



# THE ORINDA NEWS

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## Students Return to In-Person Learning Currently on Hold

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Executive Editor

Students, parents, teachers and staff of the Orinda Union School District (OUSD) were thrown a curve ball on Nov. 16 when Governor Gavin Newsom and public health officials announced many counties in the state, including Contra Costa, had moved into the most restrictive purple tier.

“What this means for OUSD is we cannot open our elementary schools for in-person learning to students in grades TK-2 during the week of Nov. 30 as planned,” said Superintendent Dr. Carolyn Seaton, who expressed “deep disappointment” in having to postpone in-person learning.

According to the California Department of Public Health, “[a] county must remain in a tier for a minimum of three weeks before being able to advance to a less restrictive tier.” Seaton urged everyone to remain vigilant and follow all safety protocols to



Members of **Glorietta Elementary School's Ensemble** choir have been working with music directors Ron Pickett and Christina Holling and the ensemble choirs at the other elementary schools on a holiday concert via Zoom. The group of 110 students recorded “Like It's Christmas” by the Jonas Brothers before Thanksgiving and plan on a second recording following the Thanksgiving break.

help move the county back to the red tier. “Working together, we can make a dif-

ference in the spread of this virus, and we can achieve our collective goal of returning students to our school campuses as soon as possible,” she said.

When schools are able to open, students in TK/K will attend a combination of in-person and distance learning from 9 a.m. – 1:50 p.m. with grades 1-5 attending from 8:30 am – 2:50 p.m. Orinda Intermediate School is currently finalizing its schedule.

In the elementary schools, each class will be divided into Cohort A and Cohort B, with all students attending a distance learning session with their entire class each morning. Mondays will be a “flex day,” without students on campus. A shorter morning meeting will be followed by such distance learning activities as music and specialized learning and projects. The day also allows for teacher preparation. On Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, Cohort

[SEE SCHOOL page 16]

## Scouting for Food Safely During the Pandemic Benefits Food Banks

By CHARLEEN EARLEY  
Editor-in-Chief



SUSAN PERSIN

Boy Scout Troop 57 and Cub Scout Pack 52 got ready at Del Rey School with masks and physically distancing themselves to assemble flyers and get their routes. (L-R front) **Cedric Gee, Blazen Roberts, Max Goldman, Alex Zhu and Dylan Welch.** (L-R back) **Scoutmaster Ken Goldman, Spencer Persin, Assistant Scoutmaster Brett Roberts, Derek Ng, and Sawyer Peterson.**

On Saturday, Nov. 7, Boy Scout Troop 57 and Cub Scout Pack 52 were at it again, fulfilling their annual Scouting for Food drive, but this time, their mission looked much different than before.

“Usually, the kids go around in groups leaving flyers hanging from the front door, but because of COVID-19 restrictions, distributing flyers this year was more of a solo activity,” said Troop 57 Treasurer Susan

Persin, also parent of a Troop 57 scout, who started as a Cub in Pack 52.

She said each parent drove one to two scouts to neighborhoods where they distributed flyers to 1,800 households to be exact.

“Also, the boys could not touch front doors but had to find someplace to leave flyers that wasn't a door or inside a mailbox, but where the flyers would not blow away and become litter,” she added.

With 20 Troop 57 kids, ages 11 to 17 and about 50 Pack 52 kids, ages 5 to 11, [SEE SCOUTS page 6]

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CARS

# Orinda Association Joins with Two Rotary Clubs to Help Others

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Executive Editor

As nonprofit organizations continue to struggle financially in this COVID-19 era, the efforts of two Rotary clubs have not only helped their clubs' service endeavors, but also those of a myriad of other nonprofits. The Orinda Association (OA) is the latest nonprofit to join Rotary in its fundraising enterprise.

Cars2ndChance is a car auction program run by Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary and Clayton Valley Concord Sunrise Rotary. Both Cars2ndChance and the two Rotary clubs work with a variety of nonprofit partners to acquire donated cars that are then either fixed and sold or donated to auction. Various nonprofit partners procure the donated cars and receive 50% of the proceeds, while the Rotary clubs each garner 25%.

Husband and wife team Dave and Mary Kennnitz, who own D&H Enterprises Automotive Services in Concord and are both involved with Rotary, conceived the program 15 years ago. It started when one of their customers asked about donating a car. They researched various car donation companies and were shocked to find that as much as 70% of the vehicle's value went to administrative costs.

"We thought we could do much better if we aligned with an auction company and ran the cars through our repair shop," said Mary, who immediately discussed the possibility with her club, Clayton Valley Concord Sunrise Rotary. "They took this idea of ours and flew with it."

The couple, along with Clayton Rotary, formed Cars2ndChance. The organization added the Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary, where Dave is a member, in May 2020. "They really took us to the next level," Mary added.

Mary, Dave and other members of the two Rotary clubs donate their time to take care of the bookkeeping and other administrative tasks needed.

"We work with Copart Auto Auction, the largest auction for cars in the world. They welcomed us with open arms, even though we're small potatoes to them," said Dave. "We only raised around \$12,000 the first year, but it has just grown and grown. In 2019, we grossed \$300,000."

Mary added, "Since May of 2020, we've helped raise over \$50,000 for the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano."

Cars2ndChance has also fixed up donated vehicles and given them away to worthy causes, including 60 cars to people in Paradise, CA, devastated by that area's 2018 wildfire.

In November, Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary member Chris Laszcz-Davis approached the OA, where she is a board member, with the idea of participating in Cars2ndChance. The idea struck a chord with the board.

"Over the past 15 years, several people have asked us about donating a car to the OA's Seniors Around Town (SAT) program," said OA Board Member and SAT founder Kate Wiley. "We researched the process only to find it too difficult or requiring more resources than we had at the time. But Cars2ndChance is just right to meet our needs. When someone donates a car to us, it gives the car a second chance to provide essential services to people."

Wiley noted that donating a vehicle, which doesn't have to be running, is essentially a painless transaction for the donor. "Cars2ndChance takes care of everything – vehicle inspection, necessary repairs, title transfer – and the donor receives the tax write-off. It also gives donors the satisfaction of knowing they've helped three

[SEE CARS page 5]



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
This 1974 Datsun 710 wagon was donated by Lou and Debbie Roessler. Debbie is a member of Moraga Rotary, one of the partner groups with Cars2ndChance. Instead of going to auction, the vehicle was repaired by D&H and sold to Adam Johnson (left), who purchased the car for his dad, Wayne Johnson (center). Wayne has cancer and had previously owned the same make and model years ago. D&H owner and co-creator of Cars2ndChance Dave Kennnitz is on the right.

## CAR TIME

Traveling by Car During the COVID-19 Holidays?

JOHN VANEK



Many local Lamorinda residents are considering traveling by car during the holidays rather than worrying about the close interaction of air travel while the pandemic lingers. Driving to Tahoe seems less risky than flying to Hawaii.

Going on any kind of a trip, however, where you will be exposed to others, is a big risk. Still, taking the trusty family vehicle should give you more confidence than dealing with crowds at the airport or Disney World.

But, is your family hauler ready? It might seem as if it has to be since you have not been driving it as much as you did before COVID-19 times. Well, not necessarily.

If you are headed for a winter wonderland destination, you might encounter crucial situations with your vehicle that wouldn't be an issue at home. For instance, extreme cold may tax your battery.

The cooling system in your vehicle is the same way. Marginal anti-freeze may

not protect from freezing in temperatures below 20 degrees.

The air filters in your car are very crucial not only for the car but your health. Your vehicle's engine air filter may be affected by all of the ash from the horrible fire season we had in Northern California. It is important for your car to take in clean air too. This is especially crucial during the pandemic.

There is also a risk when it comes to coming in contact with other people and everything they touch. So, wipe down the inside surfaces of the vehicle, wear masks and keep washing your hands two times longer than you used to. If you are planning on taking a car trip this winter, be sure to have it checked before you depart. Don't put it off until the day before you go in case problems surface.

John Vanek can be reached at john@orindamotors.com.



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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President Together (Apart)



CARLOS BALTODANO

As 2020 nears its final days, we reflect on the worst pandemic in 100 years and on a year that has had its share of grief, social distancing and being together (apart). While everyday life has changed dramatically, voting occurred in large numbers throughout the country.

Here in Orinda, we voted to continue with our two incumbent City Council members. We congratulate Darlene Gee and Inga Miller for their election to another four years on the council.

We hope they will continue to address the city's pressing infrastructure needs, downtown development and fire safety issues.

We would also like to congratulate Craig Jorgens' reelection to the MOFD Board while supporting his desire to address the need for continued fuel mitigation and a well funded wood chipper program.

As always, we are delighted in the continued selection of Congressman Mark DeSaulnier, State Senator Steve Glazer and Assembly Member Rebecca Bauer-Kahan. Congratulations to them and their efforts to support the important issues in Orinda.

The impactful Measure R, which passed in Orinda, will increase the sales tax by ½ cent. While the money will go to the General Fund, the council will be targeting continued public road and drain improvements in the city. The City Council, however, has vowed to spend the initial years of the monies towards fire safety. This will be a highly watched effort by the community. Our participation should be welcomed to ensure that the funds are spent wisely.

This has been truly a different kind of year. The Orinda Association (OA), like other nonprofit organizations, has had to evolve to meet the needs of residents and situations as they arose. For instance, the Seniors Around Town Program (SAT) added to its transportation program a grocery delivery service and provider of reassurance phone calls to our seniors. It added an emergency component that has volunteers calling and assisting seniors during blackouts and possible fire evacuations.

The 4th of July celebration became a video presentation of sights and sounds [SEE PRESIDENT page 6]

Dedicated OA Board Member Retires

By SALLY HOGARTY Executive Editor

Successful businesspeople with hectic schedules often have trouble filling their free time when they retire from busy careers. Days full of meetings, deadlines and travel often become stressful, and a lazy day without such commitments seems a dream come true. That is, until it doesn't.

Such was the case for Orinda's Joe



SALLY HOGARTY

Retiring OA Board Member **Joe Garvey** looks forward to more time with **Barney**, his very lovable, 6-year-old Irish Terrier from County Wicklow, Ireland.

Garvey. Formerly a vice president for United Airlines and executive for Royal Viking Cruise Lines and Hyatt Hotels before forming his own consulting company, Garvey looked forward to retirement. Thirty days later he was bored to death.

"I started looking around Orinda to see what else I could do, how I could fill the hours and be involved again," said Garvey. "I thought it would be interesting to join The Orinda Association (OA). I liked the programs they did for Orinda and wanted to give back to this community my wife Linda and I love."

Garvey joined the OA board in December 2014, and, not one to avoid leadership roles, became vice president in January 2015. He leaves the board at the end of December.

During his tenure on the board, Garvey coordinated the OA's Public Forums, was the OA liaison to the City Council and spent countless hours planning and working the Fourth of July Celebration and the Orinda Classic Car Show.

[SEE GARVEY page 6]

The Orinda Association

The Orinda Association is a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to:

- Maintaining and improving the quality of life in Orinda;
- Promoting awareness and discussion of issues that are important to the community;
- Encouraging and recognizing volunteer efforts to enhance the beauty, character and security of Orinda.

Visit our office at 26 Orinda Way (Library Plaza) Phone: 254-0800 www.OrindaAssociation.org

The Orinda Association P.O. Box 97 Orinda, CA 94563

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EDITORIAL

Corrections



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
**Adrienne Johnson** spoke on "Engineering with a Purpose" at the Girls Stem Webinar, Nov. 22. She was named one of the "Top Women to Watch" in 2017 by Engineering Systems Magazine.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
**Christy Tormey** presented "Refinery 101" in the first webinar on Sunday, Nov. 8.

In our November 2020 issue, we mistakenly identified the headshot for the *AAUW-OML Announces GirlsSTEM Webinars* article on page 14 with Christy Tormey, when it should be Adrienne Johnson.



KATHY ENZERINK  
Art of Mixology Cocktail Kits were sold in front of Theatre Square by (L-R) Lamorinda Arts Council President, **Denise Nomura** and Mixology Committee Chair, **Ani Breslin**.

In our November 2020 issue on page 22. in the article titled, *Best Bartenders in Town Vie for Bragging Rights*, we mistakenly identified Hailey Coder as an amateur mixologist, when in fact, she

is a professional bartender at Bar Cava in Martinez. Also, in the photo caption, we listed (L) Ani Breslin and Denise Nomura on the right, when it should be reversed.

Letters to the Editor

Time to Impose Fiscal Discipline on Orinda

On Election Day, Nov. 3, 2020, the voters of Orinda and of Contra Costa County (which includes Orinda) decided to support tax increases.

Currently, the sales tax in Orinda is 8.75%. With Orinda's voters passing Measure R, the new sales tax in the city will be 9.25%. However, a new, higher sales tax in Contra Costa County (derived from the passage of Measure X) will make the total Orinda sales tax 9.75%.

The funds derived from Measure R – \$2.4 million per year or \$48 million over the 20-year length of the tax – are supposed to be used for wildfire control, road maintenance and sewer repair. Wildfire control is essential in Orinda, but there is no guarantee

that Measure R's funds will be used for wildfire control.

The November 2020 issue of *The Orinda News* carried a front-page article stating, "According to an impartial analysis of Measure R, City Attorney Osa Wolff, writes, 'the tax can be used for any municipal government purpose ...'"

