



# THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis  
Volume 37, Number 12

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Delivered to 9,000 Households and Businesses in Orinda

12 Issues Annually  
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## Housing Element and Downtown Precise Plan Move Forward

By CHARLEEN EARLEY  
Editor-in-Chief

Orinda's mayor, city councilmembers, city manager and city attorney reviewed the updated Orinda Housing Element draft along with representatives from Placeworks on Nov. 1 via Zoom, with the public invited to comment.

The nearly five-hour meeting comprehensively reviewed the draft which was then sent to the California Department of Housing and Community Development office (HCD) on Nov. 10. Once received, members of HCD have 60 days to approve the draft or make comments for revisions.

"This is not only a complicated process, but it's a long process," said Councilmember Darlene Gee. "And we're a long way

from really knowing exactly how things will fully play out."

Echoing Gee, Mayor Dennis Fay spoke to the complexity of the Housing Element process.

"This is a complex process with many moving parts," he said. "Staff has done a good job balancing the multiple objectives of the City and HCD and citizen input has been valuable and has helped shape the outcome."

During the 36-slide PowerPoint presented by PlaceWorks, Inc.'s Principal Jennifer Gastelum and Senior Associate Cynthia Walsh, the two covered the updated Housing Element draft to include an overview of the Housing Element, importance of compliance, Housing Element progress, [SEE HOUSING page 7]



CHARLEEN EARLEY  
Orinda City Councilmembers started the city council meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance on Nov. 1 via Zoom, before discussing the Housing Element draft revisions, which included public comments.

## Annual Hospice Tree of Lights and Parks and Rec.'s Holiday Tree Lighting

By CHARLEEN EARLEY  
Editor-in-Chief

Never short on choices when it comes to community events, Orinda has not one, but two tree lightings in Orinda, both on the same night, yet at different times.

Festivities start with the 36th Annual Hospice Tree of Lights Ceremony on Satur-

day, Dec. 3 at 4:30 p.m., at Village Square, 31 Orinda Way.

Hospice East Bay members, having cared for patients and their families in the Orinda community since 1977, are proud to celebrate their 36th annual Tree of Lights Ceremony.

"These ceremonies set aside time for families and friends to honor their loved

ones through the symbolism of light and the reading of names," said Brianna Halstied, media coordinator. "Our celebration in Orinda is an opportunity for our community to come together and reflect on those who have made a difference in our lives but are no longer with us."

Funds raised by these events help Hospice East Bay provide hospice and palliative care services to community members,

regardless of ability to pay. Through donations, Hospice East Bay also offers additional services and programs, such as music therapy and children's grief support, which are not covered by insurance.

For more information, visit [www.HospiceEastBay.org](http://www.HospiceEastBay.org).

Once the ceremony ends, head over to Orinda Parks and Recreation's first Holiday [SEE HOLIDAY page 22]



LOU LANDGRAF

Hospice East Bay members have cared for patients and their families in the Orinda community since 1977 and are proud to celebrate their 36th annual Tree of Lights on Saturday, Dec. 3 at 4:30 p.m., at Village Square, 31 Orinda Way.

## Amy Worth Retires from City Council

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Executive Editor

Who would have thought fundraising for a children's play structure could become the catalyst for three decades of public service? But such was the case for long-time City Council Member Amy Worth, who retires from the council this month.

"I've so enjoyed living in Orinda and being engaged in regional dialogue and decision-making. It's so important for a small community, especially here in the Bay Area, where we have 101 cities and [SEE WORTH page 6]



JEFF HEYMAN

Mayor Amy Worth in front of the Orinda sign at the Community Center.

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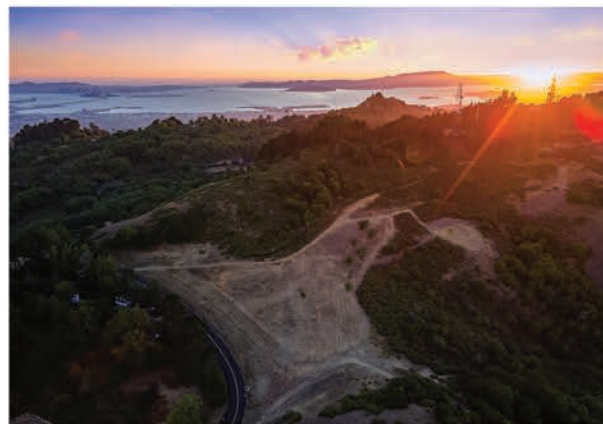
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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the President  
Shop Locally This Holiday Season

SALLY HOGARTY



It's been a difficult time for our local businesses as they struggled through COVID and now an uncertain economy. Things are looking up, however, with vaccines and boosters giving people more confidence to venture out and, hopefully, to shop locally!

Not only do you help local businesses when you shop in Orinda, you also keep tax dollars in town. And there are no parking meters, at least not yet!

