

Author chronicles novel romance set in Cape May

By **CAROL R. EMMENS**
Special to the Star and Wave

At the age of 17, Rosemarie was his first love. Charles never asked her out and never told her. Decades later, he found her again — and still didn't ask her out even though both had lost their spouses. Instead he wrote her an anonymous love note. There was no signature and no return address. There was only a strange clue: The note closed with "I Love You" written in shorthand, which was all but obsolete. It was

the unusual start to the romance in the novella by Terri Ely titled "The Girl in His Dreams."

Rosemarie continued to receive notes, so her grandchild decided to seek out her mysterious admirer. It was difficult to find him and required searching scores of old records. But Charles was found and a romance between he and Rosemarie started — when they were in their 80s. Despite his age, Charles was a true romantic



ELY

and made every date special for Rosemarie, especially on Valentine's Day.

Ely said the book is in part autobiographical; she was writing about her mother and her mysterious secret admirer.

"I was involved with my mother's romance from the very beginning. In the book I'm Anne," she said.

The character Charles lives in Cape May near the bay and the Cape May-

Lewes Ferry, so many of the chapters of the book are set in Cape May. Like all writers, Ely invented conversations and events to make the book more interesting, but she noted "every mention of Cape May or the ferry is based on an actual happening."

Because of her mother's unique romance, Ely began taking notes about it. She was then encouraged to write about it by her family and friends including an editor. At first she planned to write a short story, but she was told it was really

material for a book.

After her mother passed away, Ely bought a computer and began writing about her mother's sweet romance. It was challenging and took her 10 years to complete her book.

"It was agonizing at times because I had to educate myself on the art of book writing," she said. "I attended a number of writing conferences and along the way I was fortunate to meet many people who helped me."

"The Girl in His Dreams" is her first book, although she has had articles published in the Philadelphia Inquirer and a short story published in Guideposts. When she is not writing, she likes to paint in watercolors and garden.

Ely will be signing copies of her book during the 7th annual Chili and Chowder Cookoff sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Cape May from noon to 3 p.m. Feb. 19 at the Grand Hotel in Cape May.

Congress Hall voted best hotel in N.J.

CAPE MAY — Congress Hall has taken top honors in Travel + Leisure's recently released annual World's Best Awards.

In The Best Hotel in Every State category, the Cape Resorts hotel was selected as the best in New Jersey by travelers around the world through the magazine's annual readers' survey.

Every year, T+L asks readers to share their opinions on the top hotels, resorts, cities, islands, cruise lines, spas and airlines.

Readers taking the World's Best Awards survey ranked hotels in the United States for value, service, location, amenities and attention to detail.

"At Cape Resorts, we are committed to understanding the desires of our guests, and even though we are 200 years old, we continue to create new, personalized and meaningful travel experiences," says Curtis Bashaw, co-owner and co-managing partner of Cape Resorts. "We are honored

for Congress Hall to be recognized by the discerning readers of Travel + Leisure."

Congress Hall's distinction coincides with its recent celebration of the hotel's 200th anniversary in 2016.

"America's oldest seaside hotel has survived two fires, a rebuild and even a 10-year-closure. In addition to T+L readers, Congress Hall has impressed the likes of John Philip Sousa and five presidents," T +

L wrote.

"When Congress Hall opened in the summer of 1816, the United States flag had only 15 stars and the country was only 40 years old," Bashaw said. "For Congress Hall, which has endured fires, storms, economic disasters, wars, massive changes to building and fire codes and evolving consumer preferences, to have survived 200 years and be the thriving resort that it is today is a truly remarkable accomplishment."

3rd annual Ice Ball slated for Feb. 11

CAPE MAY — Guests will step into a glistening forest of lit branches and sculpted ice figures when they enter Congress Hall's ballroom and tented grand lawn on Saturday, Feb. 11, for the 3rd annual Ice Ball.

A sold-out event for the past two years, the Ice Ball, a benefit for The Fund for Cape May, raises private funds for public projects to support the Cape Island communities. This year's gala features cocktails and hors d'oeuvres in the ballroom, dinner on the lawn and dancing and dessert in

the "ice palace."

Curtis Bashaw, managing partner of Cape Resorts, owner of the historic landmark hotel, established The Fund for Cape May in 2014 to promote beautification and preservation and encourage area youth to become active citizens.

This year's Ice Ball celebrates the completion of the fund's first project, Cape May's Rotary Park, which reopened last summer. The fund raised more than \$500,000 for the park's restoration.

"It's been gratifying to

see so many people enjoying the park since its grand reopening in August — listening to a concert in the bandstand, reading a book on a park bench, tossing a penny in the fountain and posing for family photos by the Christmas tree during the holidays," Bashaw said. "Much of the success of Rotary Park is due to our generous supporters and donors."

Ticket sales from this year's Ice Ball will go toward the park's ongoing upkeep and maintenance costs, as well as provide

seed money for the organization's next project. The fund plans to announce its second major community project this summer.

Tickets are now on sale for the 2017 Ice Ball at fundform.org. Sponsorship packages, which include ball tickets and special recognition in the event program and on the fund's website, are also available. Anyone interested in buying a table at the benefit or who has questions about corporate or individual sponsorships should contact Tracey Martin at (609) 884-6513.

NASW names Camp Volunteer of Month

CAPE MAY AIRPORT — The Board of Directors of the Naval Air Station Wildwood Aviation Museum has named Thomas Camp its Volunteer of the Month for January 2017.

As a lighting and energy professional, Camp has extensive experience working and consulting for various lighting and electricity companies. At the Aviation Museum, he is on the NASW Foundation Board and also advises and aids on lighting and electrical maintenance concerns.

When asked why he was drawn to aid in the preservation efforts at Hangar #1, Camp gave a brief overview of his work with New

Jersey's history. Camp, of Somers Point, is a former president of the Atlantic County Historical Society and also served as chief liaison of a dive for the Mullica River-Chestnut Neck Revolutionary War Research Project. He has a passion for history and wants to uncover the stories of the past and preserve them for future generations.

"There's so much we don't know. What will future generations be able to see or discover if we don't do what we can now? Where will the history be?" Camp said.

Hangar #1 has a special place in Camp's heart. "The activity that took

place here at Hangar #1 during World War II was intense and touched the lives of many. It would be a disservice to the 42 airmen that perished while training here and to the upcoming generations to not preserve this amazing piece of Cape May County's history," Camp said.

Camp is an aircraft enthusiast and his favorite part of the museum is the variety of aircraft and the stories behind them. When he is not working or vol-

unteering his time for the sake of history, he enjoys spending time with his family and taking advantage of the local fishing habitat.

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Promoters

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per contract. Concert ticket prices for all riser and floor seating will be \$38 plus a \$4 facility for a total of \$42 per ticket.

The agreement stipulates the city will have a minimum of three employees on site for assistance with load in and load out for all performances. The city will assist with the day of transportation of performers from their local accommodations to Convention Hall and return trips to local accommodations as needed and pickup and delivery of meals from local eateries on day of show for performers at Convention Hall.

The city will be responsible for the primary marketing and public relations for the 2017 Concert Series and must approve all promotional and marketing materials, press releases and advertising for the 2017 Concert Series prior to be released to the public.

Prior to approval of the resolution, Councilman Roger Furlin said Kline was

primarily a jazz promoter, something the city did not want to book for the summer concert series. Furlin also asked why the city needed two promoters.

Mayor Chuck Lear said the city approached the two local promoters who have worked together in past.

"The thought was between the two of them, we should reach a broader audience," he said.

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