

Pacifica Tribune



Courtesy photo

Joined by a camera assistant, Pacifican and longtime film unit production manager Kathleen Courtney, far right, shares a view from behind the lens with her mom, Lorraine Smith.

Pacifica – you ought to be in pictures

By Jean Bartlett
Tribune Writer

Kathleen Courtney fell in love with Pacifica when she was associate producer on the 2012 American biographical drama film, "Chasing Mavericks." So much so she bought a house and moved here. Other works of this longtime film unit production manager and producer include: "13 Reasons Why," TV Series (unit production manager since Season 2); "Steve Jobs" (unit production manager); and "San Andreas" (unit production manager).

"I love Pacifica and want property owners and business owners to know that if they are interested, they can make money by making their location available for a film shoot. The first step is to visit the San Mateo County/Silicon Valley Film Commission website." (www.smccvb.com/film.) "The other first step is to talk to Anne LeClair and Marie Ivich."

Anne LeClair is the president and CEO of the SMC/SV Convention and Visitors Bureau, www.smccvb.com. Marie Ivich is the Bureau's film commissioner.

"If you get a major motion picture with a budget of over \$50 million, they spend \$100,000 a day, locally," LeClair said. "Smaller budgets spend less, but still spend. When a film production crew comes to town, they hire caterers, rent cars, hire electricians, buy at the local stores, sit down at the local restaurants. One of our purposes here at the CVB is to put 'heads in beds' – ideally to get people to stay overnight and spend their time and money supporting the local community. When Marie has a film lead, she contacts the local hotels."

"We really encourage the hotels to make it a film friendly offer," Ivich said. "We want that crew to stay in the area and not elsewhere."

What is the film commissioner looking for in a homeowner's property?

"It could be a home in the hills, an oceanside home, a rural home, a modern home, a home that looks dilapidated," Ivich said. "Each film has its specific needs. Homeowners can go to our website and list their property. Then I can consider them film friendly and when someone asks me for a specific look, I can put that home in front of the filmmakers and see if they are interested."

"There are so many ways a home can be used," Courtney said. "Maybe they just want you to turn your porchlight on at a certain hour. You get money for that. Maybe your driveway is a good space, or your garage, or your yard."

"What a production company does up front is paper a neighborhood to let you know they are coming," Courtney continued. "Once they have gotten the final script or the final schedule, they get into specifics and need a fast response. Having residents and business owners who have already said 'yes' through the Film Commission makes it easy to choose Pacifica."



photo by Marie Ivich, SMC/SV film commissioner

Pacifica's Oceana High School served as surfing legend Jay Moriarity's high school in the 2012 film, "Chasing Mavericks."

There are other location needs. Recently there was a film shoot in an independently-owned Pacifica grocery store. Any kind of a commercial complex space is good. Schools and empty storefronts are all excellent.

"Ranches, farms, barns, fields with flowers, small ponds, private beaches," Ivich said. "Is there something that gives the appearance of a hospital setting? Think of how many movies or television shows are shot in a hospital."

Scouts also contact the film commissioner for locations to shoot commercials, videos, advertisements and catalogues.

Matthew Del Carlo, San Mateo County (SMC) Park Ranger who heads up District IV – Pacifica south to Tunitas Creek – has been involved with a number of film projects, as has SMC Park Ranger Greg Escoto.

"I meet with the site scout onsite to understand the specifics," Del Carlo said. "As long as a project works with our mission statement, we want to make it happen. It's good for our local economy."

That mission is: "Through stewardship, San Mateo County Parks preserves our County's natural and cultural treasures, and provides safe, accessible parks, recreation and learning opportunities to enhance the community's quality of life."

"Recently we worked with Michael Kors," Escoto said. (Kors is a handbag and purse luxury designer.) "They rented a Maserati and brought it over to Devil's Slide."

"We have had a lot of car commercials go through the tunnel," Del Carlo noted, "Mercedes, Jaguar, Corvette and Porsche. Many things are shot in the parking lot at Devil's Slide. A 30-second spot in 'Memoirs of a Geisha' was shot at Fitzgerald. Sportswear ads have been filmed on our trails. The coast is often used for music videos. One film shoot we did say 'no' to was when someone wanted to suspend a plane off the side of Devil's Slide using a gimbal."

"Over the years Pacifica has been a location for a number of films," Ivich said, "including: 'The Boat Builder,' 'Chasing Mavericks,' 'The House of Sand and Fog,' 'Portrait in Black' and 'Harold and Maude.' There is a better chance to have the industry come to Pacifica if we have more locations at the ready that I can give to scouts when they contact me."

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"There are millions of dollars that could come into Pacifica," Courtney said. "Please, if you are interested, sign up with the SMCSVC Film Commission."

San Mateo County/Silicon Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau, and SMCSVC Film Commission, 111 Anza Blvd., Suite 410, Burlingame. Convention and Visitors Bureau: www.smccvb.com. Film Commission: www.smccvb.com/film.

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