



Dan Coyro/Sentinel photos

Lori Holland of Santa Cruz, right, beat out Robin Allen of Boulder Creek in the look-alike contest.

# City celebrates ZaSu Pitts

By MAY WONG  
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Santa Cruz had a party Thursday.

It contained every essential ingredient — sunshine, great rhythm and blues, a look-alike contest, and 500 people ready to have good time and dance on the streets.

Above all, there was a reason to celebrate.

It was ZaSu Pitts Day.

A proclamation by Mayor Scott Kennedy and the release by the U.S. Post Office of a commemorative stamp of ZaSu and nine other silent screen stars made it official.

ZaSu was a local girl who went to Hollywood in 1915 to start what became a long and illustrious career in film.

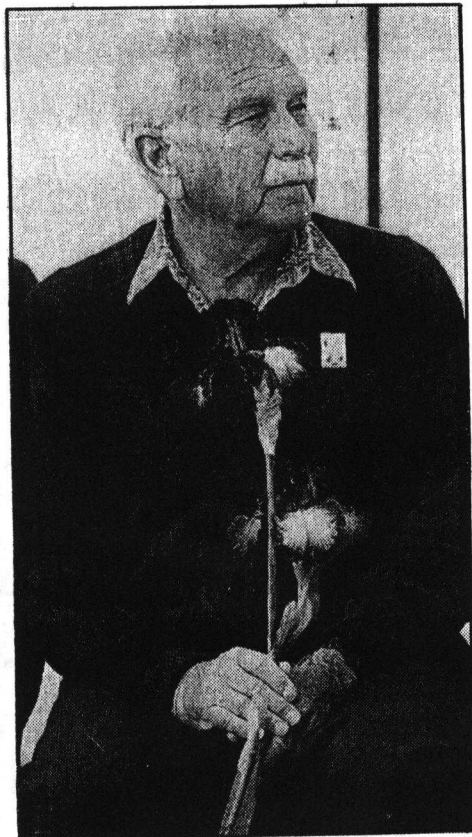
Her wistful eyes and fluttery hands are now emblazoned on a stamp that is part of set designed by theatrical caricaturist Al Hirschfeld. Other silent screen stars commemorated in the series are Rudolph Valentino, Clara Bow, Charlie Chaplin, John Gilbert, Harold Lloyd, the Keystone Cops, Theda Bara and Buster Keaton.

But ZaSu (pronounce Zay-Soo) was the star of the show in her hometown Thursday.

The events started at 10:30 a.m. with the release of first-day covers and cachet envelopes at the main post office. By the end of the day, the post office — complete with a temporary ZaSu Pitts station — sold more than 5,000 sheets of the Stars of the Silent Screen stamp series and nearly 7,000 envelopes.

"I didn't realize there were that many stamp collectors in town," said Don Cativera, the Santa Cruz postmaster.

Then the party started at 5 p.m. outside the post office.



ZaSu's son, Don Gallery, with iris.

Kennedy read an abridged version of his proclamation, calling ZaSu "one of the the most endearing comediennees in film history."

John Ghio, who has bred more than 100 varieties of irises in Santa Cruz over the last 41 years, even dedicated one of his latest to the actress.

The flower with salmon-colored petals

and black-cherry colored edges, will be called the ZaSu iris and will be available for sale throughout the world in a year, he said. "This particular one just sort of said ZaSu when I saw it," he said.

A bouquet of his irises went to Lori Holland of Santa Cruz, the winner and one of two contestants in the the ZaSu Pitts look-alike contest. Her appearance hit the "spittin' image" mark on the human "applause-o-meter."

Holland donned a conservative 1920s style dress, black nylons with a center seam in the back, and dark lipstick. The do — short brown, wavy hair wedged in the back and longer in the front — is how she wears it every day, she said.

Then the dancing began. With the sassy vocals and rhythm and blues music of the popular San Francisco band, the ZaSu Pitts Memorial Orchestra, people apparently couldn't help but move.

"I'm not really a fan (of ZaSu), but of course it's a magic name from my youth," said 80-year-old Hamilton Ferris of Santa Cruz. "I came for the excitement, the music," he said, tapping his foot and swayed hand-in-hand with his wife.

ZaSu's son, Don Gallery, and two grandsons, made a special appearance.

"It's such a great honor," Gallery said of the stamp and the ceremony.

City officials called the celebration a successful event. Even the police officers stationed at the event were having fun.

"It shows we can find celebrations that everyone could enjoy," said Councilwoman Cynthia Matthews.

The activities continue today with two showings of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," starring ZaSu Pitts and W.C. Fields. The showings will be at the McPherson Center for Art and History, 705 Front St., Santa Cruz.