

Elder's Feature



Photos courtesy of Louise Medeiros

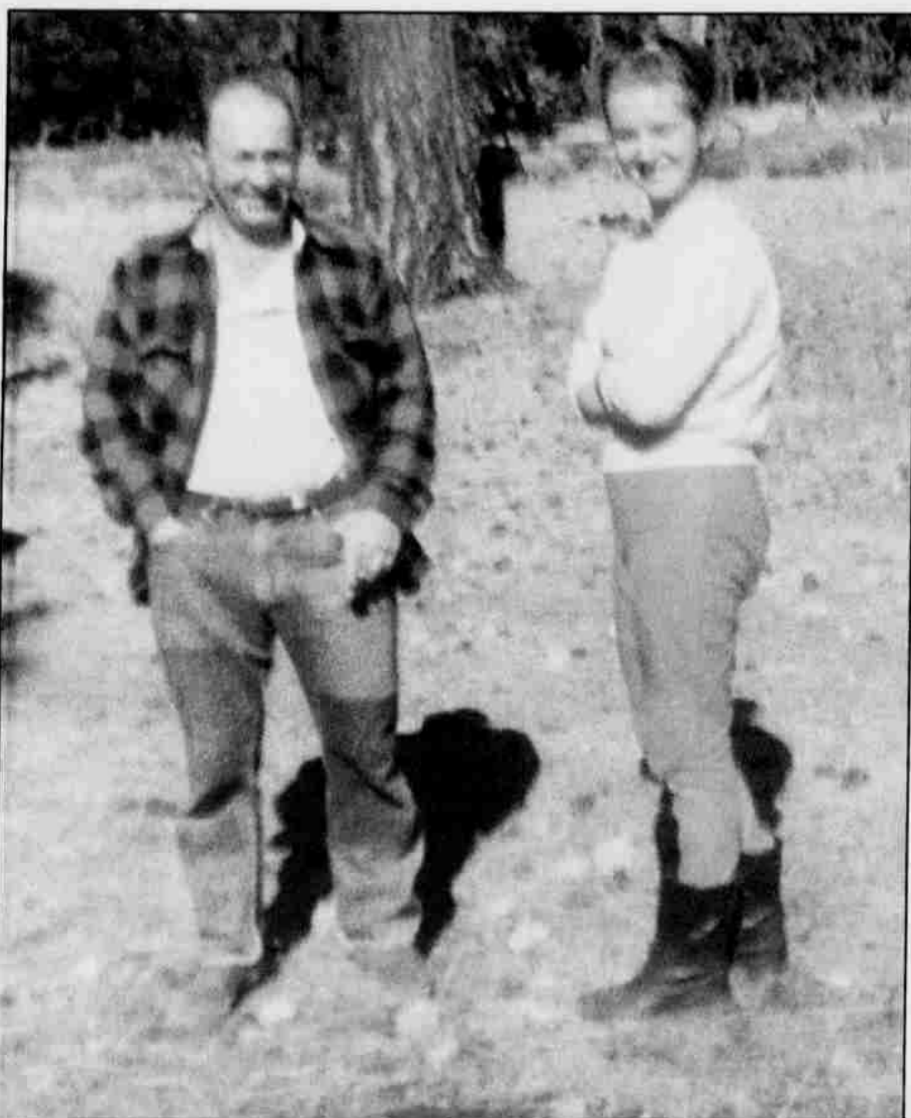
Louie and Louise Medeiros on the couch with Buddy, their Lhasa Apso in 1992.

MEDEIROS continued from front page

"She always took care of people," said daughter Tammy.

"The loosing of the hounds," Medeiros said. "Open the doors and they go escort the guest in."

Inside is a potpourri of hobbies, including crafts and artists, adventures and whatnot that have stopped along their ways to the walls, the closets, wherever they were going. As a girl at home, recalled her cousin and childhood friend, Tribal Elder Sharon Hanson, Medeiros had "probably 6-8 garbage barrels full of craft things to do when she retired."



Uncle Frank Forster and Louise near Boone Cabin in the Ochocos in 1967.

Today, she's got a remodel of the kitchen in mind.