On Oct. 6, 2020, according to an article in the *Lamorinda Weekly* (Sept. 16, 2020), Orinda's management employees received a 3% salary hike. The City's Director of Planning, the article stated, got a 13% salary increase.

Orindans have no assurance that Measure R's funds will go for city workers' salary increases and higher pensions – rather than wildfire control.

Higher sales taxes have a tendency to



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reduce consumption of taxable goods. If shoppers boycott Orinda, the city's merchants might have to cut payrolls, re-locate, raise prices or close down. Jobs could be lost.

For a \$60,000 car registered in Orinda, the sales-tax fee is currently \$5,250. When the sales tax becomes 9.75%, the sales-tax fee will jump to \$5,850, a \$600 increase.

Currently, California has the highest sales tax rate in the nation. That rate, at the statewide level is 7.25%, but local communities, like Orinda, can impose additional taxation.

What Orinda and Contra Costa voters have done is make a very high sales tax even higher.

If Orinda homes burn down because of wildfires, Orinda's voters should hold the current City Council, which unanimously decided to put Measure R on the ballot, fully accountable.

Unfortunately, improper management of money and taxation has become, over many years, the hallmarks of Orinda's city council. The time has come to impose fiscal discipline on Orinda.

– Richard S. Colman

Where Does the City Go from Here?

Congratulations to the winners in the election: City Council Members Darlene [SEE LETTERS page 16]

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Letters to the Editor are printed on a space-available basis and should be no longer than 400 words. They must include the writer's first and last name, signature and telephone number.

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For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 ([jill@aspenconsult.net](mailto:jill@aspenconsult.net)), Elana O'Loskey at 925-984-1751 ([elanao@mac.com](mailto:elanao@mac.com)) or Kathy Enzerink at 252-626-2109 ([kathy@theorindanews.com](mailto:kathy@theorindanews.com)). The deadline for the January issue is Dec. 8.

## FIRE

## Wildfire and Fire Insurance in California Poses a Dilemma

By MELANIE LIGHT  
Contributing Writer

I was invited by the California Department of Insurance to speak as a consumer representative at its Virtual Investigatory Hearing held in October. ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=vYtFqWo\\_gek&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vYtFqWo_gek&feature=youtu.be)). A broad spectrum of stakeholders was invited to relate struggles dealing with the vulnerable insurance market here. It was fascinating and revealed an extremely complicated dynamic. In the coming months this will heat up.

Orindans know personally that the insurance market in California is struggling, as evidenced by the extreme rate hikes and non-renewals many of us have experienced. The insurance industry lost decades of profit from the fires of the last three years, but also received \$11 billion from a settlement with PG&E, so it's hard to know the real bottom line for the industry. Firms like Merced Property & Casualty Company have gone out of business due to claims from fires.

One flashpoint is the use of modern catastrophe model or cat model. It is a risk management tool that uses computer technology to help insurers and reinsurers, as well as business and government agencies, better assess the potential losses caused by natural and man-made catastrophes. Currently, insurers can only use 20 years of experience, in addition to third party products like FireLine. Fire Hazard maps can yield arbitrary results – such as neighboring houses being assigned different risk levels.

Cat models could greatly improve the risk assessment. They combine experience, geographic data and forward-looking algorithms to evaluate future risk, but

these are prohibited in California. Many consider cat models to be “black boxes,” and modelers are reluctant to open them to public inspection because doing so would expose their costs to all, including their competitors.

Consequently, insurers do not have confidence in their ability to accurately measure wildfire risk with the means currently at their disposal. They, therefore, try to protect themselves by leaving the market or setting the rates as high as possible.

Even if the ideal risk assessment tools were available, our rates would have to increase markedly to take in the current risk.

California Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara is exploring guidelines/policy/laws to improve the risk through stricter fire and building codes, and creating statewide vegetation management standards that can be used to give homeowners discounts. Insurance companies are reluctant to consider homeowner wildfire mitigation efforts because they can't predict how successful those efforts would be without cat models.

In 2020, Lara “hit the pause button,” with a moratorium on policy cancellations for zip codes adjacent to recent fires, though insurers can cancel for other reasons like nonpayment of premiums. Because of the Sky Fire in Martinez, Orinda and Lafayette were a part of that moratorium which expires Dec. 6. A new moratorium has been imposed, but Orinda is not a part of it. Theoretically, the rate of cancellation in our town will rise after that, and people may be pushed to the California FAIR Plan, called the insurance of last resort because it only covers fire and smoke damage.

While the complex dynamics play out at the state level, we must stay attuned to these

issues, and work to harden our homes, our neighborhoods and our town as best we can. At the very least, we would then be more resilient to a wildfire.

In the best-case scenario, insurance companies will recognize our efforts with meaningful discounts. If your insurance is cancelled or the premiums skyrocket, there are two resources for you: United Policyholders ([www.uphelp.org](http://www.uphelp.org)) and the California Department of Insurance ([www.insurance.ca.gov](http://www.insurance.ca.gov)); both will work with you to find a solution. Homeowners have 45 days from the date they were notified to find a new insurance carrier. Also, let your elected officials, Assembly Member Rebecca Bauer-Kahan ([a16.asmdc.org](mailto:a16.asmdc.org)) and Senator Steve Glazer ([sd07.senate.ca.gov/contact](mailto:sd07.senate.ca.gov/contact)), know you have lost your insurance.

Melanie Light can be reached at [Melanie@melanielight.com](mailto:Melanie@melanielight.com).

## ◆ CARS from page 2

nonprofits and impacted the lives of many in our communities.”

According to Wiley, people donating cars to the OA can designate a particular program if they prefer, or just allow the OA to determine where the funds are most needed. The organization's programs include: SAT, which provides free transportation to appointments for Orinda seniors; the Fourth of July Parade; Public Forums; Orinda Volunteer Center; Orinda Classic Car Show and *The Orinda News*.

“Working with Cars2ndChance has given new meaning to our lives,” said Mary. “It's not so much the dollars we raise, but the lives we change,” added Dave.

To donate a car to the OA, go to [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org) and click on the Cars2ndChance link. For further information, call the OA at 925.254.0800 or Cars2ndChance at 925.326.5868.

Sally Hogarty can be reached at [sally@theorindanews.com](mailto:sally@theorindanews.com).

## Rescue One Foundation Seeks Applicants for Board Member Seat

By GORDON NATHAN  
Contributing Writer

The Rescue One Foundation is looking for applicants to fill a vacancy on its Board of Directors.

This nonprofit organization has served as a community support organization for the Moraga-Orinda Fire Districts' lifesaving paramedic services for more than 43 years. Our mission is to receive and administer donations in order to enhance public safety by providing ad-

vanced medical equipment, supplies and educational services to the community.

Residents living within the Moraga-Orinda Fire District's service area are eligible to apply.

Please submit your letter of interest no later than Dec. 15 to:

Gordon Nathan, Rescue One Foundation

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Please call 925.376.4639 for more information regarding this position.



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FITNESS / POLICE

## Fitness Tip of the Month

***Fitness is Easier to Get Than It is to Keep...***

*because we don't necessarily like the process of becoming fit, so once we get results we stop the activity;*

*or*

*because we like the workout so much we keep doing the same workout.*

*The key is to find 2 or 3 types of workouts that you like so you are not always doing the same thing and because you like it you will keep doing it!*



For more information, contact Sheena with Living Lean personal training and eating for elite fitness at 925-360-7051 or [www.thelivingleanprogram.com](http://www.thelivingleanprogram.com).

### ◆ PRESIDENT from page 3

of past parades, combined with a citywide noise making effort at noon. The Annual Car show became a tour of 60 vintage cars through several cities. It was filmed in real time and shown on YouTube. This required great imagination and organization by the car committee.

Besides these modified major events, the OA provided additional programs and services: *The Orinda News* delivered informative newspapers free to 9,000 households and businesses; the Volunteer Center, located at 26 Orinda Way (Library Plaza), and the Public Forums organized by the OA also contributed to service and communication needs of Orindans.

None of this could have been possible without the active participation of board members and the many dedicated volunteers who help out each day. Also, we owe the success of these programs and services not only to the wonderful volunteers, but also to our generous donors throughout the year. We would like to take this opportunity and thank you for your generous donations last month in response to *The Orinda News* Giving Tuesday request.

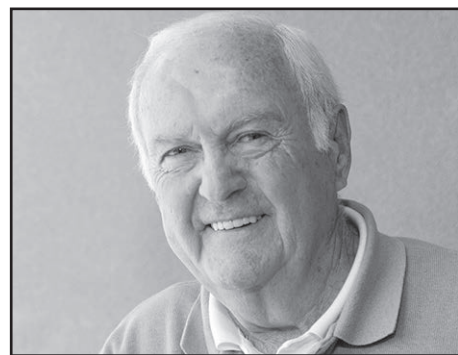
As we approach the end of the year, as spelled out in this December edition of *The Orinda News*, we are introducing another very creative manner to donate. We have partnered with two Rotary clubs to join a car donation program. You can now donate your vehicle to a good cause by choosing programs mentioned herein and noting that cause with your donation. And, you get a tax break! Please see the ad on page 3 and the story on page 2 to respond in this way. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

Carlos Baltodano can be reached at [cbalt ldc@comcast.net](mailto:cbalt ldc@comcast.net).

### ◆ GARVEY from page 3

"I've thoroughly enjoyed my activities with the OA, which helped me round out my life. I encourage others to look into joining the organization and the board," Garvey said.

Garvey leaves the OA Board and his position as vice president in "ship shape," which is appropriate for a graduate of the Annapolis Naval Academy. He served in the combat information center aboard a destroyer in the early 1960s when he found himself in the Mediterranean and North Seas. "It's where I learned the importance of discipline and honesty," Garvey added.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Joe Garvey retires from his role as VP of the OA at the end of December.

After leaving the Navy, Garvey earned an MBA in marketing from New York University before starting his career in the travel and hospitality industry.

Garvey and his family have resided in NYC, New Jersey, Chicago, Portland, Denver and Orinda. He said, "Without question, Orinda has been the most enjoyable community in which we have lived. Residents are friendly, caring and involved."

The Garveys have lived in Orinda for 33 years. They have two adult children and four grandchildren.

Sally Hogarty can be reached at [sally@theorindanews.com](mailto:sally@theorindanews.com).



## POLICE BLOTTER

September 27 through November 7

### Calls for Service

911 Hangup: 19 incidents  
Abandoned Vehicle: 3 incidents  
Accident Injury: 1 incident  
Accident Property: 5 incidents  
Alarm False: 101 incidents  
Barking Dog: 1 incident  
Burglary, Commercial: 1 incident  
Burglary, Residential: 2 incidents  
Carjacking: 1 incident  
Check Non Sufficient Funds: 1 incident  
Corporal Injury Spouse: 1 incident  
Death Unknown Causes: 1 incident  
Disturbance Domestic: 1 incident  
Failure to Obey: 1 incident  
Fire/EMS Response: 1 incident  
Fireworks: 1 incident  
Fraud False Pretenses: 1 incident  
Grand Theft: 3 incidents  
Grand Theft Bicycle: 1 incident  
Grand Theft from Vehicle: 1 incident  
Harassment: 7 incidents  
Identity Theft: 1 incident  
Juvenile Disturbance: 2 incidents  
Litter: 2 incidents  
Loud Music: 3 incidents  
Loud Noise: 4 incidents  
Loud Party: 5 incidents  
Medical Hospital: 6 incidents  
Mentally Ill Commit: 5 incidents  
Missing Adult: 2 incidents  
Neighbor Dispute: 1 incident  
Other Felony: 1 incident  
Ordinance Violation: 7 incidents  
Outside Assist: 34 incidents  
Panhandling: 2 incidents

Patrol Request: 94 incidents  
Petty Theft: 4 incidents  
Petty Theft from Vehicle: 2 incidents  
Petty Theft Vehicle Parts: 1 incident  
Public Assembly Check: 10 incidents  
Public Nuisance: 5 incidents  
Reckless Driving: 6 incidents  
Revocation of Probation: 1 incident  
Security Check: 71 incidents  
Service to Citizen: 173 incidents  
Shoplift: 1 incident  
Shots Heard: 1 incident  
Tow: 1 incident  
Traffic Control: 2 incidents  
Traffic Hazard: 9 incidents  
Traffic Stop: 1 incident  
Trespass: 1 incident  
Unauthorized Possession: 2 incidents  
Unwanted Guest: 1 incident  
Vandalism: 4 incidents  
Vehicle Theft: 2 incidents  
Verbal Dispute: 9 incidents  
Walk Through: 19 incidents  
Welfare Check: 14 incidents

### Arrest

Possession of Drugs: 1 arrest  
Possession of Personal Identifying Information: 2 arrests  
Warrant Arrest: 3 arrests

– Compiled by David Dierks  
Assistant Editor

For more incident details, visit [www.crimereports.com](http://www.crimereports.com).

### ◆ SCOUTS from page 1

the arduous task took each scout and cub several hours throughout the week to accomplish.

"Conducting a COVID-safe food drive, however, was a challenge for the scouts," said Persin. "They gathered outdoors with masks to plan their routes and staple Food Bank remittance envelopes to the flyers."

