



ROSSMOOR NEWS

Happy Valentine's Day

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Final frame: News photographer retires after 18 years at Rossmoor

By Cathy Tallyn
Staff writer

Rossmoor's official shutterbug is moving on to new challenges.

After 18 years as the Rossmoor News photographer, Mike DiCarlo will retire on March 1.

Photography will once again become his hobby.

His older brother Jim can be thanked for introducing him to black and white film photography when he was 16. The New York native had a career in the aerospace industry in Southern California before he took up photography seriously and moved to the Bay Area.

His wife, Patricia, can be thanked for his becoming a photojournalist. It was she

who saw the ad for a Rossmoor News photographer and encouraged him to apply.

If he low balls it, DiCarlo said, he's taken 14,688 News shots. However, he thinks 25,000-and-some shots are more like it. "Sometimes I go to a GRF (Board) meeting and take 90."

He's taken photos for feature and news stories, sporting events, club publicity and various resident's milestones, as well as visiting politicians and fatal and nonfatal traffic accidents and fires, to name just a few. He also provides photos for Rossmoor websites and for some News advertisements.

Residents and staff who have worked with him over the years describe him as a good photographer who's even

tempered, patient, thoughtful, punctual, professional and a good friend.

"It has been a pleasure working with Mike over the past 18 years. He's pleasant, upbeat and works well with the residents," said Maureen O'Rourke, former longtime editor of the Rossmoor News.

"He is in a tough position, because most people don't like their photos. But over the years so many residents have told me that Mike took the best photo they have ever taken," she added. "You can't beat that."

Ken Lezin of the Photography Club said DiCarlo did a really good job for the News.

"Mike is a real sweetheart of a guy," Lezin said. "I think he is a much better photogra-

Continued on page 10A



Photo by Lenny Cook

Retiring photographer Mike DiCarlo sits at his work station. He'll be spending more time with his granddaughter Lily, whose pictures can be seen behind him.

Woodpeckers going nuts



The chimney cap on the home on Rossmoor Parkway covered up the stash of acorns.

Birds get creative storing their acorns

By Maggie Sharpe
Staff writer

Rossmoor Building Maintenance staff got a call recently from a resident on Rossmoor Parkway who reported noises in the walls that sounded like some kind of animal.

"Our guys got up on the roof and pulled off the chimney cap – and we found hundreds of little acorns in the chimney," said Clayton Clark, Golden Rain Foundation's (GRF) building maintenance manager. "We think they were stored there by either acorn woodpeckers or squirrels."

Both animals are notoriously fond of acorns and find all kinds of creative places to hide them.

Another resident complained that her clothes dryer wasn't drying the clothes. "We inspected the dryer ducts and found a bucket load of acorns," said Clark.

Acorn woodpeckers are serious hoarders, but they usually stash the acorns in holes that they drill into tree trunks – and the exterior of the Event Center, in the case of Rossmoor.



A squirrel, a woodpecker, or other wild animal was storing hundreds of acorns under the chimney cap.

"They've drilled hundreds of holes in the exterior wood," said Clark, adding that the nearby oak trees provide an ideal hunting ground for the little scavengers.

As well as pecking holes in the Event Center's green trim, the woodpeckers have drilled dozens of holes in the wood beams above the three big windows that face onto Stanley Dollar Drive, across from Creekside Grill. The holes are in all six corners of the beams. Clark thinks the birds perch on the stone façade, from where they can reach the wood with their beaks.

The birds have also found handy storage space in the overhead lights in the parking lot between Dollar Clubhouse and the Event Center.

"We've had to seal up the parking lights because the woodpeckers are pecking holes and shorting out the lights," said Clark.

Last summer, Peacock Hall got a brand new coat of paint. The woodpeckers quickly

Continued on page 8A

Residents invited to take survey on shopping center

By Maggie Sharpe
Staff writer

The owners of Rossmoor Shopping Center invite Rossmoor residents to complete a simple, three-page survey (see link at the bottom of the article) about what restaurants, retailers and medical/professional services they would like to see in the shopping center.

