

An free-spirited childhood, a successful career, and a sword

HE'S A native New Yorker, a seamless and relentless East Coast talker who, when discussing his favorite topic — Samurai swords — rarely comes up for air.

"Next to my family, my sword is the most important thing in my life. It's really hard to even put into words," said Taum Dell'Armo,

"The South Bronx has always been a place for crime and poverty, and still is, but our neighborhood was home to a lot of extremely famous people, and my high school, DeWitt Clinton Public School, produced Oscar winners, Emmy winners, Nobel Prize winners, and more NBA players than any other school in America ... it's very famous," he said.

Dell'Armo's theory is that hard-working parents of that generation largely left kids to their own devices.

"We were very independent and interested in everything," he said. "When I was 12, I'd hop on a subway, go down to Broadway, and sneak into theaters to watch Ethel Merman and Mary Martin rehearse. In fact, I snuck into a whole bunch of places where I didn't belong."

See **DELL'ARMO** next page

Great Lives

By DENNIS TAYLOR

a 71-year-old Carmel Valley man who enjoyed a fortuitous life that included a lucrative career as an advertising executive, but found his bliss 12 years ago when he started studying "the way of the Samurai."

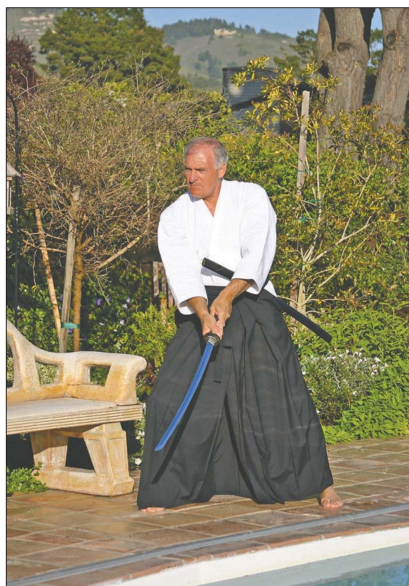
"My sword is an extension of myself. When I'm doing my kata — my exercises — it's almost mystical," he said. "It was said that the Samurai had only two possessions — his sword and his honor — and I've come to understand that."

Dell'Armo will share that unbridled passion at 2 p.m. Monday, March 19, with a presentation, including a sword demonstration, at the Carmel Woman's Club (non-members can attend for \$10).

Dell'Armo trained in Karate, Judo, Aikido and Tai Chi before discovering the combative art of the sword (Iaijutsu) and "the oneness of Zen with the sword" (Ken Zen Ichi) — disciplines he studied with two different masters after moving to the Monterey Peninsula in 2005.

Noteworthy roots

How he came to live in a large, elegant Carmel Valley home with a backyard pool is a remarkable story that began in The Bronx, N.Y., where his parents — Italian immigrants whose ashes are illegally buried (not scattered) at the foot of the Statue of Liberty — worked in sweatshops and raised their children in a sixth-floor walkup apartment.



PHOTO/COURTESY TAUM DELL'ARMO

Taum Dell'Armo, in traditional costume, practices his kata.

PEOPLE THOUGHT HE WAS WEIRD — UNTIL THEY SAW HIM PAINT

ON ONE wall of the residence in Marina that Mike Ball shares with three roommates, hanging among a series of spectacular oil paintings, is a detailed graph he created to monitor his daily battle with bipolar disorder.

The chart is a zigzag — some days are better than others — but Ball, a former Carmel gallery owner, clearly likes what he sees. The data tells him how well his medication and self-styled therapy are working, and represents progress toward regulating a problem that has plagued him for most of his life.

The 58-year-old artist said he's known since childhood that his moods were mercurial. Odd as it may seem, what usually got him in trouble were his highs — an over-exuberance that caused him to talk too loudly and laugh too hard in public places.

"I've been kicked out of a few coffee shops. People could hear me two blocks away," said Ball, whose daily routine, dating back several years, is to stake out a spot in a cozy eatery, sip coffee, socialize, and sketch life as it passes by.

Problems at work, home

Ball was an electrician by trade until the day in 2001 when a co-worker pinned him against a wall by his throat and shouted, "You've been bugging me for a whole year! You're too damn happy all the time!"

Weird? Perhaps. But it wasn't the first time he had been assaulted on the job by colleagues who were annoyed by his personality. The problem also affected his personal life, truncating two marriages.

His first, from 1988-95, was to a Carmel woman — the mother of his two adult children (Marc, 27, and Sara, 24) — whom he followed to the Monterey Peninsula from his New Jersey home. After six years, she scooped up the kids and moved to

Atascadero, while Ball remained in Carmel.

He got married again in 2011 to a woman he'd met playing chess online and joined her in Kentucky. Six years later, in 2017, she announced they were finished (something Ball says he never saw coming, just like the first time), and handed him a plane ticket back to the West Coast.

"What I kept asking myself was, 'What the hell is wrong with everybody?'" he said. "Then I got diagnosed, and I suddenly realized, 'Oh, my god ... it's me!'"