Persin said in normal years, the scouts would go back the following week to pick up non-perishable food donations, but this year, to keep everyone safe, the scouts are asking Orinda residents to drop food off at St. Monica's Church, 1001 Camino Pablo in Moraga, on Saturday, Nov. 14, between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., where uniformed scouts will accept them.

All food and monetary donations will go directly to the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

"The need is greater than ever, due to COVID-related job losses," said Persin.

Persin's son, Spencer, of Troop 57, has a

heart for those less fortunate than himself. "It's important to help provide for those who are more needy than me," he said.

Persin could not be any prouder of him: "As a parent, I'm happy that he recognizes the need that exists in his own community and that has grown greater during COVID-19 when many people cannot work, and I welcome his enthusiasm to do something about it."

She added that the need to donate either cans or money is significant, and readers can still donate by going online to <https://give.foodbankccs.org/team/327458> or to find a drop-off location for non-perishable food.

"The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano is also a great place to volunteer. Our scouts earn community service hours throughout the year by bagging produce or sorting food there," Persin added. "Opportunities are posted online at [www.foodbankccs.org](http://www.foodbankccs.org)."

Charleen Earley can be reached at [editor@theorindanews.com](mailto:editor@theorindanews.com).

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## MEALS ON WHEELS / FIRST FRIDAY FORUM / AUTHOR



KATHY ENZERINK

At Orinda Senior Village, County Connection driver **Amy Hako** (L) hands a cooler of five frozen meals with fresh fruit and milk to Meals on Wheels Diablo Region employee **Brian Underwood**.

## Meals on Wheels Diablo Region is More Than Food Delivery

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK  
Assistant Editor

Meals on Wheels (MOW) Diablo Region volunteers deliver more than 300 nutritious meals weekly to housebound Orinda seniors. Prior to COVID-19, hot, ready-to-eat meals were prepared and delivered five days per week. The in-person deliveries provided a safety check as well as often being the only human interaction the senior had all day.

“When COVID hit, we were like air traffic controllers during rush hour at O’Hare,” said Sherry Nadworny, director of development and community relations, referring to Chicago’s busiest airport. “Now, we deliver frozen meals once a week. We wait for the client to answer when the food, in a bag, is placed at the door. Our safety checks are now from a distance.”

Delivered meals, based on need not income, are provided to housebound people 60 years or older, not able to drive, unable to prepare food themselves or without a caregiver to prepare their meals.

Meal deliveries have increased 40% throughout the county since COVID-19 hit. In March, Orinda had two delivery routes. Now it has three. With increased expenses agency-wide, MOW Diablo Region announced a holiday fundraising campaign, the No Show Gala. Participants are requested to donate the amount of money which would’ve been spent on evening attire, tickets and related costs, “to an event that you would rather not go to.”

Pre-COVID, volunteers were able to load the hot meals into their vehicles for delivery to their assigned clients. Now, the frozen meals are stored in bulky coolers, making deliveries a challenge unless the driver has a big SUV or van.

“The size of the deliveries is so large, few of our volunteer’s cars can accommodate all the meals for their whole route,”

said Nadworny. “Our friends at County Connection pitched in to help.” Where needed, coolers are loaded into the CC buses and transported, with the volunteer, for delivery. Now the senior gets an extra smile and wave from the driver. “We always adapt,” said County Connection driver Jeff Blair. “There was a need and we wanted to help.”

Serving Contra Costa County for more than 50 years, MOW Diablo Region is the only area agency which delivers meals and offers additional services.

The Care Management program provides confidential guidance to help older adults and their families meet long-term care needs and deal with problems such as housing, elder abuse and depression. More than 800 seniors, county-wide, use these services each year.

The Fall Prevention program helps reduce preventable injuries that would otherwise lead to loss of independence and significant healthcare costs. Falls are the largest reason for seniors to be admitted to hospitals and nursing homes, according to Nadworny. The program focuses on a combination of education and exercise endorsed by the Centers for Disease Control. “Additionally, many of our clients receive critical in-home safety improvements every year,” Nadworny said.

“Isolation is one of the major issues,” the Director said. “Seniors become ‘The Hidden Hungry’ when their world gets small.” Volunteers make phone calls and in-person, distanced visits as part of the Friendly Visitors/Callers Program.

Located at 1300 Civic Drive in Walnut Creek, MOW Diablo Region accepts dry goods, adult diapers and kitty litter donations year-round. For details, visit [www.mowdiablregion.org](http://www.mowdiablregion.org).

*Kathy Enzerink can be reached at [kathy@theorindanews.com](mailto:kathy@theorindanews.com).*

## First Friday Forum is Back for the New Year, Albeit Online

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

Among wildfire, COVID-19 and other worries, here is some good news. The First Friday Forum resumes in January via our best new way of staying in touch, a Zoom webinar.

The First Friday Forum is a monthly event, held at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (in-person before COVID-19), with speakers who engage in topics relevant, timely and of interest to the entire Lamorinda community.

Since the first Friday falls on New Year’s Day, the series will begin Jan. 8, 2021, at 1:30 p.m. It is necessary to register for each program. Look for instructions to register in next month’s issue of *The Orinda News*.

This popular series has been open to the public since its inception in 2002. Running from January through June, it is sponsored

by the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church.

Larry Lamborn is the speaker for January. His topic is “New Encirclement of Asia.” Lamborn’s 40-year national defense career includes 26 years with the Central Intelligence Agency, where he worked in a variety of analytical and operational assignments. As a trained operations officer, he served in various Third World countries.

Upcoming First Friday Forum topics include Homelessness, COVID-19, the Middle East and Climate Change.

Register and join via Zoom for now, until guests can meet in person again in the sanctuary. For more information, visit [www.lopc.org](http://www.lopc.org).

*Bobbie Dodson can be reached at [bobbiedodson@comcast.net](mailto:bobbiedodson@comcast.net).*

## Orinda Author Making a Change in the World with Plastic-Free Living

By CHARLEEN EARLEY  
Editor-in-Chief

The last thing Orinda resident Sandra Ann Harris wanted to do was write a scary, depressing book during this pandemic – so she took six months and did exactly the opposite.

She wrote an uplifting, informative narrative about eliminating plastics from one’s life in her book titled, *Say Goodbye to Plastic: A Survival Guide For Plastic-Free Living*.

Founder and CEO of her woman-based online store, ECOLunchbox, a mission-based plastic-free lunch box social enterprise she started in 2009 that has sold over 800,000 stainless steel and silicone food containers worldwide, Harris is passionate about living a plastic-free lifestyle.

“I’m a lifelong environmentalist and humanitarian,” she said. “The business is a vessel for making change in our world by educating about the dangers of plastic, inspiring people to make better choices and empowering them to say goodbye to plastic starting at lunchtime with our ECOLunchbox stainless steel containers.”

Born in Oakland and moved to Orinda at age 3, Harris attended Del Rey Elementary, Orinda Intermediate School and Miramonte High School (class of ’84). She went on to



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Orinda native and plastic pollution activist **Sandra Ann Harris** published “Say Goodbye To Plastic: A Survival Guide For Plastic-Free Living” in October 2020 to educate, inspire and empower people to reduce their plastic footprint.

earn her BA in English at the University of California, Davis, and an MA degree in investigative journalism through the Kiplinger Program from Ohio State University.

But her love for Mother Earth started as a child.

It began with enjoying a local summer hiking program offered by Mark Joiner, a teacher in the Orinda Union School District,

[SEE HARRIS page 17]



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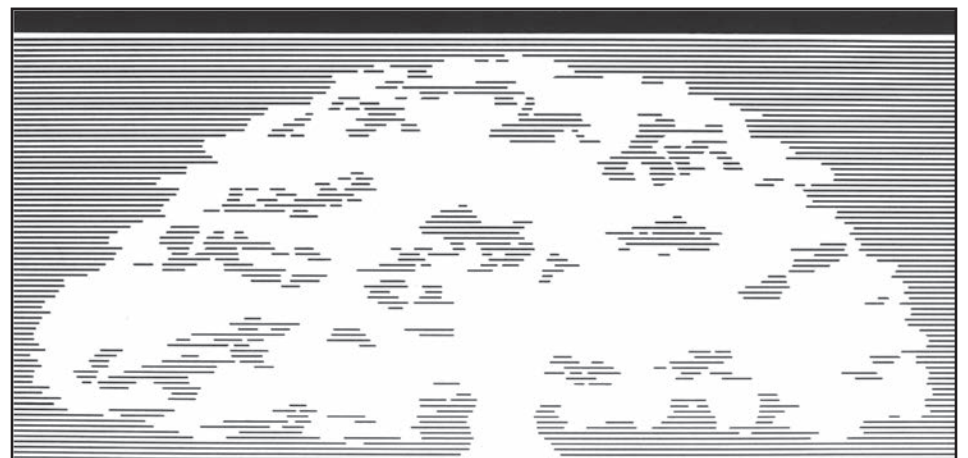
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ORINDA ASSOCIATION / STUDENTS



KATHY ENZERINK

**Cathy Goshorn**, with the Orinda Association and Seniors Around Town program, is loaded to the top of her COVID-19 mask with 11 new children's coats donated by a savvy shopper who purchased them at Costco, using discounts and savings offers, for less than \$100. New and clean, gently worn coats are accepted through Dec. 16.

## Warm Coats for Neighbors in Need

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK  
Assistant Editor

“**B**aby it’s cold outside...” and the chilly temperatures started long before Dec. 21, the official first day of winter. ‘Tis the season of staying warm and protected from winter weather elements, especially the cold. As part of One Warm Coat, The Orinda Association is collecting new and clean, gently worn coats for those in need.

Now in its sixth year of collecting coats in a donation box outside the office at 26 Orinda Way (first floor below the library), program chair and OA Board Member Kate Wiley said the focus of coat donations has changed due to COVID-19 health restrictions: “New and squeaky-clean coats are the priority this year.” When donating a used coat, the Center for Disease Control recommends washing items in the warmest appropriate setting and drying completely.

New and dry-cleaned, in the bag coats will be distributed to Contra Costa families by the nonprofit White Pony Express, founded by Dr. Carol Weyland Conner in 2013. “We believe we’re all part of one human family and when one of us moves forward, everyone does,” she said. “We work to help bring people living on the margins into the mainstream.”

Mission for the Homeless, in Oakland, will receive and distribute the used, gently-worn clean coats. Since 1999, the nonprofit organization visits approximately 120 unhoused people every night. Clean and warm are key as sometimes a coat is all a person has for warmth, day or night. The team of Mission volunteers hands out 60-90 coats per month.

“This is not just about culling outwear from the closet,” said Wiley. “Our goal is bringing dignity to our neighbors in need with coats everyone would be proud to wear. When shopping this holiday season, consider buying an extra coat to donate.” She continued, “One bargain-hunter took advantage of special savings and discounts at Costco last month. She bought 11 coats, in sizes for boys and girls for less than \$100!”

The Orinda Association is accepting coat donations weekdays from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. through Dec. 16. Donations will be accepted at the Orinda Farmers’ Market on Dec. 5 and Dec. 12.

For more information about these locals programs and needs, visit [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org), [www.whiteponyexpress.org](http://www.whiteponyexpress.org) and [www.missionforthehomeless.org](http://www.missionforthehomeless.org).

*Kathy Enzerink can be reached at [kathy@theorindanews.com](mailto:kathy@theorindanews.com).*

## Presidential Spotlight Shines on Wagner Ranch 4th Grade Student

By MIMI BOMMARITO  
Staff Writer

**L**et’s call this “funk” news: mostly fake, but lots of fun. What if a fourth grader was elected President of the United States (POTUS)? Agnes Swaney, a student at Orinda’s Wagner Ranch Elementary, recently played the role of presidential candidate Kaley Gurlbaus, a spunky, 9-year-old karate-loving Girl Scout, who successfully wooed voters with her campaign slogan, “Vote for tomorrow’s leader — TODAY!” *POTUS Among Us* is the latest improvisational comedy performance of the Washington Improv Theater, revamped this year from a live, DC stage production to an online format viewable on YouTube and all social media channels.

The Washington Improv Theater, cleverly acronymed WIT, is an improvisational comedy theater established in 1986 in Washington D.C. Fortunately for Lamorinda, comedy veteran Michelle Swaney, who portrays the role of Kaley Gurlbaus’ overbearing campaign *Mom-ager*, was instrumental in securing spots for Bay Area comedic actors in the recent Internet collaboration.

Conceived for adults, the humorous, imaginary campaign saga mimics the real-life path of political candidates: cutthroat debates, attack ads, punditry, scintillating



MICHELLE SWANEY

**Agnes Swaney** as 9-year-old presidential candidate Kaley Gurlbaus.

scandals and political intrigue, seasoned by a heavy dose of tongue-in-cheek social media promotion.

In the fictional world of *POTUS Among Us*, instead of Democrats and Republicans, three political parties — Rock, Paper, [SEE POTUS page 14]

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VISUAL ARTS

# Gallery: Vibrant Color by The Glover Group

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

The Lamorinda Arts Council proudly presents *plein air* paintings from The Glover Group in the virtual Art Gallery at the Orinda Library during December. All Council art exhibits are virtual until COVID-19 restrictions change.

