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Elevator Update Rheem Theatre on its way to a new elevator

By Sophie Braccini

Long time Lamorinda resident Joan Bruzzone recently contributed \$5,000 to the Rheem Theatre's elevator/lift fund. She also gave the Lamorinda Theatre Foundation, through the California Independent Film Festival Association, a loan of \$25,000 -giving it the ability to place the order for a new lift at the theater. Bruzzone said she pitched in to encourage other people to support the theater and that she wants the upstairs theaters to re-open as soon as possible. "Loving my Saturday night movies and Larry Swindell's marvelously exciting adventures recalling our wonderful classic movies and a delightful journey back in time for so many of us, I can't tell you how very much I look forward to sharing both my donation and loan to enjoy with my Moraga friends and fellows," said Bruzzone. "Go, Moraga...see you all at the New Rheem, long may she live!"

The loan will need to be repaid so efforts to raise funds for the lift continue. "The purchase of tickets to the upcoming Oscar Party on Feb. 24 is a great way to participate in this effort," said Rheem Theatre's Derek Zemrak. Instead of just replacing the old lift that was attached to the stair rail and could carry one person at a time, management decided to install an outside elevator. "We learned from elevator operators that the lift concept was prone to failing and that it would not cost more to build an elevator," explained Zemrak.

The installation might take some time. CAIFFA needs the approval of the property owner, who is out of reach for a few weeks. It also needs to get final plans from the elevator manufacturer so it can submit an application to the town. The town's approval process will include the Design Review Board. Planning Director Shawna Brekke-Reed said Feb. 6 that she had not received the application yet, but was on the lookout for it. The approval process could take about two months.

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