

ZaSu

was a cook

Screen star also was quite the candy maker

By JANET BLASER
Sentinel staff writer

RUDOLPH VALENTINO taught her to dance. Mary Pickford launched her career on the silver screen.

ZaSu Pitts eventually teamed up with comedy greats like W.C. Fields, and with her plaintive eyes and fluttery hands, kept audiences laughing through a career that spanned silent movies, talking pictures and television.

The Santa Cruz native was a woman of many talents who went on to become a darling of the silver screen and make more than 500 movies. In the midst of all that, Pitts somehow managed to retain the friendly manner and small-town congeniality that endeared her to audiences for almost 50 years.

This weekend, Santa Cruz will honor Pitts with a festival that coincides with the release of a commemorative stamp by the U.S. Post Office, the first ever to feature a Santa Cruzan. A locally-produced commemorative cachet envelope, with a short biography of Pitts and photos of her and her childhood home, will also be offered for sale for the next month in a special area in the main branch of the Post Office. The envelopes cost \$3, and a limited edition cancellation stamp is available as well.

A proclamation by the mayor, a free concert by the ZaSu Pitts Memorial Orchestra, showings of two of her films, and a ZaSu Pitts look-alike contest are also part of the festivities planned.

Although Pitts is known primarily as a comedienne, she also enjoyed making candy as a hobby. Just before her death in 1963, she published a cookbook of recipes and anecdotes. "Candy Hits" contains stories about learning how to make candy with her mother in her



At home in the kitchen: ZaSu Pitts had a fondness for candy.

home in Santa Cruz, as well as inside looks at life in the film industry.

Pitts said making candy was always a "big moment" in her life, and her cookbook includes four basic recipes for be-

ginners that everyone will love. This week's festival will include candies made from these original recipes by Buckhart's Candies of Santa Cruz.

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A celebration in honor of a hometown star

OFFICIAL proclamations, live music and film screenings — Santa Cruz is going all out to honor the ZaSu Pitts postage stamp. Following are the planned activities.

Thursday

10:30 a.m. — Official release of limited edition local cachet envelope and first day of issue cancellation on the steps of the main Post Office, 850 Front St., Santa Cruz

5:10 p.m. — Local celebration begins on the Post Office steps with:

- Proclamation by Santa Cruz Mayor Scott Kennedy.
- Guest appearances by ZaSu Pitts' son and grandsons.

- Look-alike contest with prizes.
- Candies made from Pitts' cookbook will be available for sale.

5:30-6:30 p.m. — Free concert by ZaSu Pitts Memorial Orchestra at the corner of Front and Pacific Streets, Santa Cruz

7:30 and 10 p.m. — Showing of the 1923 silent film "Greed" at the McPherson Center for Art and History, 705 Front St., Santa Cruz. Film historian a Morton Marcus will give an intro-



duction, and Phil Collins will provide live piano accompaniment. Don Gallery, ZaSu Pitts' son, will make a guest appearance. Admission is \$5. Advance tickets are available at the center and at the City Parks and Recreation office, 307 Church St., Santa Cruz. For more information, call 425-7278 or 429-3477.

Friday

7:30 and 10 p.m. — Showing of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," starring ZaSu Pitts and W.C. Fields, with introductory slide show by historian Ross Gibson and guest appearance by Ron Fields, grandson of W.C. Fields. Tickets are \$5 adults, \$3 children under 12, at the McPherson Center. See above for purchase information.

ZaSu the candy maker

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ZASU PITTS CHOCOLATE FUDGE

- 2 cups sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk
- 2 1-oz. squares unsweetened chocolate
- 1 tsp. corn syrup
- 2 Tbsps. butter or margarine
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup coarsely chopped walnuts or toasted almonds

Butter the sides of a heavy 2-3 quart saucepan. Combine sugar, milk, chocolate, salt and corn syrup. Heat and stir over medium heat till sugar dissolves and mixture comes to a boil.

If you have a candy thermome-

ter, cook till it registers 238 degrees. At this point, do not stir unless necessary to keep it from sticking. If you don't have a candy thermometer, remove pan from heat and drop a few drops of fudge mixture into a glass of cold water. If the mixture is hot enough, small soft balls of fudge will form.

Add butter and let cool to lukewarm (110 degrees) without stirring. Add vanilla and start beating vigorously. Soon the mixture will become very thick and start to lose its gloss. Toss in the nuts. Pour into a buttered shallow pan, and let cool. Cut into squares and serve.

PANOCHA

- $2\frac{1}{3}$ cups firmly packed brown sugar

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup evaporated milk or light cream
- 2 Tbsps. butter
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped nuts

In a heavy three-quart saucepan, blend sugar and cream. Stir over medium heat till sugar dissolves and mixture comes to a boil. Continue to cook until a few drops make a soft ball when dropped into a glass of cold water, or till temperature reaches 238 degrees on a candy thermometer. Remove from heat immediately and let cool to lukewarm.

Add butter and vanilla and beat till mixture becomes thick and creamy and starts to lose its gloss. Just before it "sets up," add nuts. Pour into a buttered shallow pan. When cool, cut in squares.