This exciting exhibit celebrates the Grover Group's 10-year anniversary. Participants met as students of the late, great *plein air* artist Pam Glover. Locals will remember Glover's quarter century tenure teaching *plein air* painting at the Orinda Community Center. Her love of *plein air* painting still ripples through the local arts community. The group is also known for some playful rule-breaking styles because members strive for freshness and immediacy.

By observing social distancing and wearing masks, painting outdoors continues unabated for most of the group throughout

the pandemic. The artists consider themselves fortunate to have so many beautiful locations in California to paint *plein air*. "Painting outdoors with fellow artists satisfies our need to be together as artists and helps preserve our sanity," said Maria Santo Stefano, organizer of the exhibit. Enjoy the online gallery of artwork images and a video by visiting [www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries](http://www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries).

Oil paintings dominate the media, with some pastel work. Polly Ziolkowski's *Rutherford Vineyard Worker*, a 14" x 18" oil painting will have you dreaming of a St. Helena road trip. It focuses the eye on saturated color and dense grape vines bathed in sunlight.

Because the group's artists paint with intense color and identify as colorists, their work delights the eye, a hallmark of *plein air* painting. For 10 years a core group has painted together at least once a week; other members join in as convenient. The group allows participants to enjoy personal and

professional connections. Members belong to the same galleries, show together in different venues and some even take the *plein air* class at the Orinda Community Center.

Members of the group consider the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library their traditional showplace because Glover herself set up annual exhibits here for her students. The Council is delighted The Glover Group continues the tradition. The 19 artists showing work in this virtual exhibit include: the late Maureen Angelo, Flora Baumann, Dana Beebe, Julie Bradner, Claire Finne, Sylvia Fones, Therese Gladstone Gordon, Renie Herrera-McDonough, Susan Kendall, Alecia Larson, Janet Mardirosian, Margaret Mason, Allyn Morton, Iris Sabre, Mary Spain, Maria SantoStefano, Mary Claire Stotler, Taki Tu and Polly Ziolkowski.

To get in touch with the group, contact Maria SantoStefano at [www.santostefano.weebly.com](http://www.santostefano.weebly.com) or Susan Kendall at [www.susankendallart.com](http://www.susankendallart.com). To



POLLY ZIOLKOWSKI

If you've ever journeyed to the wine country, *Rutherford Vineyard Worker*, a 14" x 18" oil painting by Polly Ziolkowski, will take you right there.

learn more about the Lamorinda Arts Council, go to [www.lamorindaarts.org](http://www.lamorindaarts.org).

Elana O'Loskey can be reached at [business.orinda@gmail.com](mailto:business.orinda@gmail.com).

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# Virtual "Meet the Artists" at Christian Ehrhorn Fine Arts Gallery



KAREN FREY

Karen Frey's *Kitchen Window Glass-Reflection*, a 30" x 46" watercolor, captures light as it shimmers and shimmies through reflected glass in rainbow colors.

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

On Dec. 12, at 5 p.m., try something new: Meet artists Christian Ehrhorn and Peeta Tinay of Orinda, Karen Frey of Oakland and Aaron Webb of Petaluma at their online opening hosted by Christian Ehrhorn Fine Arts Gallery. Visit [www.christianeohrhornfineart.com](http://www.christianeohrhornfineart.com) to obtain the link for this event. The new exhibit, entitled "Arrivals," offers a variety of artwork,



including oil paintings, basket weaving, watercolors and encaustic paintings.

Tinay, a basket weaver, creates large scale baskets unique in size and multi-color finishes. Her bold constructions are often dyed, weathered and wax-finished, resulting in stunning pieces to be used and displayed. Visit [www.tinaystudio.com](http://www.tinaystudio.com) to learn more.

Webb, a Navy Veteran and visual artist, creates deep, meaningful paintings utilizing

[SEE EHRHORN page 14]

**CE CHRISTIAN EHRHORN FINE ARTS**

**PAINTINGS**  
By Aaron Webb

**BASKETRY**  
By Peeta Tinay

Also on display are paintings by Christian Ehrhorn and Karen Frey

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VISUAL ARTS / OBITUARY

# Wilder Gallery: “Epic Nature” Comes Alive

By ELANA O’LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

The Lamorinda Arts Council (Council) invites you to view a virtual exhibit of Lafayette artist Suzy Elsworth-Heithcock’s paintings during December. All Council art exhibits are virtual until COVID-19 restrictions change. See her virtual exhibit entitled “Epic Nature” through images and a video at [www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries](http://www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries). Elsworth-Heithcock exhibits 12 works

focused on landscapes, trees, figurative drawings and works from her imagination. Two companion pieces, *Dryad* and *Nayad*, really draw the epic aspects of nature into her artwork, as mentioned in her theme. A Dryad is a female Greek nature spirit about whom Elsworth-Heithcock said, “*The Dryad* painting is part of my reaction to being quarantined for months, expressing the explosive need I had to feel and melding my senses with the rich banquet in Nature.” *The Dryad* in particular feels the wind.”

Nayad is the Greek name for an immortal female nymph who presides over freshwater, springs and wells. The biomorphic lines of *Nayad*, her 24” x 6” oil painting, recall the fluidity and grace of moving water. You may have heard of Nayads and Dryads in books such as *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*, *The Illiad* and *The Odyssey*.

Elsworth-Heithcock is conscious of the difficulty presenting a three-dimensional world in two dimensional drawings or paintings. She said adding in the fourth dimension of time, such as showing the passage of time in an old tree to remind the observer that wind moves tree branches about, is what she tries to convey in her paintings. “Portraying a flow of movement is fundamental to my work,” added Elsworth-Heithcock. For more about her work, visit [www.elsworthartworks.com](http://www.elsworthartworks.com).

The Art Gallery at Wilder is virtual because the Gallery is closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. Contact curators Denise Nomura and Aniston Breslin at [wildergallery@lamorindaarts.org](mailto:wildergallery@lamorindaarts.org).

Elana O’Loskey can be reached at [business.orinda@gmail.com](mailto:business.orinda@gmail.com).



SUZY ELSWORTH-HEITHCOCK

“I was struck by the perfect egg shape of one of the rocks and made a play on words with the legendary great Roc bird. I added a bird to the scene to further this concept. I used a Japanese Heron, not a local bird, to represent the tourism that is so plentiful near the Monterey Aquarium,” said Suzy Elsworth-Heithcock.

# Jan Coe: Known for Her Tireless Community Work, Love of Family

Compiled by SALLY HOGARTY  
Executive Editor

Best known for her boundless love of family and friends, dedicated community work, passion for Bay Area sports teams and enthusiasm for being a Nana to her grandchildren, Janice Becker Coe passed away Oct. 22. While family and friends mourn her loss, she will always be remembered and celebrated by those who loved her.

“Jan was an intuitive leader of volunteers, flawlessly matching the right person with the right job, while providing volunteers the tools to be successful,” said her good friend and fellow volunteer Vanessa Crews. “She worked with grace, charm and humor, inspiring and motivating everyone around her to do their very best. Bringing her own warmth and humor to every position, she made volunteer service a fun social experience, never work. She was my friend and mentor, and I know I am a better person and leader because of her.”

Born March 16, 1952, in Pueblo, Colorado, Jan lived briefly in Georgia, Wash-

ington and Massachusetts before her family settled in Denver. Upon graduation from high school, Jan attended Southern Methodist University in Dallas where she met her husband, Alan, and graduated with honors in 1974.

Jan and Alan started their life together in Sacramento, where Alan was stationed as an officer in the U.S. Air Force. Jan taught kindergarten and first grade at Sacramento Country Day School and earned her master’s degree in education. She later taught first grade at the Cathedral School for Boys in San Francisco.

Jan and Alan started their family in the Bay Area in 1979. Although they lived in Sydney, Australia, for six years and Houston for three years, home ended up being Orinda, where they have been since 1988.

Jan was the consummate volunteer as their three children (Amy, Lisa and Brian) grew up. Beginning with running successful fundraisers at Glorietta Elementary School, she then, as her children moved on to Orinda Intermediate School, transformed OIS’s food canteen, Bulldog Kennel, into a highly successful venture. To accomplish that, she organized hundreds of volunteers. When her children entered Miramonte High School, she became the Miramonte Parents’ Club President, organizing snack programs and chairing two highly successful Grad Nights.

She also helped raise crucial school funding as president of the Educational Foundation of Orinda (EFO), running a successful campaign for a parcel tax for the Orinda Union School District in 1994 and chairing a successful bond measure for the Acalanes Union High School District in 1996.

“I didn’t learn from Jan telling me what to do. I learned from the example she set,” said Paula Goodwin, VP of EFO when Jan

[SEE COE page 16]



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Jan Coe passed away Oct. 22 after a short battle with a rare and aggressive cancer.

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HOSPICE / SEASONED SHOPPER

# Orinda's Tree of Lights Brightens the Sky Once Again

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Executive Editor

For the 34th year, Orinda's majestic oak tree in the Orinda Village shopping center will again sparkle with hundreds of lights honoring loved ones from Dec. 5 through the end of the year. This year's ceremony, however, will be virtual.

In previous years, the Tree of Lights event in Orinda offered a time to be with friends and family, listen to the elementary school choirs conducted by Ron Pickett and, of course, greet Santa Claus as he arrived on a fire engine.

While large gatherings of Orindans enjoying hot chocolate won't be happening this year, Friends of Hospice Orinda has coordinated with Hospice East Bay to create a memorable online event. Scheduled for Dec. 5 from 4:30 – 5:30 p.m., the eve-

ning's agenda includes several local speakers, including Orinda Mayor Darlene Gee and Hospice East Bay CEO Cindy Hatton, a reading of the names for whom lights have been purchased and a performance by music therapist Brittany Tachkov.

"These ceremonies have provided a way for families and friends to honor their loved ones and find solace in the symbolism of light as the names of their loved ones are read," said Hospice Special Events Coordinator Ann Mimiaga.

The funds raised by these ceremonies make it possible for Hospice to provide hospice care to patients not covered by insurance. "Your support also allows us to offer additional services and programs, such as music therapy and children's grief programs," Mimiaga added.

Those who purchase a light will be invited to a Zoom Webinar on Dec. 5. The event will also be available to anyone via Facebook [www.facebook.com/Hospiceoftheeastbay](http://www.facebook.com/Hospiceoftheeastbay) or through the website [www.hospiceeastbay.org](http://www.hospiceeastbay.org).

"We will also be recording the event for those who might not have a strong enough WIFI connection, and we'll make it available to everyone through our website," said Mimiaga.

For more information, call Hospice East Bay at 925.887.5678.

Sally Hogarty can be reached at [sally@theorindanews.com](mailto:sally@theorindanews.com).



Although the crowds won't be in attendance at the **Hospice Tree Lighting** this year, the oak tree in Village Square will still shine with bright lights from Dec. 5 through the end of the year.



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**BARBARA KOBSAR**

The Orinda farmer's market remains open! Since 1997, the final market of the season was the Saturday before Thanksgiving, but with the requests and support of the community, you'll be able to visit the market every Saturday going forward. Rain or shine, growers and vendors are ready to bring their best.

Produce changes with the season so bring your bags to fill with persimmons, pomegranates, greens, root vegetables, early citrus, Asian pears, nuts, dried fruit, honey and jam.

Hardy squash is a highlight of the season. Winter squash are allowed to ripen on the vine to develop a hard shell. They are as diverse in their shapes and colors as in their flavors and textures and perfect candidates for making pies, cakes, breads and soups.

Kabocha (Japanese) squash is prized for its fluffy texture and sweet flavor. When baked, the intense yellowish orange flesh can be scooped and mashed with butter to make a delicious side dish. The skin also softens up nicely when cooked and is completely edible.

Delicata squash is another market favorite and easily recognized with its green or orange stripes. As the name suggests this squash has a delicate flavor and texture and is easy to bake, microwave, sauté or steam. Try stuffing the squash with a meat or veg-



**Delicata squash** and other winter squash are waiting for you at your local Orinda market.

etable mixture to make a meal-in-one dish. Spaghetti or vegetable squash can be your go-to pasta! Once the squash is cooked, remove the flesh using a fork, to produce long, spaghetti like strands. Serve with or without sauce as a substitute for pasta and roast the large seeds for a tasty snack.

Choose your favorite squash to make this moist cornbread for the holidays.

[SEE SEASONED page 13]

*Orinda*

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*At Orinda Village*

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## FRIENDS OF THE JOAQUIN MORAGA ADOBE / STUDENTS

## Time to Save the Oldest House in Orinda: Joaquin Moraga Adobe

By CHARLEEN EARLEY  
Editor-in-Chief

The 1841 Joaquin Moraga Adobe, built by Don Joaquin Moraga as a modest two-room, though other rooms were added later, is the oldest house in Orinda and the oldest surviving building in Contra Costa County – and it needs saving.

Despite its name which confuses many, Joaquin Moraga Adobe, the home, recognized as a historical landmark by the State of California in 1954 (Landmark #509), is located in the City of Orinda. It rests on 2.3 acres of land surrounded by a new subdivision, J & J Ranch Development.

The Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe are doing everything they can to keep the home safely restored while turning it into a museum. In order to reach those goals, the group needs to raise a half million dollars.

The nonprofit recently started a GoFundMe page to move efforts along. “We recently passed the half way mark of \$250,000, probably currently near \$270,000,” said Kent Long, president and chairman for the last 11 years of The Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe.

“The money will go towards the restoration of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe,” said Long.

