

DOMINICAN OAKS

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2026

A MESSAGE FROM OUR ADMINISTRATOR

Dear Residents and Families,

As we move into September we usher in the first day of Autumn on the 22nd. With the end of the summer season we want to thank everyone who participated in our summer activities whether that was joining scenic drives to the beach or attending mixers in our outdoor spaces. We celebrate Labor Day, created to recognize the strength, prosperity, & well-being of our country—but here at Dominican Oaks, it feels personal. Each of you has built a remarkable life, contributing your talents, skills, & heart to your families & communities over the decades. This day is a celebration of you & the lifetime of work, service, & dedication that has shaped the world we live in today. I hope you take time this weekend to relax & reflect on the incredible legacy you have created. This change in season also signals the beginning of the holiday season. We are already busy planning a calendar filled with cozy indoor gatherings, themed festivities, & opportunities for us to come together. Thank you for being the heart & soul of Dominican Oaks. Let's make this a season of reflection, gratitude, & wonderful new memories.

Warmly,

Amy Saulnier

SEPTMEBER RESIDENT MIXER

¡Oye! It's Havana Hour on the Patio! Join us Wednesday, Sept 30th, from 3–4 PM on the Thomas Patio for an afternoon of Cuban inspired bites and sips. We're also thrilled to have the Resident Buddy Committee on hand to introduce our new residents to the community. Whether you're craving a classic mojito or a refreshing mocktail, we've got something to make your afternoon muy bien. See you there ¡nos vemos!

RESIDENT-RUN MAKERS FAIR!

Come one, come all to the first, resident-run Dominican Oaks Makers Fair! A collection of our own residents will participate in a marketplace offering their original creations for sale on Monday, September 28, from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m. in the Oaks Room.

Beautiful artwork, handmade greeting cards, authored books, charming dreamcatchers, crocheted wearables, pretty and practical fabric handicrafts, homegrown succulents, and more! Questions? Please contact residents Kay MacKenzie or Margit Aramburu.

This event is a great opportunity to shop for Christmas presents, hostess gifts, decorative items, fashion accessories, etc... for a friend, or for yourself! Be sure to save the date for this fun and special occasion.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE NOTES

We miss the Bookmobile, but welcome the Santa Cruz County Libraries Homebound Book Program. Trained, vetted and fingerprinted library volunteers serve as Book Buddies who can bring library materials to YOU once a month.

You will need a library card. How to apply: Call the Library's Homebound Service: 831 427-7700 Ex. 7614 or Email: homebound@santacruzpl.org

Our friendly public libraries also offer free ebooks, audiobooks, music, movies, online newspapers and magazines, and much more.

DOMINICAN OAKS MANAGERS

Administrator:
Amy Saulnier

**Activities &
Transportation:**
Annette Rau

Assisted Living:
Stacy Smith-Paynter

Dining Services:
Gerardo Piduca

**Facilities (Maintenance) &
Housekeeping:**
Eric Botkin

Food Service:
Matt Mettalia

**Associate Administrator/
Business Office Manager:**
Cheir Harty

**RIGHT,
HAPPY RESIDENTS
RETURNING FROM
THE HENRY
COWELL BBQ IN
THE REDWOODS.
THANK YOU,
CHEF MATT &
GERARDO, FOR
ANOTHER FUN
FEAST!**



**RIGHT & BELOW,
RESIDENTS
EXPLORING
NATURAL
BRIDGES STATE
PARK &
ENJOYING THE
PICNIC LUNCH
WITH THE
OCEAN VIEW!**



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

06 Phyllis Molinari Anniversary:
08 Sr. Noreen Nolan 02 Gene & Virginia Lieb
09 Evelyn Jones
10 Pat Malloy
10 Sharon Meyer
13 Richard Fredette
14 Elaine Callahan
14 Beverly Vigliecca
16 Joan Osborne
17 Claire Tedsen
23 Joyan Svancara
24 John Heyes
25 Kent Thompson
28 Carol Paarmann
30 Jean Pacholski
30 Susan Peoples



EXCITING NEW BUS OUTINGS IN SEPTEMBER!

In addition to our many shopping trips, scenic drives, and regular bus outings, this month sees several new destination trips, including:

- **Seymour Long Marine Lab + Picnic Lunch**
Thurs, Sept 3, departing 10:30AM
- **Henry Cowell Redwoods Walk & BBQ**
Thurs, Sept 10, departing 10:30AM
Note: first priority will be given to those who were on the wait list last month
- **Shopping in Downtown Santa Cruz**
(resident requested trip!)
Fri, Sept 11, departing 10AM
- **Daisy Consignment Store**
(resident requested trips!)
Wed, Sept 2 departing 10:30AM &
Tues, Sept 15, departing 10:30AM
- **Santa Cruz County Fair**
Wed, Sept 16, departing 1:30PM
- **Coffee & Pie at Gizdich Ranch**
Thurs, Sept 17, departing 10:30AM
- **Alladin Nursery**
Fri, Sept 18, departing 10:30AM
- **Ocean Therapy: Ocean Excursion on a 37 foot Catamaran leaving from the Santa Cruz Harbor**
Thurs, Sept 24, departing 10AM

As always, please sign up at the Activity Desk in the lobby. Even if the list is full, sign up on the wait list as there often are cancelations and openings.

