

## **Pacifica Senior Center spotlight Marge Ryan – Senior Center fan for 29 years and counting**

By JEAN BARTLETT | THE WEEK OF 6-25-18–7-1-18



(Jean Bartlett photo)

**For Marge Ryan, faith and positivity (and maybe bingo!) are the key to success.**

Pacifican Marge Ryan has been an active participant in the multi-purpose Senior Center, located in Pacifica's Community Center, for 29 years.

"I'm a cancer survivor," Ryan said, "34 years now. I got it when I was 50. Took me five years to recover and when I started feeling better, I came to the Center to play bingo."

Ryan continues to play bingo, every Wednesday. "I won \$35 yesterday," she laughed. She is also on the Bingo Committee, plays bocce ball at the Center, is on the Seniors In Action Advisory Council and organizes the bingo/casino trips for the Center four times a year.

"Before I say another word about me, I need to say that Jim Lange (Senior Services Manager) and Janis Haynes (Senior Services Program Coordinator) work harder than anyone I know. And Jim gets all those grants for the seniors. They are top notch people and top notch at what they do."

Ryan is originally from Mineral Wells, Texas. The daughter of Turner Oliver Newberry and Annie Pearl Cook, Ryan is the youngest of four daughters. When she was 8, her mom died of a heart attack. When she was 10, her family moved to a Doelger home in San Francisco's Sunset District. Her dad was a shipfitter and got a job working in the shipyards during WWII. In order to take care of his family, he additionally worked as a dishwasher and also set pins at the Broadway/Van Ness Bowling Alley.

A graduate of Polytechnic High School, Ryan married her husband Bill Ryan, a Sunset neighbor, right before she graduated.

"I still graduated," Ryan said. "But we snuck off to Reno, April 21, 1951. He was inducted into the Army on the 10th of May. He broke his foot in infantry training in Fort Ord and ended up serving his time in Chicago during the Korean War. I was deemed too young to go with him, so I waited for him in San Francisco."

Two weeks after Bill came home, he got a job with PG&E. He would work for them for 34 years and Marge would eventually work for them as well, for 33 years. When Ryan was 21, the couple bought a home in Pacifica. It was May of 1955.

"Our first house was on Rosita," Ryan said. "It cost \$10,750 and with the GI Bill, we moved in with \$350 down."

The couple had to put their names in for a telephone, about a seven month wait. They used the telephone booths that were situated every 15 blocks.

"Back then Rosita stopped at Perez and Mr. Pito's artichoke farm was part of the neighborhood," Ryan said.

The couple's three daughters are all Terra Nova graduates. Marge is a grandmother and a great grandmother. She and Bill were married 51 and 1/2 years until his death in 2002. "He was a good guy," Marge said.

The couple traveled to every state in the U.S. and two before they were states, Hawaii and Alaska. That's how Ryan learned her organizing-trip skills. She also does all kinds of trips for St. Peter Parish in Pacifica which have included a cruise to the San Juan Islands and a trip to the Rosie the Riveter WWII Museum in Richmond, CA.

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"One of the best things I did was come to the Senior Center," Ryan said. "Everybody is so congenial and interesting, there's so much to do, and we're all in the same boat. As far as I am concerned the key to success in life, at any age, is keep a positive attitude and have faith. That will bring you through."

Senior Services at the Pacifica Community Center. 540 Crespi Drive, Pacifica. T: 650-738-7384. F: 650-738-0564. On the web at: [http://www.cityofpacific.org/depts/senior\\_services/](http://www.cityofpacific.org/depts/senior_services/).



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Jean Bartlett is a longtime Bay Area features writer: Pacifica Tribune, Oakland Tribune, San Jose Mercury, San Mateo Times, Portraits & Roots, Marin Independent Journal, Twin City Times, Ross Valley Reporter, Peninsula Progress, Coastal Connections, Contra Costa County Times, Bay Area Business Woman and Catholic San Francisco.