She comes from talented parents, Medeiros is proud to say, that gave her the example and the confidence to take on all sorts of projects. Her dad, Tom Forster, who passed on in October at 99 years of age, and Forster's cousin, Frank Forster, married Mercier sisters, Dorothy and Marion, in 1936 and 1937, and worked their magic together for years. Frank Forster and Marion Mercier were Sharon Hanson's parents.

In 1946, both families moved to Central Oregon and lived in a motel for a week or two, as Medeiros remembers, while the cousins built garages. The family

moved from the motel rooms to the garage rooms while the cousins went to work on the houses. "I can still find the house my dad built," she said.

"They could do anything. Electrician, farmer, builder, car mechanic, plumber; back in those days, you had to survive so you learned how to do all that stuff."

These talents were the road out of poverty. Of course, they had the use of everything the cousins could make, or sales from it, but Medeiros also said, "We never felt poor."

But she also remembers a time the family was invited to a 4th of July picnic and her family "took cream to town. They sold it for 35 cents and got a watermelon for the picnic. That was a big thing," she said. "I guess we were poor."

"I remember during the Depression, Daddy walking to town for any kind of work. He found a \$10 bill and bought pigs feet and me an ice cream cone. "Never ever ever did I feel poor."

"We raised food animals. Daddy hunted for food. We always had food."

Her dad, she said, was the kind of guy who "never locked anything. He left the keys in the car and the pickup. Daddy was very easy going — he would give you anything you needed but if you stole from him or messed with him, watch out."

"And Mom and Marion were seamstresses. They could sew and every year my mom bought a pattern and we kids went to school with new clothes."

She remembers that her mom, Dorothy, who passed on 15 years ago, "was an excellent cook" and hopes some of the skills have passed down to her.

"Daddy and Uncle Frank were master gardeners," said Medeiros, "and Mom and Marion canned anything they could get their hands on."

"Mom was always busy."

And today, said Sharon Hanson, Medeiros is that same kind of hard worker.

"She worked most of the time



Louise in Bend in 1950.

(when she was young)," said Hanson. "She had her own car and worked on the farm."

Later on, "she sewed most of her girls' clothes."

Medeiros remembers a nearly idyllic childhood. On a road trip to Idaho, she said, "Daddy had a truck and he took the back window out and made a canopy for it."

"Daddy was teaching us to shoot, and Mom made us the candy bars and cookies and she cooked for us over the campfire."

"That was the most wonderful trip," she said. "I remember driving down the road eating a candy bar and sitting and looking out the back window into the cab."

"She always called our grandpa, Daddy," remembered daughter Tammy. To me that's always been really special. When we were little kids," she called him, grandpa, to us, but as we got older, she went back to calling him, Daddy."

Another trip had another sort of excitement. "Daddy was taking the 4-H Horse Club into the Ochocos," said Medeiros, "I remember him loading up the big truck with horses."

When they got there, the kids tried to get Tom to ride with them using the ruse that they'd get lost without him, but her dad said, "You can't get lost."

They could and they did, Medeiros said. "We were trudging around and we didn't know where we were and it got pretty dramatic. We were putting up SOS's to planes going by. Why was nobody looking for us?"

"Finally, we got back to camp."

"Dad got lost regularly, but he always knew where he was." She said that she is like her dad in that way. "I'm always getting lost, but I always know where I am."

When she was 16, Medeiros was named princess in the Deschutes County Fair. Her mom and Aunt Marion got a Pendleton blanket at



The Hudson-Mercier clan in 1950. Louise is seated at the bottom right. Next over is her mom, Dorothy, holding Marie on her lap. A little further to the left is Aunt Marion holding Sharon. Among others in the photo are great grandmother and grandfather Hudson seated in the center. In the top row from the left is Ila Petite, Vernon Mercier, Gertrude Mercier, Blanch (whose last name now eludes Louise), Martha Mercier and Barbara Mercier, and so many others.

LIFE ON AND OFF THE REZ

"I can remember when we were restored," said Medeiros. "I had just come home from work and we were a Tribe again, but I had no idea what it meant. I'd never had to worry about it before."

That was when her mom collected all of the records documenting people in the Hudson-Mercier family. Martha Jane Sands, for example, is Medeiros's great great grandmother. A copper statue of Martha Jane sits holding a basket she is working on in front of Legends at the casino. Next to the statue of Martha Jane is one of Martha Jane's granddaughter, Gertrude. Gertrude was Medeiros's mother's mother.