What saved his life in the interim, he said, was an epiphany that had taken decades to surface: Ball had stunning natural talent as an artist — a gift he discovered in 2001, at age 41.

Carmel's artists

By DENNIS TAYLOR

"People laughed at the very first thing I painted, which was awful, but then my work immediately got more interesting," he said. "I wound up selling my sixth painting to somebody, and from there I sold my next 20 in a row."

Just as amazing is that Ball, who is completely self-taught, was peddling his work from a Carmel coffee shop and the Jeep he kept parked on the street. Indeed, his success eventually roiled a local gallery owner, who complained to the police.

"He basically saw me as a panhandler, and I can't really blame him because he was paying rent on his gallery, and I was pretty much selling my stuff off the street," Ball said. "So, one day the Carmel cops surrounded my Jeep and shut me down."

Painting became cathartic to Ball, a cre-

See **BALL** page 31A

To all in our community:

As mayor of Carmel-by-the-Sea, and a long-time resident who loves this city as much as anyone, I would like to offer a sincere and heartfelt apology to everyone for my inappropriate conduct — conduct that led to a months-long investigation and culminated on March 7 with a reprimand from Carmel-by-the-Sea's three strong women on the city council with whom I serve.

As those of you who have followed these events know, I was precluded until now from making any comment related to the ongoing investigation. For that reason, this apology is late in coming, but I hope you will accept it nonetheless.

To the citizens of Carmel-by-the-Sea, and to those individuals I may have hurt or offended, I am truly sorry. Please know my comments were not maliciously uttered, but I admit they were very much ill-considered, insensitive and unprofessional. I am also truly sorry that my family has had to go through this painful time.

Additionally, I apologize to the three remarkable and courageous council members — Carrie Theis, Jan Reimers and Carolyn Hardy — who were put in the eye of the storm by my comments, and who handled the entire matter for our village with integrity and strength.

I was born and raised in Carmel-by-the-Sea and, like my family, love and honor its special sense of place and spirit. I pledge to work even harder to regain the trust of its citizens and to do my very best for our beloved village. I have learned a painful life lesson from this episode, and pledge to be a better person and a better Mayor.

From the bottom of my heart, I apologize.

Steve G. Dallas, Mayor
Carmel-by-the-Sea



Paul Brocchini
(831) 601.1620
PaulB@CarmelRealtyCompany.com
CalDRE #00904451

Paul
AND
Mark

OPEN HOUSES THIS WEEKEND
174 Carmel Riviera, Carmel Highlands
Saturday 12-2pm
3053 Bird Rock Road, Pebble Beach
Saturday 2:30-4:30pm



Mark Ryan
(831) 238.1498
MarkRyan@CarmelRealtyCompany.com
CalDRE #01458945

BROCCHINI-RYAN
www.CarmelAbodes.com



CARMEL REALTY COMPANY
ESTABLISHED 1913



ADAM MONIZ
RESULTS FOR CARMEL

Real Estate Solutions
For When Needs Change.

Call 831.601.3320
www.AdamMoniz.com

Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

DELL'ARMO

From previous page

As a sixth-grader, he read a bestselling book, David Ogilvy's "Confessions of an Advertising Man," and decided he wanted someday to work for Ogilvy in advertising. At 18 he scored high enough on his SATs to get into City College of New York, the top-ranked advertising school in America. A year later, he was a writer at ABC TV. At 21 he was elected president of the New York Professional Advertising Association — the youngest person in the group's history to hold that post.

A fortunate assignment

When his number came up in the military draft, Dell'Armo signed up for the Air Force and was sent to Langley Air Force Base in Virginia, where he got lucky again. Instead of sending him to fight in Vietnam, they made him an education counselor. From there he went to pursue his masters degree at the College of William and Mary, where he became involved in regional theater (actress Glenn Close, also a William and Mary student at the time, was an occasional rehearsal partner). After earning his graduate degree, Dell'Armo won a scholarship to the prestigious Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute.

"I didn't want to go back to New York for the Strasberg school, so I went to Los Angeles instead," he said. "I was 30 years old by then, and I spent the first three days there sleeping in my van outside the men's dorm at UCLA."

But Dell'Armo quickly fell in with the Bel Air and Beverly Hills crowd and spent the next three years teaching tennis to movie stars.

He eventually found work with Simon Marketing, where he soon became executive vice president. Then he got the job offer he'd been craving since childhood — from Ogilvy Advertising. They named him senior VP of their West Coast division.

Dell'Armo later ran his own consulting agency, The Madison Group, before retiring from advertising at age 45. He moved from Los Angeles to San Francisco with his two sons: John is a high school teacher today, and Tatum Joe is a writer.

Dell'Armo lives today near Quail Lodge with his wife, Diane (retired from a 30-year career in the biopharmaceutical industry), who married him 26 years ago after he proposed on Carmel Beach.

The Dell'Armors have become heavily involved with local nonprofits, including the Monterey Bay chapter of the American Red Cross, for which Tatum has served as chairman of the board.