“If we reach our goal, it will be deeded over to us, and we will open it up to the public and schools as a museum,” added Long. “It will open 30 days a year, most likely one weekend day a month. Additionally, we plan to have school group visits throughout the year, particularly fourth grade students when they study the missions each year. Del Rey Elementary students are literally within walking distance to the Adobe.”



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe are raising money through a GoFundMe campaign to restore the oldest building in Orinda and Contra Costa County, the Moraga Adobe home, built in 1841 by Don Joaquin Moraga.

Long has had a fascination for the Adobe since he was a kid: “I grew up in Orinda and had known about the Adobe. It was never open to the public, so as a kid, I was always kind of curious about it!” Long volunteered at the Moraga Historical Society 11 years ago as an archivist.

“When word about the Adobe came up, I went out there for the Moraga Historical Society and took pictures for them,” Long

added. “So when J & J Ranch bought the property, they invited everyone on a walk-through. A lot of those people on that tour said we needed to organize something and turn the house into something!”

The Friends of Joaquin Moraga Adobe was born, with Long at the helm. The Moraga Historical Society also has a stake in partnership, and so does J & J Ranch,

[SEE ADOBE page 14]

## Orinda Junior Women’s Club Announces Youth Ink 2021

By The Orinda News Staff

The Orinda Junior Women’s Club’s (Orinda Juniors) annual creative writing contest, Youth Ink 2021, will once again be open to all middle school students who live in or attend school in Orinda.

The Youth Ink 2021 prompt this year is “Hope.” Entrants, however, do not have to adhere explicitly to the prompt since imagination and creativity are encouraged. Orinda Juniors Board Member Erika Rosenberg, who oversees the contest with fellow Board Member Sara Shukairy, hopes the contest will continue to give young

adolescents the opportunity to experience the literary arts and enjoy the creative writing process.

Cash prizes of \$250 for first place, \$125 for second place, \$75 for third place and gift certificates for 10 honorable mentions will be awarded. Youth Ink 2021 submissions will be accepted via email from Tuesday, Dec. 1 until Friday, Feb. 26, 2021, in order to be considered for an award. Full entry details will be on the Youth Ink 2021 submission forms, available through Orinda Intermediate School, several local private middle schools, the Orinda Public Library and online at [www.orindajuniors.org](http://www.orindajuniors.org).

### ◆ SEASONED from page 12

#### Squash Cornbread

¾ cup yellow corn meal  
¾ cup flour  
4 teaspoons baking powder  
½ teaspoon cinnamon  
¼ teaspoon allspice  
½ teaspoon salt  
½ cup butter at room temperature  
¼ cup brown sugar  
2 eggs  
2 teaspoons lemon juice  
1 cup cooked and pureed winter squash  
¼ cup milk

Combine corn meal, flour, baking powder, spices and salt. Cream butter, add sugar and beat until light. Add eggs, lemon juice, squash, and milk. Beat together, then gradually add dry ingredients until well combined. Pour batter into a greased

medium size loaf pan. Bake in a preheated 350-degree oven for 45 to 50 minutes, or until a skewer inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in pan for 10 minutes, remove and cool on rack. Enjoy!

The Orinda market is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Orinda Way in Orinda Village. More information is available at [www.cccfm.org](http://www.cccfm.org), [facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket](https://facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket) and [Instagram@OrindaFarmersMarket](https://instagram.com/OrindaFarmersMarket) or call the market hotline: 925.431.8361.

Barbara Kobsar sells her Cottage Kitchen jams and jellies at the JAM STAND at the Saturday Orinda market and the Sunday Walnut Creek market. She is also president of CCCFM (Contra Costa Certified Farmers Market) Association Board of Directors.

Barbara can be reached at [barbara@cotkitchen.com](mailto:barbara@cotkitchen.com)

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## CLUBS

## Club Meetings in December

While most clubs are not meeting during shelter-in-place, others offer Zoom meetings. Use contact info to find out.

**American Association of University Women - Orinda Moraga Lafayette Branch (AAUW-OML).** No Meeting for Dec. AAUW-OML's website: <https://oml-ca.aauw.net>.

**Birding with Ben.** The group meets at a different birding location every Wednesday at 9 a.m., masks and social distancing rules are practiced and enforced. FREE. Email: Ben Pettersson at [berntp988@gmail.com](mailto:berntp988@gmail.com).

**Diablo Star Chapter #214.** Order of the Eastern Star. No meetings at this time. Contact Karen Seaborn, 925.689.0995 for information.

**Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe.** Third Monday, 7:30 p.m. Contact Kent Long for Zoom link at [kentlong@moragaadobe.org](mailto:kentlong@moragaadobe.org). For more info., visit [www.moragaadobe.org](http://www.moragaadobe.org).

**Friends of the Orinda Creeks.** Fourth Wednesday, 5 p.m. 510.919.4765. [www.orindacreeks.org](http://www.orindacreeks.org).

**Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition.** Third Wednesday, 10 a.m. 925.687.8844, ext. 227. [www.facebook.com/lamorindaalcoholpolicycoalition](http://www.facebook.com/lamorindaalcoholpolicycoalition).

**Lamorinda Meditation Community.** Mondays and Thursdays, 10:30 - 11:25 a.m., through Zoom. All levels and philosophies welcome. Contact Gaby for more details: [gcmozee@gmail.com](mailto:gcmozee@gmail.com).

**Lamorinda Nature Walk and Bird Watching for seniors.** Wednesdays, 9 a.m., free. Call 925.254.2445 for meeting information.

**Lamorinda Republican Women Federated.** Third Thursday. For more information, search Facebook for Lamorinda Republican Women Federated or go to [www.lamorindarepublicanwomen.org](http://www.lamorindarepublicanwomen.org).

Contact Elsie Euing at [ejeuing@comcast.net](mailto:ejeuing@comcast.net) or 925.254.8617.

**Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary.** Until further notice, all weekly meetings will be conducted via Zoom video conferencing. 7 - 8:15 a.m. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82609498205>. Regular meetings will resume at the Lafayette Park Hotel when conditions permit. [www.lamorindasunrise.com](http://www.lamorindasunrise.com) or [lamorindasunrise@gmail.com](mailto:lamorindasunrise@gmail.com). Meetings: Dec. 4, MyKayla Skinner and Sophia Serseri, Olympic Athletes; Dec. 11, Tyler Schultz, Theranos Unraveled; Dec. 18, Skip McCowan and Avi Mylrea, Common Hope.

**Montelindo Garden Club.** Third Friday, Sept. through May. [montelindogarden@aol.com](mailto:montelindogarden@aol.com).

**Orinda Association.** First Monday, 7 p.m., Zoom meeting, [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org). 925.254.0800.

**Orinda Garden Club,** PO Box 34, Orinda, 925.257.0668, [www.orindagc.org](http://www.orindagc.org).

**Orinda Hiking Club.** Every weekend and first Wednesday, [www.orindahiking.org](http://www.orindahiking.org) or Ian at 925.254.1465.

**Orinda Historical Society.** Call 925.254.1353 for times and location of meetings and appointments.

**Orinda Junior Women's Club.** Second Tuesday, via Zoom, 7 p.m., September through June. [www.orindajuniors.org](http://www.orindajuniors.org).

**Orinda Job's Daughters.** First and third Mondays, 7 p.m. 925.283.7176.

**Orinda Masonic Lodge #122 F&AM.** 9 Altarinda Road, Orinda Masonic Center. For information, call 925.254.5211.

**Orinda Rotary.** Virtual meeting Wednesday, 12:30 p.m., 925.254.2222 go to [www.orindarotary.org](http://www.orindarotary.org) for zoom link. Orinda Rotary Fundraising (Take-Out) Dinner: Dec. 9, 4 p.m. Casa Orinda, Fried Chicken Dinner \$35 (includes \$12 donation). free bottle of wine with \$70+ order. [orindarotaryfundraiser@gmail.com](mailto:orindarotaryfundraiser@gmail.com).

**Orinda Satellite Rotary Club.** Second Wednesday. Call Sylvia at 510.224.8548.

**Orinda/Tabor (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation.** Fourth Thursday, 7 p.m., social, 7:30 p.m. meeting via Zoom. For more information, 925.254.8260.

**Orinda Woman's Club.** Currently meeting virtually Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. Email Jean Barnhart at [jeanr.barnhart@gmail.com](mailto:jeanr.barnhart@gmail.com) or go to [www.orindawomansclub.org](http://www.orindawomansclub.org).

**Reservoir Walk for Seniors** meets Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at the center bench and walk begins at 9 a.m. If you'd like to receive the weekly notice,

e-mail to [jascala2@comcast.net](mailto:jascala2@comcast.net).

**Road Runners.** Runners meet 5:45 a.m. Tuesday at Papilion (67 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette), Wednesday (Gepettos 87 Orinda Way, Orinda), Thursday (SiSI, 910 Country Club Drive, Moraga) and Friday (Starbucks, 470 Moraga Road, Rheem). For more information, contact John Fazel, [runmnts@prodigy.net](mailto:runmnts@prodigy.net).

**Sons in Retirement (SIR) Lamorinda Branch 174** hosts, via Zoom, a speaker and discussion on the second Wednesday of each month at 11:30 a.m. For info, call Tyler at 925.963.5741 or Bill at 925.963.0442 or go to [www.branch174.sirinc2.org](http://www.branch174.sirinc2.org).

Send calendar items to Jill Gelster at [calendar@aspenconsult.net](mailto:calendar@aspenconsult.net)

## ◆ POTUS from page 9

Scissors — duke it out for the presidency amidst a swirling media circus. Actors in Michelle Swaney's troupe of Bay Area improv actors called, Jurassic Pope, represented the primary candidates of the Scissors Party: General Fist, a blustery, combat-hungry military general, Miranda Curie-Swift, an environmentally obsessed candidate, fixated on overpopulation and her questionable approach to combating that; and Beekman, whose masked face resembles a cross between a giant Croc and Jason Voorhees from Friday the 13th.

Rounding out the pack is charming 9-year-old Kaley Gurlbaus, a Greta Thunberg-esque breath of fresh air, who proudly wears her karate yellow-belt with every outfit, earns an impressive array of Girl Scout badges and promises to nominate an all-female cabinet. Amusing "attack ads" accuse her of heinous crimes, such as hosting playdates during the pandemic and shortchanging customers at her lemonade stand.

"Typically, *POTUS Among Us* is a live, interactive show, performed on stage in DC," Swaney explained. Performed quadrennially — every election year since 2004 — the show was forced to make alterations in the presentation and delivery this year, which opened the door for actors from around the United States to participate. As the fast-paced, satirical format humorously chronicled an election cycle from beginning to end, every stage performance depended on audience participation by voting, which gave every show a different and unpredictable outcome. This year, once Swaney learned the show would take place virtually, she immediately sought to incorporate the local improv troupe she founded, Jurassic Pope of Oakland.

*POTUS Among Us* was young Agnes Swaney's first foray into the acting and improvisational comedy world. She plans to expand her theatrical resumé by performing in Wagner Ranch's spring musical, assuming COVID-19 precautions permit. Michelle Swaney conceded her daughter Agnes had such a positive and rewarding experience performing in *POTUS Among Us*, perhaps she will want to follow in her mother's comedic footsteps, although that was never the goal when the personalities and platforms of this year's candidates were created. "I was on the phone, in a brainstorming session, and Agnes just happened to wander into the room," Swaney explained. "I asked her, 'Agnes, what would be important to you, if you ran for President?'"

Without hesitation, Agnes responded, "S'mores. Recess. Birds. Karate. And Double Christmas." And a candidate was born.

To enjoy a variety of sketches from *POTUS Among Us*, visit #WITPOTUS2020 on YouTube, Facebook and Instagram. Swaney's improv troupe, Jurassic Pope, performs classic and interactive improv year-round. To stay up-to-date on their

latest comedy endeavors, follow Jurassic Pope Oakland on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Mimi Bommarito can be reached at [editor@theorindanews.com](mailto:editor@theorindanews.com).

## ◆ ADOBE from page 13

which owns the land.

If the nonprofit organization can reach \$500,000 by September 2021, J & J Ranch will match that amount and surrender the deed to The Friends of Joaquin Moraga Adobe.

Long said if they don't reach their goal, it will most likely become a clubhouse for the 13 homeowners, with somewhat limited public access.

For Long, and all members involved in this tiny house, the intent is not just about restoring the Adobe, but also about preserving history.

"If you don't know about history, you'll make the same mistakes again," said Long. "I think history is a humbling thing. If you understand the people and struggles of those who went before you, it gives you perspective on our times and ourselves. This Adobe house is something that people can connect with."

For more information, visit [www.moragaadobe.org](http://www.moragaadobe.org) or type "Moraga Adobe" on [www.gofundme.com](http://www.gofundme.com).

Charleen Earley can be reached at [editor@theorindanews.com](mailto:editor@theorindanews.com).

## ◆ EHRHORN from page 10

dyes, paint, cold wax and texturing elements such as salt. He explores different materials to process personal experiences, emotional responses and surviving trauma. See [www.aaronwebbstudio.com](http://www.aaronwebbstudio.com) for more of his work.

Ehrhorn's recent work explores depictions of place through the often fragmented and hazy residuals of memory. His oil paintings prompt viewers to recognize their own experiences while hunting for figurative elements within his paintings.