We look forward to another fun month of adventures!

NEW RESIDENT-RUN DIABETES SUPPORT ROUNDTABLE

A group of residents have identified a need for an ongoing Support Group for residents of Dominican Oaks living with Diabetes. It will start in **October, on the second Monday of the month at 3:30PM in the Oaks Room.**

We hope to meet regularly once a month for 30-45 minutes. Our format will be a roundtable with a changing moderator. Topics which we feel will be helpful include: Updated dietary recommendations; education through handouts; sharing information and other sources; food choices and how they affect our disease; navigating the Dominican Oaks menu; exercise and its' importance in managing blood sugar; and of course, sharing as much or as little of our personal journey as we wish.

Hope you will join us.



ABOVE, RESIDENTS ENJOYING HAPPY HOUR ON THE ROTUNDA IN AUGUST

HAPPY HOUR ON THE ROTUNDA WITH GERARDO!

Don't miss the final month of Happy Hour with Gerardo! Join us every Thursday in September from 3-4 PM on the beautiful rotunda patio to unwind and connect with your neighbors.

We can't wait to see you there!

MEET YOUR NEW NEIGHBORS!

Dora-Thea Porter grew up in New York City in the Bronx. She went to public schools & graduated from Hunter College. She studied to be a speech pathologist and audiologist. Her first job was on Long Island doing speech therapy in a cerebral palsy center. She spent a few years in Columbus & Dayton working for the Ohio State Health Department. After returning to New York she met her future husband, a fellow from LA working in seismology at New York University. They lived on Long Island doing the suburban thing for a while before her husband decided they should go to California (not LA but the SF Bay Area). Dora-Thea thought it would be a great place, maybe live there for 3-4 years before returning to New York. Never did she imagine living the rest of her life here. She lived in the East Bay in Danville for over 50 years. She worked for the Navy in their Oakland Hospital as an audiologist from the early 70s until they closed in the mid-90s. She finished her career with the VA in Martinez after 10 years. About 3 years ago Dora-Thea came to Santa Cruz to live with her son. Now she's beginning her Dominican Oaks adventure. Her interests include opera, theater, photography, and following SF Giants baseball, she used to play Bridge and Mahjong (and might try again).

David D. Steller was born in 1938 and raised in Bowling Green, Ohio. His father was a football & baseball coach at Bowling Green State University where his mother also taught music. David was a lieutenant in the US Navy where he served as a navigator on the USS Maury during numerous research cruises throughout the Pacific Ocean. David attended the University of Michigan where he received his Master's degree in Geology. He has lived in California since 1967 and worked as a field geologist. His research took him to many places in the US and Africa and his favorite location was Alaska. He has remained an avid world traveler. His three daughters live in the Bay Area, as well as 5 grandchildren, with a daughter in Petaluma, San Jose and Davenport. He was married to Janis Healy for 34 years and they traveled the world, lived in San Diego and shared 3 step-sons and 7 step-grandchildren. She recently passed away in July 2026. Dave enjoys beach walks, adventures, humorous stories and is happy to explore the Dominican Oaks activities and community.

Don Grettum grew up in a logging, mining, and cattle-raising community near Baker City in Eastern Oregon. His father managed the power company that supplied electricity to a large section of Eastern Oregon. Shortly after the end of World War II, when Don was 10, he and his family moved to Delaware. When his dad retired, they returned to Oregon during Don's senior year of high school, returning to the company of long time family friends and gorgeous scenery. Don graduated from Oregon State College majoring in geology. In 1954 Don obtained a commission in the US Navy as an Air Intelligence officer with a three-year commitment. In part, due to the Cuban Missile Crisis, his commitment was extended for another year. During his active duty, he was assigned to Carrier Group-15 and made three separate cruises: one on the aircraft carrier, USS Hancock and two on the larger carrier USS Coral Sea. He participated in aviation intelligence for the following 17 years retiring in 1982 as a Commander. In 1962, Don married his wife Margaret in 1962, and procured a position as a field representative for State Farm Insurance. Don and Margaret were married for 62 years until her untimely death in 2022. In his retirement, Don has researched his ancestry and established contact with relatives on both sides of the family, including relatives in Norway. He often visits them and plans to make this an annual tradition. Don has three children throughout California—Chico, Fresno and San Diego—as well as seven adult grandchildren. Don is joining Dominican Oaks from Cupertino, where he lived for 55 years. He is happy & relieved to be living in Santa Cruz, where he has several relatives & friends, as well as new friends here.

BELOW, CONGRESSMAN PANETTA MEETING DOMINICAN OAKS RESIDENTS



Newsletter Editor Annette Rau
welcomes your input!
annette.rau@commonspirit.org

**Please be sure to check your calendars for all of
this month's musical offerings, art classes,
exercise classes, and more!**