Medeiros has taken part in Tribal activities since coming to Grand Ronde to live. For years, she has been chair or member of the Elders Committee and also is a member of the Enrollment Committee. She always takes part in the Elders Honor days.

She championed Elder participation in the annual Muckleshoot event, last year bringing her granddaughter, Dorothy, and other Elders for the canoe gathering of many Tribes that brought back the memory of times past.

"The canoes came around this outcropping one at a time," she recalled. They were singing songs and paddling, and they came past us and waved and then landed at the ceremonial platform. I really, really, really enjoyed that," she said.

The family had always come back to Grand Ronde where her mom was born and raised. "As we got older, we thought it was fun coming out here," she said. "There were all these colorful people who lived here (and still do). Dean (Mercier), Crystal (Thomas), Ila (Doud), Martha (Mercier), Velma (Mercier)."

"We were not part of it but were," she said.

FAMILY LIFE

With first husband, Duane Anderson, a millworker in Bend, Medeiros had three children, Tony, now 47, a contractor living near

Medford with two children of his own, Tammy, 45, also with two children, living in Palmer, Idaho, and Trixie, 44, Medeiros's youngest who lives in Fruitland, Idaho.

Married almost 20 years, she called Duane "a hard worker," and added, "Our big thing was water-skiing. We would drag the babies to mom and dad's and go."

In 1965, Duane and Daddy and Uncle Frank and Merlyn Walker, my brother-in-law, they built our house on Dean Swift Road in Bend in three months. They would work nights at their jobs and then come home and work on the house, and then go back to work. Me and the kids would go out when they were done for the day and clean up."

When son, Tony, was 10, he and Duane went to Madras and came back with three rabbits and cages. "They were on sale," Medeiros remembered. "And that was the beginning. We were living on an acre and a half, and before it was all over three or four years down the road, we had 100 rabbits and we were butchering and selling them. Tony went to the fair with the rabbits and took all the blue ribbons. Everyone wanted to beat Tony with the rabbits."

And there were horses for the kids. Tony got the black and white Welsh pony named Rocky, who was already about 25 when they got her.

"Tony jumped right on the horse and it decided, 'I'm going home.' And off it went down the middle of the road. Then it threw Tony into a telephone pole. I was watching. Tony cracked a few ribs. That was a very eventful few years," she said.

Then, from friends in Alfalfa, the family picked up a horse for \$50. They called it, Domino. The friends bred Appalosas and Domino did not mark.

"That was Tammy's horse," said Medeiros. "She trained that horse. They would walk across the field and he would walk with his head on her shoulder. They did very well in 4-H."

The kids also did a lot of trail riding. "Horses are wonderful for kids."

Daughter Tammy remembers the animals. "We always had a lot of ani-

mals. We always had too many cats and too many dogs and mom and dad weren't into spaying and neutering back them, so we were always trying to find homes for the babies. And we had the horses. They took us to a lot of play days. We raised rabbits and showed them at 4-Hs. One time we even had a duck. It was injured when we got it, so we kept it around as a pet for awhile, and it flew off one day."

When Medeiros was much younger, recalled Sharon Hanson, "we did a lot of fun things, running around, going to dances," but she also remembers a childhood filled with horses. "We had a horse and kept it at their farm," said Hanson. "We were there every week on Sundays. The adults would play cards and us girls would put horses in the water ditches and then we'd jump on them and they ran and we jumped the irrigation ditches bareback. We really thought we were something."

"And you know that was a long time ago," said Hanson. Medeiros married Louie Medeiros in 1982. "He was a very interesting person," she said. She described an incident in which Louie may or may not have been part of a plan that used a boat to spring a guy from Alcatraz prison "and nobody escapes Alcatraz," she said.

"Don't tell anybody," Louie told her, "but I worked on that boat."

"He had some wild stories," Louie said. A truck driver and jack-of-all-trades, he also was the kind of guy who took special care of Louise. She came home from work sick one day and Louie came in. "Someday, could you build me a shelf," she asked him absently.

"The same day, he came back and had it made."

So many stories in the family are legend.

"One of my cousins on Daddy's side," Medeiros continued, "did a history and found out that back in Texas, a relative who was a horse thief got hanged."

"Dad said, 'Where did you hear that?' 'And we said, 'It's true. Mom told us.' 'And he couldn't argue with that.' ■