Karen Frey works in watercolor and encaustic — a process using beeswax and pigments on birch panels. Her masterful paintings in both mediums depict intimate still life moments, sweeping landscapes and bustling urban scenes. Keep up with Frey at [www.karenfrey.com](http://www.karenfrey.com).

Visit the gallery at 39 Moraga Way in Orinda Wed. - Sat. from 12 - 4 p.m., call 510.703.7020, email them at [cafearts@gmail.com](mailto:cafearts@gmail.com) or visit [www.christianehrhornfineart.com](http://www.christianehrhornfineart.com). All COVID-19 precautions are observed; wear a face mask; maintain social distancing by keeping at least 6 feet apart; hand sanitizer available for gallery guests.

Elana O'Loskey can be reached at [business.orinda@gmail.com](mailto:business.orinda@gmail.com).

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Live Long and Prosper, People

MIMI BOMMARITO



Capture 2020 in four words or less: Beam me up, Scotty.

Pandemic + wildfires + power outages + riots + election cycle + chardonnay and pumpkin bread + daylight savings time + Facebook + impending holidays — we can all agree on one thing: the stress level is ridiculous. Let’s be honest here, reality has been a little “much.” Most days I’d rather escape to the bucolic, fictional settings of beloved TV shows from my childhood: *Petticoat Junction*, *Little House on the Prairie* and *Star Trek*.

If the Starship Enterprise could “whoosh” me far away — cue the theme song and get me some 1960s hair — I feel like I would be full of questions for Spock. I’m fairly certain Spock’s home planet, Vulcan, also experienced a year like 2020.

Let’s review the coincidences and see if we can learn something about 2020 from an alien race created by Gene Roddenberry. First, the planet Vulcan is smoldering hot. Named after the Roman god of fire, Vulcan sounds like “volcano,” so perhaps that’s why the art directors on the original television series chose to give it an acrid and, quite frankly, miserable type of environment.

Vulcan’s hazy, yellowish sky and red sun reminds me too much of the tragic smoke-filled Orinda skyline of late. Was the planet Vulcan born this way? Instead, perhaps, before this highly intelligent race pulled their collective shizzle together, they burned way too much fossil fuel, ignored their carbon footprint and learned the hard way that climate change was real.

You see where I’m going with this. Maybe, before evolving, the Vulcans trashed their planet. Their Vulcan forests and wineries burned to a crisp and everyone was coughing and irritable from the smoky air. On the flip side, they had so many hurricanes they went through the Vulcan alphabet twice in a year to name them, which is a lot of hurricanes. I know because I researched this and found a legit Vulcan alphabet with 46 letters. (Somehow, I just knew if I Googled “Vulcan alphabet” I would find one, along with Vulcan, Romulan and Klingon dictionaries. My tendency is to insert a wisecrack here, but I won’t, since my family considers my Ancestry.com obsession equally as esoteric).

Imagine if the Vulcans eventually concluded, “That was highly illogical to ignore the science and ruin our planet. To ensure we don’t do anything like this again, let’s value logic above all else. And, while we’re at it, let’s invent space travel so we can visit

some place with fresh air.”

With Vulcan’s ecosystem in crisis mode, it would make sense if a viral pandemic followed. Exhibit A: Even your most amateurs of Trekkies have noticed how a Vulcan never shakes hands. They raise their hand in greeting, spreading their fingers to create a V shape between the ring and middle finger. Could this gesture possibly signify a great divide in their population? Like humans, they probably disagreed about how to best tackle the pandemic. “Protect our health!” vs. “Learn to live with it!” Both logical mindsets. But tension prevailed. Everyone began to dread Vulcan Patio Christmas — too much arguing. Even N95 masks couldn’t stifle the drunk Vulcan uncles. Despite the chaos, a plan was taking shape: value logic, dial back on all the emotion. And elect a female leader. T’Pau rocked.

In addition, the proper greeting for the Vulcan salute was, “Live Long and Prosper.” Seriously. Exhibit B: This definitely resulted from a pandemic. They raise their hand in greeting, demonstrating a great divide, while wishing everyone a long life and prosperity; wishes everyone is definitely concerned about during a pandemic.

Oh, and I also learned that the official, yet lesser known response to “Live Long and Prosper” is “Peace and Long Life.” Kind of like “Thank you” followed by “You’re Welcome.” That’s two references to long life. Plus, on a totally unrelated note, you won’t find one doorknob on a starship.

To be clear, I don’t want to be a Vulcan. Despite the messiness of emotions, I’m grateful for the release they provide. A good time to pretend I’m a Vulcan is when I access social media. The Vulcan response to reading an outrageous post a raised eyebrow, a neutral facial expression (with just smidge of “Judging Corgi”) while uttering only one word: “fascinating.” When you remove the emotion, that irritating post becomes nothing more than a science experiment in a petri dish. I wonder if this small homage to Spock and his people could lower our worldwide blood pressure?

And, if it makes you feel any better, I have already disregarded my own suggestion and responded (albeit, with positivity, I hope) to a relative’s recent political post. Much like my wavering resolve to stop sipping “comfort beverages” while watching the evening news, another post, another chance. Next time, I’ll pinch the tops of my ears and try harder.

Mimi Bommarito can be reached at editor@theorindanews.com.



KATHY ENZERINK

Pastor Elizabeth Robinson (L) holds one of five colorfully wrapped Surprise Balls she made for the online auction. Gwen McNeilus (C), hands the box of her homemade jellies and sauces to auction volunteer Jeane Samuelsen.

Online Fundraiser a Success for Orinda Community Church

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

With a new format, the Orinda Community Church’s (OCC) *FUNdraiser* netted 110% of its \$10,000 goal. Because of COVID-19, the total was accomplished all online.

“This was a fundraiser for the church to raise money to help us honor its mission as a community-based church with outreach to the community on such issues as social justice, environmental awareness and housing. [OCC donated the land for Orinda Senior Village]. It helps us keep what we call our ‘prophetic edge,’” said Gail Mead, auction administrator.

Pastor Elizabeth Robinson added, “We recently voted to become a Creation Justice congregation. Our denomination, the United Church of Christ, states that it assists congregations who join this program in making the ministry of environmental justice an integral strand in our faith community.”

She clarified: “The idea grew out of the ‘green church’ movement, but seeks to move beyond a concern for the natural environment to include a ‘focus on the social justice impacts of environmental degradation on poor communities and communities of color.’ Currently, we assist a number of

organizations that help unhoused people into housing. Surpassing our auction goal ensures we have the means to help causes like these.”

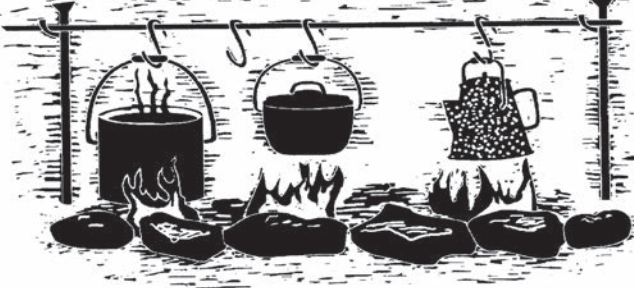
A fall auction usually occurs during the church’s Octoberfest, when members gather for celebration and a good meal. “Since we couldn’t meet and conduct an in-person auction this year, our congregation embraced the plan to do it online,” Mead said.

“One of our staff, Leslie O’Brien, offered ‘singing telegrams’; a family with Louisiana roots delivered various Cajun meals; another member donated a handmade quilt. There was a golf package and vacation retreats as well as gift certificates from local businesses such as Shelbys, Village Pizza and Bird and Bear Coffee Roasters.”

Robinson concluded, “We tried to think ‘outside the box’ and offer items our people would find interesting while keeping everything safe. The congregation truly rose to the challenges of the moment with generosity and spirit.”

At present, OCC does not have in-person services, but Sunday services with Pastor (and poet) Robinson are recorded on their website at [www.orindacommunitychurch.org](http://www.orindacommunitychurch.org).

Bobbie Dodson can be reached at [bobbiedodson@comcast.net](mailto:bobbiedodson@comcast.net).



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## CLASSIFIEDS

## ◆ SCHOOLS from page 1

A will attend in-person classes with Cohort B attending Wednesday and Friday afternoons. When one cohort is at the school, the other group will be engaged in such asynchronous work as group projects, special assignments, individualized reading/writing and other work assigned during the morning meeting.

Many parents have expressed frustration with it taking so long to begin in-person learning, while others still think it's unsafe to do so. The consensus, however, was distance learning doesn't work for a number of students, especially the younger ones. Parent Marie Olson commented through email at the district's Nov. 9 board meeting saying she thought the district needed to offer in-person learning more than just a few hours a day. She wrote how her kindergarten student's only experience with school is through Zoom. "When she thinks about school, she thinks Zoom. That's the only thing she knows, resulting in her saying every single day 'I hate school.'"

Parent Julia King was also anxious to begin in-person learning; however, she didn't think the schedules allowed enough time for parents with children in multiple grades to get them where they needed to be.

"We're constantly evaluating and fine tuning the schedules, and this forced delay in reopening may have us making a few changes such as possibly bringing all the students back at once rather than starting with the younger grades and then adding



SALLY HOGARTY

Third-grade teacher **Dara Slevin** readies her classroom at Wagner Ranch for the start of in-person classes on Dec. 1. She's placing stickers that designates desks for Cohort A and Cohort B, which will attend on different days.

others," said Seaton.

OUSD will also be testing cameras in one classroom at each elementary school and at OIS. The cameras will be pointed at the teacher but show a much wider view of projects and other items in the classroom than currently afforded by Zoom. The District hopes this will be an alternative to distance learning, allowing the cohort at home to view what's going on in class.

While teachers and administrators deal with schedules and curriculum, Director of Facilities Stuart House is seeing to the

schools themselves. California School Inspections Inc. has been contracted to provide COVID-19 consulting on school sites to ensure all are in compliance with the health and safety guidelines of the Center for Disease Controls and Contra Costa Health Services. The consultation makes certain all provisions for student and staff safety are properly in place.

"California School Inspections works with many school districts and provides another level of safety through their very thorough, precise inspections and meticu-

lous attention to detail," said OUSD Board President Cara Hoxie.

OUSD's additional safety precautions include changing all HVAC unit air filters to MERV-13, procuring no-touch thermometers, renting hand-washing stations, purchasing hydrogen peroxide sprayers for frequently touched surfaces and installing sanitizer dispensing pedestals at all schools and the district office.

"We are looking at what, in this imperfect world, we can offer our kids" Hoxie said.

This includes looking into childcare at the various elementary school locations. The district hopes to have something up and running at Wagner Ranch after winter break. They are also discussing possible childcare options with the City of Orinda's Parks and Rec Department.

The coronavirus has taken its toll on the district's enrollment as well, with more than 108 students leaving for private schools or home schooling as of mid-November. "All of the districts are down right now. Lafayette has lost over 200 students so far," said Seaton.

While the virus has posed myriad problems for the school district, Seaton noted some good had come out of it. "It has really brought our teachers together. They are working more closely than ever before to do the best they can for their students."

For more information on the Hybrid Plus program, go to [www.orindaschools.org](http://www.orindaschools.org).

*Sally Hogarty can be reached at [sally@theorindanews.com](mailto:sally@theorindanews.com).*

## ◆ COE from page 11

was president. "She worked very hard, and you had to work hard to keep up with her. It was no surprise Jan was the first EFO president to get us over the \$1 million fundraising mark. When she came off EFO, we gave her a brick on the Miramonte Wall of Excellence in honor of achieving this milestone."

According to Goodwin, Jan was a natural leader, fair and inclusive: "It was an honor to have known Jan Coe. Orinda lost a great citizen."

Although not as challenging as running a parcel tax and bond campaign but no less important, Jan and Vanessa Crews were legendary for their Apricot Pepper Jelly sold at the annual Holiday Bazaar as a school fundraiser. "We actually made 1,000 jars of pepper jelly in a single day," Crews recalled.

"Jan was dedicated to improving education resources for our students, parents and teachers. It was her tireless efforts along with other community stalwarts that established the Educational Foundation and secured much needed additional funding for our schools," said Sue Severson.

Jan's many honors included sharing Orinda's 1998 Citizen of the Year honors with Crews and winning the American Association of University Woman's Distinguished Woman Award in 2011. She returned to the workforce as finance director for the Honorable Ellen Tauscher, who represented California's 10th congressional district. Continuing her passion for education, Jan also tutored first graders at Burckhalter Elementary School in Oakland for more than a decade. She and Alan were longtime members of Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church, where Jan served in Children's Ministry and as an elder.

Jan always took great pride in her family and its accomplishments. Alan noted in recent years "she was happiest playing

with, and providing a loving influence for, her five grandchildren."

She passed peacefully at home in Orinda, surrounded by her loving family on Oct. 22. She fought a courageous but, ultimately, short-lived battle with a rare and aggressive cancer first diagnosed in March.

