at age 17 he enlisted. He attended boot camp in San Diego. His parents wouldn't sign a waiver allowing him to ship out that was necessary because he was underage, so he joined the Marine Reserves and remained a member for six years. He later returned to finish high school at San Andreas, in Larkspur.

During this time he also took several memorable trips with Dan and other friends, including one to New Orleans for Mardi Gras and another to Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

On a double date with Dan at a birthday party in San Anselmo in February of 1974, Ron met Maria Gonzales.

"I walked into a crowded room of people drinking and having a good time. I was a quiet, shy country girl, and really felt out of place," wrote Maria in a posthumous letter to her husband. "Within minutes of scanning the room, I see a young man sitting in a chair with the most beautiful smile I had ever seen. Your big brown puppy eyes looked up at me and our first glance connected! Before even being introduced to you, I knew that you were the one I wanted to spend my life with."

Two years later, the couple was married at Saint Anselm's in San Anselmo, and immediately afterwards they bought their first Harley, a shovelhead. The couple referred to the bike as their "first born," and they road-tripped up the coast and into the mountains.

They lived in Novato, bought a lot in Grass Valley, and with the money they made when they sold it they built their dream home above Lucas Valley. The land was part of what was once a 2,400-acre sheep ranch called Rancho Santa Margarita that belonged to Maria's father, Cirilo "Chilo" Gonzales. Chilo immigrated to California from a small mill town near Guadalajara, Mexico, in 1920.

Maria grew up on the Nicasio ranch, and by the time she moved there with Ron in 1988 her father had sold off about two-thirds of the property. He was unable to grant a piece of the parcel to his daughter and son-in-law because a coun-



Ron Perrin was remembered at a ceremony at his home above Lucas Valley two weeks ago. Photo by Justin Nobel.

ty law prevented subdividing a property in this manner.

By 1989, the couple had completed the home, which sits at the edge of a forest-fringed meadow overlooking hills striped green and gold. They raised three kids here, Jon, Lucia and Rosa.

The family lived close to nature, helping to nurse several sick animals back to health, including a deer and a raven named Hector that slept in their bed for four months.

Ron and Maria continued riding, despite friends who said it was impossible with children. "We'd get on the bike and call the kids and say 'Hey, we're not coming home,'" said Maria. "We went wherever, and stopped when we felt like stopping."

She wrote fondly of their time spent riding in her letter. "No matter what challenges life threw at us, we would get on the bike and once we had the wind in our face, it was all good! Together we could conquer anything!"

The couple shared their love of motorcycles with their children too. "On Easter Sunday when everyone else was doing their prim and proper stuff we'd be out having a great time on our bikes," said Maria. Jon now has his own Harley and Lucia rides a Ducati.

When Chilo died in 2000, his final

will went missing. Maria argued with her brother over who would inherit the land but with no written heir the court appointed trustees to settle the estate. The trustees took a loan out on the property, using the home as collateral because it was the only piece of a land with a structure on it.

"The political fight to regain what was rightfully ours became intense and you became depressed," wrote Maria. "We faced losing everything we have ever owned!"

On the afternoon of February 23, upon the advice of a doctor, Ron considered taking a Paxil pill, an anti-depressant drug. Maria spent several hours trying to dissuade Ron from taking the drug, but at about 4 p.m. he took the pill. Some ten hours later he shot himself in the heart.

"It wasn't my husband's nature to take his own life," said Maria. "He loved life."

The Thursday after he died hundreds of friends and family members packed Monte's Chapel of the Hills in San Anselmo for the funeral service. "People poured out the side doors and the driveway was filled with motorcycles," said Dan.

The following day a similar sized crowd gathered under an azure sky at the family's home atop Lucas Valley for a farewell tribute by the Marine Corps. Guests sat in folding chairs or stood solemnly in

the grass. Several perched themselves on the side of pickup trucks parked in the winding dirt drive and some sat on rocks beside a duck pond.

At 1 p.m. the service began and except for some sniffing, the crowd was silent, and the sounds of the country became audible: a stream gurgled, a dog barked, a frog croaked, a crow cawed and a screen door creaked. An American flag was unfurled and marines dressed in full uniform fired a salute into the crisp afternoon air.

"He was my soul mate," said Maria, who wore black and spoke in a voice laden with sadness but etched in spirit. "He loved life, and he will be forever in our hearts. So please, let us celebrate, and help us remember the good times, because to me there were no bad times."

Overhead, a shiny black raven circled, catching the eye of all who were there. The crowd looked up, astonished, and burst out clapping.

Ron is survived by his wife Maria, his mother Mary, his daughters Rosa and Lucia, his son Jon and numerous other friends and family members. Memorial contributions can be sent to Maria Perrin c/o Indiggin.us, P.O. Box 5008, Novato, CA 94949-5008.