In addition to practicing "the way of the Samurai" on a daily basis, Dell'Armo is in the process of commissioning the eight most-celebrated master swordsmiths in Japan to create swords for a one-of-a-kind art series he intends to market as "The 8 Samurai."

"Imagine if I had convinced the eight greatest living artists of a generation to create one painting each to be part of a specific series with the seven other great artists," he said. "A hundred years later, out of all the thousands of paintings

those artists had produced during their lifetimes, only one of those paintings would be part of that series. I'm bringing a little bit of Western advertising culture to the East."

Each sword will be registered with the Japanese government, signed by the master who created it, and its history will be traceable back to its original owner, he said.

More information about Dell'Armo's presentation on Tuesday can be found online at carmelwomansclub.org.

Dennis Taylor is a freelance writer in Monterey County. Contact him at scribelaureate@gmail.com.

SPORTS

From page 27A

Three of the league's weaker teams — Greenfield (4-11), King City (5-15) and Gonzales (0-17) — were moved to a lower division of the MTAL this year, and Marina (17-3 in the Coastal Athletic League in 2017) has been added.

With two fewer teams in the league, Carmel will play Marina, Santa Catalina (17-8, 12-2 in the MTAL), Pacific Grove (18-8, 10-4), Soledad (17-10, 8-6) and Stevenson (4-12, 4-9) three times each this year.

■ Looking ahead (March 16-22)

Baseball — Friday: Greenfield at Carmel, 4 p.m.; Tuesday: Anzar at Carmel, 4 p.m.; Thursday: Carmel at Anzar, 4 p.m.

Boys golf — Tuesday: Carmel vs. York at Laguna Seca Golf Ranch, 3:30 p.m.; Thursday: MTAL league meet at Laguna Seca, 3:30 p.m.

Boys lacrosse — Monday: Carmel vs. Pacific Grove at Stevenson, 3:15 p.m.; Wednesday: Carmel at Aptos, 7:15 p.m.

Girls lacrosse — Tuesday: Salinas at Carmel, 5:30 p.m.; Thursday: Santa Catalina at Carmel, 5:30 p.m.

Softball — Friday: Marina at Carmel, 4:30 p.m.; Wednesday: Santa Catalina at Carmel, 4:30 p.m.

Swimming — No events scheduled.

Boys tennis — Tuesday: Alvarez at Carmel, 4 p.m.; Thursday: Monterey at Carmel, 4 p.m.

Track and field — Saturday: Carmel at Garlic Classic, Christopher High School, 9 a.m.; Thursday: Gonzales and Soledad at Carmel, 3:30 p.m.

Boys volleyball — Tuesday: Monterey at Carmel, 6:30 p.m.; Thursday: Carmel at Palma, 6:30 p.m.

Dennis Taylor is a freelance writer in Monterey County. Contact him at scribelaureate@gmail.com.

Providing High Quality, Full Service Painting for Residential & Commercial

STEPHEN G. FORD PAINTING, INC

Serving the Peninsula
Since 1969



OUR PAINTING SERVICES INCLUDE:

Interior and Exterior Painting • Painting and Decorating
Cabinet Refinishing • On Site Color Matching
Elastomeric Coating • Distressing & Antique Finishes
Lacquers, Glazes & other fine finishes
Professional Spray booth for cabinets, louvers, doors

Call or email us today for a free estimate.

(831) 373-6026

Email: fordpaintpg@att.net

No job is too big or too small!

Professional, Clean, Courteous,
Responsible, English Speaking Employees.



Visit us on facebook
@fordpaintford



We are fully licensed
#266816 and insured.

located at: 672 Dias Street, Sand City, CA 93955

Hours: Mon-Fri 7:30am-4:30pm

www.stephengfordpaintinginc.com

WHEN YOUR PET NEEDS US, YOU'LL BE GLAD WE'RE HERE.

- Supporting your veterinarian with board certified surgery, internal medicine, cardiology and dermatology.
- Conveniently located 24-hour emergency service.
- Leading edge medical technology and imaging.
- Valuing the community, our relationships and the environment.

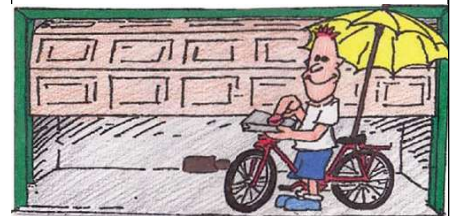


PET SPECIALISTS
EMERGENCY

451 Canyon Del Rey Blvd. • Del Rey Oaks (in the Stone Creek Center by Tarpy's)
831-899-PETS (7387) • www.thepetspecialists.com

THE DOOR COMPANY

GARAGE DOORS AND GARAGE DOOR OPENERS



"QUALITY AT A REASONABLE PRICE"

831-763-0563

Contractor License #651452

Got MOLD?

Water Damage?

featuring
STRUCTURAL
PASTEURIZATION

(831) 970-7089



Pacific Reconstruction Inc.
Certified-Environmental.com

Get your complete Pine Cone every Thursday
night by email —
free subscriptions at
www.carmelpinecone.com