

POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE ASSOCIATION

# *Voices* <sup>at the</sup> *Seashore*



## Love at the Seashore

*Dorothy & Roman*

BY ZOE DUERKSEN-SALM



# Love at the Seashore : *Dorothy & Roman*



(L) Dorothy paddle boarding on Tomales Bay. (R) Roman on the hike to Limantour beach with his heavy backpack of picnic goodies.

*Point Reyes National Seashore has something for everyone. PRNSA members Dorothy and Roman love the park for different reasons—she prefers hiking, while he loves being in the water—but they’re both drawn to being a part of the community of PRNSA members who care for and contribute to this park.*

The hike from Laguna Trailhead to Limantour Beach is an easy two-mile stroll through coastal scrub—unless you’re carrying a 40-pound backpack filled mostly with cheese.

A trip to Point Reyes was nothing out of the ordinary for PRNSA members Roman Hasenbeck and Dorothy Walter. They’d shucked oysters in Tomales Bay, visited the elephant seals at Drake’s Beach, and hiked a good portion of the Seashore’s 150 miles of trails.

The difference on this day was that tucked away among the picnic items and cheese on Roman’s back was a ring and a bottle of champagne. When he woke up that morning he didn’t know exactly where they’d be picnicking, but after years of loving and caring for this park together, he knew he’d propose in Point Reyes National Seashore.

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*“The good thing about Point Reyes is you’ll always find a beautiful spot where you can propose. I never thought about another place.” – Roman*



Dorothy and Roman enjoy a post-engagement picnic at Limantour Beach.

## From Childhood to Point Reyes

Dorothy grew up in Beijing, China, where hiking was part of her everyday life. Her parents had always loved hiking, and as grad students had often visited Point Reyes. And when a job relocated their family to China, they were adamant about keeping the hiking tradition alive. Dorothy continued the tradition even after returning to the Bay Area by finding respite on the trails at Point Reyes National Seashore.

Almost 5,000 miles away, Roman was raised in Munich, Germany, where he opted for

watersports instead of hiking. When Roman moved to the United States, Point Reyes was the first national park he visited, and he immediately felt connected. Much like Dorothy, Roman found relaxation and recovery at the park, but for him this was through water activities and spending time in the local towns.

“You’d think growing up so close to the alps, that he’d be a good hiker,” Dorothy said, chuckling about the first overnight trip they’d taken to Point Reyes together. Dorothy, expecting a weekend of hiking, was appalled at Roman’s hiking shoe

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*“Honestly, it was the best party we’d been to since the beginning of the pandemic. It had been a year and half, and we weren’t getting out much. The music, the people, the cause, and learning more about Youth in Parks, was just so much fun,” Dorothy says, “We’re certainly coming back now every year because I’m addicted!”*

Roman and Dorothy at PRNSA’s 2021 Picnic on the Pacific Plate event.

choice (his regular sneakers)—but what would you expect from someone who thought he’d be eating oysters all weekend?

## Joining the PRNSA Community

Despite their differences in expectations for the weekend, the trip expanded their options for how to enjoy the park. That weekend they hiked Tomales Point Trail together for the first time—a trail that has since become their go-to for weekend getaways, impressing visitors, and celebrations.

“People don’t comprehend how such a place can exist, it’s just mind blowing,” said Dorothy, “A couple of years ago my mom was recovering from cancer, and we took her there when she got better. It was so amazing to be able to celebrate life in a place like that.”

Dorothy and Roman also explored the beaches—much to Roman’s excitement—including hours spent at Drake’s Beach, where Dorothy’s sister was working as an elephant seal docent through the Winter Wildlife program run by Park Ranger Carlo Arreglo.

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*That was the day they decided to become PRNSA members and give back to the park that gave them so much. They were drawn to be part of the community of people they saw who care for and contribute to this park as volunteers, docents, and donors.*

Dorothy and Roman at the end of the 9-mile (out and back) Tomales Point Trail.

That was the day they decided to become PRNSA members and give back to the park that gave them so much. They were drawn to be part of the community of people they saw who care for and contribute to this park as volunteers, docents, and donors.

PRNSA members are the driving force behind the projects that maintain the Seashore's unique natural and cultural resources, and open spaces that belong to us all. Since joining PRNSA's community of members, Dorothy and Roman have become annual Peter Behr Circle donors, have sponsored PRNSA's annual fundraising event, rallied coworkers to support PRNSA

on Giving Tuesday, and done so much more to support our education, conservation, and community building work. By becoming members, Dorothy and Roman were not only enjoying Point Reyes, but helping to ensure that it can be enjoyed for future generations.

## Celebrating Love

Flash forward to Roman and his backpack of cheese. As usual, Dorothy wanted to go off on a bigger hike that day, while Roman was heading toward the beach as fast as possible—although this time he had a greater motive than relaxation.

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**(L) Dorothy visits Drakes Beach to see her sister volunteering for the Winter Wildlife elephant seal docent program. (R) Dorothy with her mother and sister, continuing the family hiking tradition at Point Reyes National Seashore.**

“I was just trying to get down to the beach, and she was trying to go off and hike up a mountain,” Roman recalls, “It was a total surprise!”

And then, as you might expect, when Dorothy said yes to his proposal, Roman suggested they jump in the water in celebration!

The two were married at City Hall last year, without their geographically dispersed families because of rising covid cases. They plan to celebrate with friends and family in Point Reyes when Covid is more manageable.

To celebrate their wedding and honor the place where they got engaged, Dorothy purchased tickets to PRNSA’s Picnic on the Pacific Plate (POPP) fundraiser in October. The annual fundraising event brings together the greater PRNSA community for an evening of fun and fundraising to create opportunities for all people to experience, enhance, and preserve Point Reyes National Seashore for present and future generations.

“Honestly, it was the best party we’d been to since the beginning of the pandemic. It had been a year and half, and we weren’t getting out much. The music, the people, the cause, and learning more about [Youth in Parks](#), was just so much fun,” Dorothy says, “We’re certainly coming back every year because I’m addicted!”

The beauty of Point Reyes National Seashore is in the diversity of natural and cultural resources that it has to offer. Whether you’re more like Dorothy and prefer the park for hiking, or if you’d rather enjoy the small town vibes and beaches like Roman, the Seashore has something for you. Members like Dorothy and Roman are the driving force behind PRNSA’s work to ensure that these experiences are available for all.