The 50-year-old center is currently undergoing a major renovation and the owners are recruiting new tenants to join those already there.

The survey can be completed online or printed, filled out, and returned via email or snail mail.

"We want everybody's two cents worth," said property owner Terrence Tallen of Rossmoor Retail Partners, adding that he hopes to receive thousands of responses. "Our

marketing people will analyze data from the surveys and go back armed with that information to potential retailers and restaurants. A lot of retailers don't understand the demographics of Rossmoor and that residents want upscale shops and restaurants."

Rossmoor resident Marilyn Weiss is a leader of a focus group at Rossmoor that recently hosted a presentation at Creekside by Rossmoor Retail Partners about the shopping center. The meeting was attended by about 110 residents, all eager to voice their opinions and learn about potential new tenants.

"We're helping Terrence to clarify what people in the community want," said Weiss, a 7-year resident of Rossmoor. "I hear a lot of questions from people about why it's taking so long to complete the renovation.

Continued on page 14A

INSIDE THE NEWS

Section A

Arts and Leisure..... 21-29A
Classified 32-38A
Main News 1-17A
Movies 30-31A
Op/Ed Columns..... 18-20A
Residents Forum18A

Section B

Arts and Leisure listings...17B
Bridge/Games 2-4B
Calendar..... 12-14B
Channel 28 TV Guide24B
Clubs.....5-9B and 19-21B
Excursions..... 13-16B
Health 22-23B
Obituaries11B
Religion10-11B
Sports 1-2B



Residents share their love stories. Pages 3-7A

www.rossmoornews.com

SURVEY: What do you want at Rossmoor Shopping Center?

Continued from page 1A

But from concept to shovel, a project like this can take 18 months up to three years to complete.”

The new CVS and Starbuck’s are already up and running and a new burger restaurant called Burgerim is set to open next door to Starbuck’s this summer.

“We want to use the results of this survey to help Terrence and his marketing team to persuade new businesses and restaurants to open at Rossmoor Shopping Center,” said Weiss. “I think there’s a false impression about Rossmoor. Everybody you meet here is somebody – doctors, CEOs, educators. And retailers don’t realize that most people here have money to spend. The spending power of Rossmoor residents

has changed drastically in the last 10 years.”

As an example, Weiss noted that the top-priced home at Rossmoor in 2008 sold for \$1.2 million, whereas in 2018 a top seller sold for over \$2 million.

“Residents are begging for better retail and restaurant options at Rossmoor Shopping Center,” said Weiss, adding that right now, a lot of people drive to Lafayette or Alamo to do their shopping. “A lot of residents, including our neighbors in the Parkmead district and new Pulte homes just outside the gate, would own Rossmoor Shopping Center as their place to shop – if it was worth owning.”

She added that people who rely on the bus for transportation would be

particularly grateful for new shopping and eating options at the center on their doorstep – and improvements to Safeway in particular.

“There is strong disenchantment with the Safeway store among residents – and a strong desire for a Trader Joe’s,” said Weiss. “The Safeway is not pretty and it smells. It really needs a redo.”

She and Tallen think Mexican, Chinese, Thai, Italian, pizza and other ethnic restaurant options also would be happily patronized by Rossmoor and other Walnut Creek residents.

The survey poses eight questions regarding: general thoughts about Rossmoor Shopping Center; likes and dislikes about the center; what stores

the respondents currently patronize; parking problems at Trader Joe’s in Walnut Creek; respondents’ top five retailers they’d like to see at the center; and top five restaurants; and if respondents have any interest in franchise opportunities.

To access the survey go to: <https://rossmoor.com/what-we-offer/walnut-creek-vicinity/rossmoor-shopping-center-survey>.

The survey should be returned to Samantha Freeberg, Marketing Director, Tallen Capital Partners, LLC, via email to sfreeberg@tallencapital.com or by mail to Tallen Capital Partners, LLC, c/o Samantha Freeberg, Marketing Director, 2683 Via de la Valle, G-608, Del Mar, CA 92014.