While Jan will be greatly missed, her legacy lives on in the hearts and minds of her family and many friends. She is survived by her husband of 46 years, Alan Clemmons Coe; their three children, Amy Coe Rodde (Brian), of Hillsborough; Lisa Coe Villarosa (Marshal), of Moraga; and Brian Alan Coe (fiancée Cheyenne Skye) of Santa Barbara; and five grandchildren - Austin, Owen and Alexa Rodde of Hillsborough, and Ryan and Eva Villarosa of Moraga. Jan

is also survived by her sister, Dr. Barbara Becker of Centennial, CO, brother-in-law Richard Coe (Deb) of Wichita, KS, along with five nieces and nephews and 10 great-nieces and nephews.

A celebration of Jan's life will take place at a later date. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Jan's memory may be made to the American Association of University Women OML Community Outreach Fund or to the P.E.O. Foundation. Please see [www.hullschapel.com/obituaries/Janice-Coe?obId=18720775#/celebrationWall](http://www.hullschapel.com/obituaries/Janice-Coe?obId=18720775#/celebrationWall) for more information about how to donate.

*Sally Hogarty can be reached at [sally@theorindanews.com](mailto:sally@theorindanews.com).*

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## ◆ LETTERS from page 4

Gee and Inga Miller and Measure R.

I hope that our leaders take note of what the opposition was trying to say.

When all of the votes get counted, Latika Malkani will have received over 6,000 votes; 90% of what the incumbents received. No challenger, at least in the past 10 years, has ever received this kind of a response. Six thousand Orindans are looking for change. What kind of change? The Council needs to ask itself that.

And Measure R, while receiving almost 60% of the vote, was the least well-received city tax since Orinda was incorporated, and 5,000 people have rejected this tax. Again, the Council needs to ask itself why. Were their objections valid? Are there things the City can do to address the issues 5,000 Orindans had with the tax?

Is Orinda spending its money wisely? Is it spending it on what the community says are its highest priorities?

The first post-election city council meeting (Nov. 10) gives a hint of what the City is thinking.

In closed session the Council is discussing a 600-foot walking path that is budgeted

at close to half a million dollars.

In open session the Council is discussing increasing the fee to a consultant for a downtown plan to over \$100,000. Is that the highest priority for \$100,000?

But what about fire prevention? Eighty six percent of those surveyed said this was the community's highest priority. The ads for Measure R implied that this was the primary reason for approving this \$2.4 million annual tax. But the only "official" statement by the City of what is needed, was a single sentence from a staff report back in July which said the City should spend \$500,000 - \$750,000 a year for 3-4 years. There was no indication of where these numbers came from. To the best of my knowledge, there is no report based on science of what needs to be done to make Orinda as fire-safe as possible. And at the Nov. 10 council meeting, there was nothing on the agenda hinting when these issues would be addressed.

The City needs to step back and look to the future. We have voted in a massive \$60 million, 20 year tax. The City needs to create a long-term plan for those funds.

— Steve Cohn



## CALENDAR

## On the Calendar in December

**Orinda Library** Online events. Daily storytimes and events can be viewed at: [www.ccclib.bibliocommons.com](http://www.ccclib.bibliocommons.com). Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way, for front door service only: Mon. through Thu., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Fri. and Sat., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; closed Sun. The library is closed Dec. 24. Call 925.254.2184 for information or visit [www.ccclib.org](http://www.ccclib.org).

**Christian Science Church**, Prayer Garden open to all for Quiet Meditation. Books and periodicals with a spiritual perspective on current issues are free to all. Attendant on site from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., but you are welcome any time during daylight

hours. 24 Orinda Way, Orinda.

1 **Art Gallery at the Orinda Library**, Vibrant Color by The Glover Group, a virtual exhibit featuring *plein air* paintings by 19 artists celebrating their 10th anniversary. See article p. 10.

**Art Gallery at Wilder**, virtual exhibit Epic Nature featuring Suzy Elsworth-Heithcock. [www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries](http://www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries). See article p. 11.

**Orinda Park and Rec's Skyhawks Sports** for children (grades 6-8) to improve their basketball skills, 3:45 p.m. at Orinda Intermediate School. [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org).

**Orinda Books**, Pat's Book Club will meet via ZOOM to discuss *Harry Himself* by Stewart O'Nan. 4 p.m. To attend, phone 925.254.7606 or email [info@orindabooks.com](mailto:info@orindabooks.com) giving your email address. You will receive a link to the event.

**Youth Ink 2021** submissions accepted via email through Feb. 26, 2021. Submission forms available through Orinda Intermediate School, several local private middle schools, the Orinda Public Library and online by [www.orindajuniors.org](http://www.orindajuniors.org). See article p. 13.

3 **Orinda Park and Rec's Skyhawks Get Moving After Zooming** Orinda Community Park, Meadow 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. Multi-Sport program. Mon. and Thur. through Dec. [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org).

5 **Orinda Farmers' Market**, 9 a.m. Orinda Way in front of Rite Aid and the Community Park. [www.cccfm.org](http://www.cccfm.org) or market hotline at 925.431.8361. Also Dec. 12, 19 and 26. See article p. 12.

5 **Hospice Tree Lighting** virtual ceremony 4:30 p.m. via Facebook [www.facebook.com/Hospiceoftheeastbay](http://www.facebook.com/Hospiceoftheeastbay) or [www.hospiceeastbay.org](http://www.hospiceeastbay.org). See article p.12.

6 **Wagner Ranch** - volunteer clean-up. 9 a.m. [www.fwrna.org](http://www.fwrna.org). Also, Dec. 13, 20 and 27.

11 **Lamorinda Arts Council's** Virtual Holiday Party, visit [www.lamorindaarts.org/holiday2020](http://www.lamorindaarts.org/holiday2020) for more information or call 925.359.9940.

12 **Meet the Artists** at Virtual Open House, 5 p.m. Learn more about the artwork of Karen Frey, Peeta Tinay, Aaron Webb and Christian Ehrhorn. See article p. 10.

## ◆ HARRIS from page 7

and continued with hiking the 213-mile John Muir Trail in the Sierra with her Miramonte High School cross country and track coach, Bob Campbell.

After that, she sailed at Lake Pincrest, windsurfed on the San Francisco Bay, kayaked on Tomales Bay, snorkeled in Hawaii and enjoyed other outdoor activities further sparking her love of nature from the mountains to the sea.

Today, she is mother to Nikolo Vo (20) and Mabel Vo (17) with husband Think Vo, all of whom support her green efforts to educate those around her about the perils of plastics.

"With the book, I'm hoping to share my journey with readers and invite them into the plastic pollution movement and lifestyle," Harris wrote previously to Sustainable Lafayette, a grassroots non-profit working to transform Lafayette into a highly sustainable community that enhances the quality of life for current and future residents.

Parting with plastics, in her opinion, doesn't have to be a downer for people.

"By recounting some inspiring experiences I've had in nature, as well as educating about the origins of the plastic crisis we're facing, I hope to light people up with the possibility that we can joyfully say goodbye to plastic and save our planet from this onslaught of pollution," said Harris.

Surprisingly, since she says she's always enjoyed writing ever since she was a student at Del Rey Elementary, this is Harris' first book.

"My family told me that I must have ink in my blood, as the expression goes," said Harris, whose parents, Sue and Bourke Harris, live at the Moraga Country Club.

While writing comes easy for this former journalist, writing her book was not.

"The hardest part was telling my own story. As an ex-journalist, I'm much more practiced in telling other people's stories. Pulling my own story out of my head and putting it to paper was a bit of a challenge, but, with some coaching and persistence, I

think I achieved that," she said. "I wanted my readers to feel from the first page of the book to the last, that I was with them, walking the plastic-free path, supporting them in their journey. It's not just third person tips, a how-to book. This is a memoir mixed with tips."

In her new book, notably forwarded by Dianna Cohen, CEO of the Plastic Pollution Coalition, Harris offers tips to readers about how to eliminate plastics from their lives.

Revealing a tip or two from her prose, Harris suggests "you might pick a room in your house and do a plastic audit, looking

Copies of Harris' book can be purchased at Orinda Books or [www.ecolunchboxes.com](http://www.ecolunchboxes.com), where copies are signed and shipped by Sandra Ann Harris.

at all the plastic you're using to write down a top 10 hit list of plastic items you want to weed out."

While COVID-19 has significantly changed the landscape of recycling methods, currently prohibiting shoppers from using their own bags, Harris offers this idea: "I suggest people refuse single-use grocery bags and take their purchases to their car and load them to reusable bags themselves, since we're sometimes not allowed to bring our own grocery bags.

"There's so much more you can do, but if you're an Amazon shopper, contact customer service to get your account flagged 'plastic free' so your shipments are packaged only with recyclable paper - no plastic pillows," she added.

If it weren't for pollution, toxins and global warming, this book would not have been so important. "For me, plastic pollution isn't just a job. It's personal," said Harris. "This is our world, our planet and home for future generations. We'd better

not keep messing it up!"

Harris, who was not only a journalist, but also a humanitarian aid worker in Vietnam, and when her kids were young, a digital marketing consultant, said her book isn't just about facts – it's much more.

"It's a first-person narrative about my life as a mother and my endeavor to show it's possible to put to market, a plastic-free product line that's healthy for both people and the planet," said Harris.

In her own opinion, avoiding all plastics would be a good thing.

"If you can avoid using plastic, even if it's a reusable plastic, it's best to do so. At end of life, reusable plastics like Tupperware, are not recyclable," she said. "Even if they have a symbol on the bottom with a number, it's most likely that piece of plastic, at end of life, will be buried or burned. I talk about this in my book and changes in recycling policies that are making it harder and less likely plastic will be recycled as time goes by."

Charleen Earley can be reached at [editor@theorindanews.com](mailto:editor@theorindanews.com).

## CITY/FIRE ZOOM MEETING SCHEDULE

**City Council**. First and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way. [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org). Dec. 8 City Council Reorganization, 7 p.m. Amy Worth will be installed as mayor via Zoom.

**Historic Landmarks Committee**. Fourth Tuesday, 3-5 p.m. Call 925.788.7323.

**Moraga-Orinda Fire District**. Third Wednesday, 7 p.m. For agenda, go to [mofd.org/board/meetings](http://mofd.org/board/meetings).

**Planning Commission**. Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., [cityoforinda.org](http://cityoforinda.org).

Send calendar items to Jill Gelster at [calendar@aspensconsult.net](mailto:calendar@aspensconsult.net).



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VETERANS

# Lafayette Veterans Memorial Center Seeks Funding Donations

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

The Lafayette Veterans Memorial Center, catering to Lafayette, Orinda and Moraga, is a popular venue in the area to host a wide variety of events, from weddings and bar mitzvahs to club meetings and prominent speakers. Now, with the center closed due to COVID-19, management faces severe monetary difficulties.

Center Board Member and Orinda resident, Terry Murphy, explained, “We had been doing nicely. With rental usage fees, we were able to make improvements in the building and donate money to worthwhile causes while still maintaining a good cushion in the bank. Though no money is coming in now, we still have normal expenses which run \$3,500 to \$4,000 a month.”

Because the Veteran’s building offers valuable services to the community when it can function, the group has established a GoFundMe campaign. “It’s our hope residents from our Lamorinda population, and beyond, will step up to keep us solvent until we can open again. Because we are a 501(c)(3) entity under the tax code, all contributions are tax deductible,” Murphy said.

Murphy served in the Army-Infantry, drafted in June 1967 and deployed to Vietnam just before the Tet Offensive. He provided some history about the building and its predecessor, built at First Street and Mt. Diablo Boulevard. The present Veterans Center was completed 12 years ago at 3780 Mt. Diablo Boulevard, when the land of the old Veterans Hall was deemed the best place for Lafayette’s new Library and Learning Center. “Since then,”

Murphy noted, “it has served as a ‘quasi community center.’ We are also a cooling/charging center in case of an extended blackout, a ‘safe place’ for kids in case of an emergency at Temple Isaiah and a voting location and election drop off site for Lafayette.”

The building is home to American Legion Post 517 and Veterans of Foreign War, Post 8063. Board Member Mike Gilson, who served in the Air Force from 1966 to 1970 in South East Asia, is especially proud of the Memorial which is in front of the building. It honors all of the men and women in Contra Costa County who have served and died for their country since 9/11. Murphy said, “These service people, who served because they chose to rather than because they had to, deserve our admiration. We also have donated to the Student Veteran Center at Diablo Valley College and contributed to veterans who lost their homes in California’s devastating fires. Another wonderful program we help is Project Healing Waters, which takes veterans fly fishing.”

County Supervisor Candace Andersen said, “Our Lafayette Veterans do an outstanding job raising money to maintain their beautiful building, which is such a great resource for our community, and to support fellow veterans. Unfortunately, because of the pandemic, they have not been able to rent out their facility while most of the fixed costs of this building have remained. Their GoFundMe campaign is a great way to support them and show appreciation for all they do for our veterans.”

The GoFundMe website highlights other services the two Veteran Posts provide to aid local veterans in need. Money often



SALLY HOGARTY

(L-R) Bill Cooper, Leonard Snyder and Warren Jensen are honored for their service in World War II at a D-Day Ceremony in 2014.

fills gaps not covered by the Veterans Affairs Department. Examples include helping with rent, providing appliances and even used automobiles, plus providing transportation for those who cannot drive. Lamorinda veterans also provide guidance to others with the process of securing earned benefits such as educational loans or medical care.

“We pay our own expenses as individuals and volunteer our time to help with building operations,” Murphy added. “But this pandemic and loss of rental revenue is causing a crisis in our ability to keep it afloat. Our board hopes loyal Lamorinda citizens will choose to help us meet our significant monthly obligations until we once again can earn what is needed each month to provide this space for our communities to

use and enjoy.”

Murphy continued, “A Veterans Memorial Building has served Central Contra Costa County since 1925 to keep veterans in our memory and honor our American war dead. The Veterans Building provides an emotional and historical sanctuary for former, current and future Comrades in Arms as well as a social venue for occasions of ceremony and camaraderie.”

To donate online, go to GoFundMe-Help Our Vets and click on the Fundraiser by Wm. A. Charles, or mail a check to Lafayette War Veterans, P.O. Box 501, Lafayette, CA 94549.

*Bobbie Dodson can be reached at bobbiedodson@comcast.net.*

**AFTER A YEAR  
LIKE THIS,  
WE COULD USE  
SOME EXTRA  
HAPPY HOLIDAY  
WISHES**

**Happy Holidays to all of my  
buyers, sellers, fellow agents,  
friends, and neighbors.**

2020 Transactions

- 18 Daisy Lane, Orinda
- 511 Kiki, Pleasant Hill
- 117 Southwind, Pleasant Hill
- 1146 Upper Happy Valley Road
- 257 Ivy Place, Orinda
- 863 Camino Ricardo, Moraga
- 222 Overhill Road, Orinda

2020 Transactions

- 3226 Lucas Circle, Lafayette
- 112 Canon Dr, Orinda
- 95 Camino Encinas, Orinda
- 1091 Pereira Road, Martinez
- 46 Martha Road, Orinda
- 2 Middle Road, Lafayette
- 172 Glorietta Blvd., Orinda

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FILM / PERFORMING ARTS

I have set for myself a challenge of sorts, not mentioning or referencing the single most notable thing about this month (save for the above title and this introductory paragraph). What I would like to do, however, is holiday adjacent. Simply put, I will recommend a trio of joyous films, pieces of filmic art, the final frames of which will see you ready to leave the theater (or, during these times, your living room) with a dance in your step, a song in your heart and a smile on your lips.

But first, I would like to let you know about a significant milestone having to do with two people I have had the pleasure of mentioning in nearly every column. They are JoAlice Canterbury and Efi Lubliner. Together, they have run the International Film Showcase (I.F.S.). For as long as I can remember, I have had the privilege of touting their monthly contributions toward widening our cinematic horizons. Scouring film festivals for the very best in foreign films, they have always brought us the best from overseas. Most notably, they've been doing this for 10 years!

In celebration, I.F.S. will present yet another great film not born of this continent. Even better still, it's a film that has taken some of its inspiration from a great American film that I have mentioned in columns past. Even better, this offering will be presented absolutely free of charge! Starting early this month, JoAlice and Efi will be presenting *The Weasel's Tale*.

This is one of those movies about movies, and the people who make them, and, as I intimated earlier, this film references another movie about movies, *Sunset Boulevard*, insofar as it deals with celebrities of the faded past. But unlike *Sunset*, *Weasel's Tale* is played for laughs – mostly (could there be a movie with “weasel” in the title that isn't?). This film will be made available via the I.F.S. website, (internationalshowcase.org) but this time, in observance of this auspicious occasion you'll be able to enjoy it *gratis*.

So now, on to the recommendations. It should not come as any great surprise that two of the three films I'm championing are musicals. They are *Singin' in the Rain*

and *An American in Paris*. Of the two, the former almost always gets the majority of attention, with good reason. It's a wild, glittering, enthusiastic piece of filmmaking that can leave you breathless. The colors are vibrant. The songs are infectious, the dancing is unparalleled and the “Make ‘em Laugh” number alone will exhaust you.

For my money, however, *Paris* is the better film, mostly because it's tethered, just a little more than *Rain*, in the real world. That said, Gene Kelly is in both of them, and he dominates every moment he's on the screen, whether he's a threatened silent film star or an ex-patriot artist. Moreover, special mention should be given to Donald O'Connor and Oscar Levant. Their roles are meant to provide the comic relief, but that should, in no way, lessen their contributions to either film. Levant's Gershwin fantasy (Another reason I prefer his movie over *Rain*), for example, is astounding.

Before I get to my final recommendation, I would be remiss if I did not remind you about the Orinda Theatre. The theater is still a player in the Lamorinda area with its virtual cinema, but I still urge you to check out the iconic Orinda site's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/orindatheatre) and main site (www.orindamovies.com). All donations are welcome to ensure the Orinda Theatre will still be a community asset post-COVID.

Now, my last recommendation might seem a little incongruous with all I said before, but I was so struck by this film, as well as the lasting impression it left on me, that I have to pass it along to all of you. *Zootopia*, a 2016 Disney release, is far more than a CGI (computer generated imagery) “funny animal” movie, mainly due to its underlying attitude, filled with optimism and hope. Even the central mystery has certain real world echoes, propelled by characters which are flawed but still relatable – even though they're animals.

I do wish to extend warm and fuzzy sentiments your way and encourage you to veer towards those wonderful images made from light, since that is where the reel magic lies.

*Tom Westlake can be reached at poppinjay@earthlink.net.*



ART BY BARRY HUNAU

Participants at ORSVP's *Christmas Jaunts and Jingles* show will interact with this cast of enchanting Christmas characters.

## Starlight Players Zoom Through Christmas with Jaunts and Jingles

By DAVID DIERKS  
Assistant Editor

The Orinda Starlight Village Players (OrSVP) return in December with another Zoom game, this time with a Christmas twist. “It's not a murder mystery; it's a Christmas jaunt,” said writer and director Malcolm Cowler. “It's aimed at a pre-teen audience, accompanied by parents, grandparents and other guardians. Our earlier shows were aimed at an adult audience, but this one is for pre-teens and anyone who's young at heart.”

Santa has lost his lead reindeer, Nosey Parker, and needs help to find him or Christmas will have to be cancelled. “Participants are invited to join Santa at the North Pole and save Christmas. They get to talk with everybody who lives at the North Pole,”

said Cowler. Participants get to interact with characters including elves, a fairy, a snowman, a penguin, a toy soldier, a gingerbread lady and, of course, Santa and Mrs. Claus with their daughter, Belle. “Kids have to help each character in one way or another, by solving Christmas puzzles,” said Cowler.

This show will involve more interaction with the characters than the previous two games that OrSVP performed in July/August and October. “We want to encourage and respond to the kids' interactions as much as possible,” said Cowler. Performances for *Christmas Jaunts & Jingles* are Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7 p.m. throughout December. The shows are free, although donations are encouraged. To reserve links for the Zoom show, email info@orsvp.org.

Because the local theater group has been [SEE STARLIGHT page 20]

BUSINESS BUZZ

## Business Buzz

### Putting a Personal Face on Local Business

ELANA O'LOSKEY



#### reCHIC Supports Orinda Theatre – Join Them!

Maureen Brown of reCHIC designer consignment and gift shop dreamed up a way to help keep Orinda Theatre alive. She commissioned Bay Area artist Regina Schachter to design tea towels, boxed greeting cards and prints featuring the Orinda Theatre. They are made in the most ecologically clean way possible. Although they make great holiday gifts, Brown says they are available year round.

Derek Zemrak's Orinda Theatre GoFundMe campaign is at 82%. At 100%, it will keep the lights on through March, 2021. When considering dollars that go a



ELANA O'LOSKEY

The iconic Orinda Theatre pictured here on boxed cards and framed prints was designed by S.F. Bay Area artist Regina Schachter. **Maureen Brown** of reCHIC donates 50 percent of the proceeds from these gifts to help keep this local landmark alive.

long way, contributions to keep the landmark Orinda Theatre open are at the top of the list. Go to [www.gofundme.com/f/orinda-theatre-needs-your-help](http://www.gofundme.com/f/orinda-theatre-needs-your-help) for information.

Stop by reCHIC at 101 Orinda Way, phone 925.317.3715, email them at [hello@shopreCHIC.com](mailto:hello@shopreCHIC.com) or visit [www.shopreCHIC.com](http://www.shopreCHIC.com). Holiday hours are Mon. - Sat. 12 – 5 p.m. Call first for a private appointment. All COVID-19 precautions are observed; wear a mask and observe 6' distancing.

#### Virtual Holiday Boutique Benefits Children in Need

Pivoting from its usual luncheon boutique and auction to an online Holiday Boutique has kept Children's Health Guild (CHG) volunteers busy. The Guild's online boutique runs from Dec. 1 to 12; access it at [www.childrenshealthguild.org](http://www.childrenshealthguild.org). If you order a ReadyFestive seasonal gift box, all proceeds go to CHG's two beneficiaries. ReadyFestive was founded by two CHG volunteers, Liz Voelker of Lafayette and Kristina Barnes of Orinda.

Founded in 2011, CHG is a volunteer nonprofit organization of 50 talented and passionate East Bay women who have raised over \$2,800,000 for their two beneficiaries: UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland and George Mark Children's Hospital. Together the two institutions provide a full spectrum of medical care for children, including emergency care, ongoing treatment, transitional care, respite care and

palliative care.

Orinda board members include President Beth Cleveland; Holiday Support Meredith Kreis; Social Chair Christina Linezo; Holiday Product Chair Hope Lucas; Corporate Development Jennifer Moeller; Data Management Kacey Patroni; Beneficiary Liaison Sheeva van Gemenen; Annual Giving Campaign Erica Weber and Membership Chair Gina Witucki. Email them at [info@childrenshealthguild.org](mailto:info@childrenshealthguild.org).

#### Holiday Gift Collective Pop-Up - Where Women Artisans Shine

The Holiday Gift Collective's (HGC) light, bright location in downtown Lafayette came about because local artisans who, pre-COVID-19, had multiple venues to offer their creations, found they needed an accessible spot for the holidays. Their pop-up holiday gift gallery is open daily from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. through Dec. 31. Anchor businesses are names you will recognize, such as Hofssi Chocolates, Hollie's Homegrown herbal creations and Planet Renu's eco-friendly household gear. With Hofssi in the mix, count on goodies to nibble while you learn more about these dedicated, fun-loving business owners.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

All ReadyFestive box proceeds go to **Children's Health Guild** beneficiaries UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland and George Mark Children's Hospital thanks to generous sponsors.

HGC is also a 'pop-in' venue, where space can be reserved for single to multiple days by women entrepreneurs who add spice to the mix.

One such 'pop-in' business is Jenny Hill's Beautycounter line of clean skin makeup. On Dec. 3, Hill, of Orinda, is popping in with a curated selection from her treasure trove of makeup, single purchase skin-care and self-care items and gift sets. Beautycounter products are minus 1,800 ingredients they restrict from all formulations. Check out the trendiest, cleanest face and body gifts this season at [www.beautycounter.com/jennyhill](http://www.beautycounter.com/jennyhill).

Visit HGC at 3539 Plaza Way, Lafayette (next to Sideboard). Hours are 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Follow them on Ins-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The **Holiday Gift Collective Pop-Up** welcomes the public to their light, bright space filled with unique, eco-friendly gifts made by local artisans.

tagram @holidaygiftcollective or go to [www.instagram.com/holidaygiftcollective/?hl=en](http://www.instagram.com/holidaygiftcollective/?hl=en). All COVID-19 precautions observed; wear a mask and observe 6' distancing.

To send items for consideration, email [O'Loskey@business.orinda@gmail.com](mailto:O'Loskey@business.orinda@gmail.com).

#### ◆ STARLIGHT from page 19

unable to perform since May on its stage at the Orinda Community Center Park Amphitheater, Cowler started experimenting with Zoom and put together two interactive murder mystery games to keep patrons in touch with the theatre and keep people from going stir crazy. OrSVP's actors, each in their own Zoom window, perform the show and the online audience interacts with the characters and figures out puzzles to solve the mystery.

Participants have been very pleased with the games. Nancy Holloway participated in the Zoom murder mystery on Halloween. "In the midst of the COVID despair, many of us feel you shine like a bright star of hope. All of you are gems," Holloway said. "It was engrossing trying to figure out the murderer in the Halloween show."

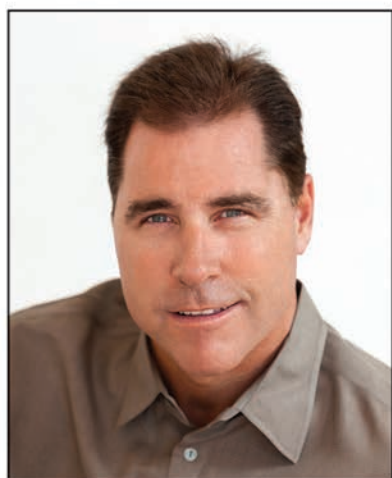
Orinda resident and former Mayor, Victoria Smith also participated in both the August and Halloween events. "The production quality of both events was very impressive, and the actors were great," said Smith. "I really think that OrSVP's ingenuity in producing live theater online has been very creative. I have seen a few other wonderful 'live' performances. San Francisco Shakespeare did a wonderful full production of *King Lear*, but few other companies have managed to do live theater. That OrSVP, a small company, has, is very impressive."

For more information, visit [www.orsvp.org](http://www.orsvp.org) or email [info@orsvp.org](mailto:info@orsvp.org).

David Dierks can be reached at [david.dierks@theorindanews.com](mailto:david.dierks@theorindanews.com).

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