Donate to ‘Fling Your Bling’ fundraiser

Residents are urged not to throw away old jewelry; rather they are urged to donate neglected necklaces, broken bracelets and orphaned earrings to Youth Homes Auxiliary.

Youth Homes is a nonprofit agency that provides a range of services to abused and neglected Bay Area children.

An orange donation container will be on the counter at the Rossmoor Library until Friday, Feb. 15.

The Youth Homes are four professionally staffed group residences in Contra Costa County, offering a nurturing home environment, counseling and education for at-risk youth who have been removed from their homes by the courts.

Other Youth Homes agency services include support for foster families, and transition assistance for young people moving on to independent living, including shelter, education, counseling and career-planning assistance.

Under the leadership of Youth Homes Auxiliary member Peggy Fleming, a group of young girls in the Youth Homes program participate in an ongoing workshop that transforms donated jewelry into new creations and a new sense of accomplishment.

A brooch may be made into a necklace,

while single earrings can be combined to adorn a bracelet or decorate the handles of a hostess serving set.

In addition to learning valuable skills, the girls receive the sales proceeds of the items that they make, money they can spend on things they will want and need as they move on to live independently.

All donations are carefully evaluated. Money from precious metal scrap and sales of jewelry in wearable condition goes into a separate scholarship fund, making college education or vocational training possible for foster youth who will soon be on their own with few resources.

In the past four-plus years, \$79,600 has been raised through the sale of donated jewelry. Broken precious metal jewelry is sold for scrap.

Exceptional pieces are sold on eBay or through Darren Jewelers of Danville, which takes no commission and also helps evaluate donated jewelry.

Youth Homes Auxiliary, which has an active Rossmoor chapter, supplements county and state funding. The auxiliary helps provide special-occasion gifts, money for school supplies and scholarships for college and vocational training, as well as support for a mentoring program.

Volunteer Exchange to discuss using drones to find landmines

The Volunteer Exchange will meet on Wednesday, March 6, at 10:30 a.m. in the Fireside Room at Gateway.

Speaker Dr. Anders Jepsen, a Rossmoor resident, will talk about using drones to search for landmines. His presentation was first given in 2017 to the Explorers Club of Northern California.

Jepsen, a geologist and geophysicist, spent his career using technology for resource exploration. In recent years, he has become interested in the adaptation of that technology for humanitarian purposes.

Thousands of people each year, often children, are maimed or killed by landmines or unexploded ordinances. Locating and removing these dangers can be costly and dangerous. Drones can be a useful tool.

Members of the Volunteer Exchange perform services for each other such as transportation and pet care. In this way, they earn credit hours which they can use in the future to “pay” other members for services.

New members able to provide services are always welcome. Services are not available to non-members.

For information visit the club’s web page which can be accessed via a link in the “Clubs” section at www.rossmoor.com.

Residents are also invited to attend one of the monthly meetings or call 925-906-9882.

CERT meets Feb. 19 in Fairway Room

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Rossmoor area, will hold its monthly training meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 19, from 10 a.m. to noon in the Fairway Room at Creekside.

CERT’s medical operations chiefs, Patti Holland and Arlyss Rothman, will demonstrate what to do when you encounter a victim.

Attendees will be divid-

ed into search-and-rescue (SAR) teams to practice triage and head-to-toe assessment (HTTA) skills.

Monthly training meetings are open to anyone interested in learning more about CERT. All Rossmoor CERT members are encouraged to attend.

For more information, contact Marcia McLean, area coordinator, at 415-246-1994 or marciacan@comcast.net.

Newcomers set meeting

The Newcomers group meets on Monday, March 4, at 1:30 p.m. at Dollar Clubhouse.

The speakers will be Anna Pomazanova, excursion coordinator, and Brian Pennebaker, special events coordinator, in Rossmoor Recreation Department.

Participants can mingle with new residents, volunteers and others who have lived in the community for many years. Refreshments will be served.

Newcomers programs are open to all residents. No reservation is required to attend. This program is a unique way to welcome new residents and provide an opportunity to learn more about the community.

For more information call Elena Ybarra in Recreation at 925-988-7703.

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