This year, show your town spirit with a handsome trucker hat sporting the name Orinda with proceeds going to The Orinda Association's many community programs. Or learn more about your town from Alison Burns' new book, aptly titled *Images of America Orinda* with proceeds benefiting the Orinda Historical Society.

Both are available at The Orinda Association office with the book also available at Orinda Books. Speaking of which, Orinda Books has a plethora of wonderful holiday items, from a wide assortment of books and accessories to Nicole Collins' ceramic pieces, Holly Eckwall's knit hats and paintings by Paul, Joel and Tia Kratter. Known for her unique ceramic items, Gerry Wallace will once again have a festive holiday display at the bookstore.

Most people think of McDonnell's Nursery when it's time to start spring planting, but this delightful place offers so much more, including a fun assortment of one-of-a-kind gifts as well as holiday decorations and fresh trees.

If you're looking for clothing and accessories, try McCaulou's Department Store

or consignment boutiques Maven Coco and ReChic 101, all located in the Village District. At Theatre Square, Hello Tiara features customized bracelets, keychains, necklaces and elegant hair clips – the hair accessories even come with a complimentary styling!

On the Village side, shop Hilton House for beautiful furniture and vintage items (including jewelry) with lovely tableware at Village Antiques. Monogrammed totes, handbags and so much more awaits at Parker Thatch.

In the Theatre District, holiday party arrangements can be found at Orinda Florist, with Orinda Hardware offering a large assortment of useful and fun items.

For a truly elegant gift, Morrison's Jewelers (which has been in business for 100 years!) offers high quality selections of custom jewelry designs.

And don't forget Orinda's restaurants. A gift card is always a welcome holiday surprise. If you're giving a restaurant gift card, you might also consider a gift card for Corekinetics, Jeanne Dowell Yoga, Anytime Fitness and Axon Fitness 24/7 to work off those extra holiday pounds or Entourage Spa for a little post-season pampering.

I suggest a walk around Orinda to check out the businesses listed above and to find ones I've inadvertently left out!

The Orinda Association Board wishes you all a healthy and happy holiday season!

*Sally Hogarty can be reached at sally@theorindanews.com.*

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: 925.254.0800  
www.OrindaAssociation.org

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



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KATHY CORDOVA

The Seniors Around Town (SAT) staff held a Volunteer Appreciation Open House Nov. 10 to thank SAT drivers for donating their time to provide Orinda seniors with transportation to doctors' appointments, errands and social events. Pictured above (L-R) Don Monaco (driver), Cathy Goshorn (SAT coordinator), Kate Wiley (SAT director), Laurie Hall (SAT driver), Lauren White (SAT driver) and Liza Chooi (The Orinda Association staff member). For more information about SAT or to donate to the program, visit [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org) or call 925.402.4506.

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COMMUNITY EVENTS



CAROLINE GILMAN LA VOIE

Members of the Orinda Garden Club will hang wreaths around town on Saturday, Dec 3 with their Holiday Wreath Installation. Some of the volunteers pictured above include, front row (L-R) **Lisa Jorgens, Monica Burnick, Shelley Gilligan, Ruth Fortune, Barbara Weikert, Kaija Gibbs, Linda Thompson, Lorene Quist, Jennifer Lyons, Juanita Kizor,** and back row (L-R) **Jane Wiser, Laura Sawczuk, Janet Riley, Anne Southwick, Bonnie Cassriel, Cathleen Sodos, Tina Locke, Margene Stahle and Lynn Garrett.**

## Orinda News Briefs: Around Town Spreading Holiday Cheer

### Holiday Wreaths Around Town

The Orinda Garden Club (OGC) will once again hang wreaths around town on Saturday, Dec. 3 with its Holiday Wreath installation. The Boy Scouts will assist with taking the wreaths down Saturday, Jan. 7.

The OGC tradition begins at the Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way, where everyone gathers to add berries and bows to the 100 wreaths, before setting off in teams to decorate Orinda.

Advice is to bring a warm coat and shoes for walking around. Also, bring gardening gloves. Wreath decorating at the Community Center goes from 8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m., wreath-hanging from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. If interested, RSVP by Nov. 30. Contact Monica Burnick at [mdburnick@yahoo.com](mailto:mdburnick@yahoo.com) or call 925.216.8128.

### Call for Community Photographers

Members from Plan Orinda are seeking

those who have photos and memories to share of events, activities or places in downtown Orinda. As the Downtown Precise Plan nears completion, photos taken which best exemplify the guiding principles for downtown Orinda will be used to help illustrate these principles throughout the final

Downtown Precise Plan. Learn more about these principles, tell your story and submit your photos online at [www.planorinda.com/submissions](http://www.planorinda.com/submissions).

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

## National Wreaths Across America Day Event for American Veterans

By VANESSA CREWS  
Contributing Writer

This year, National Wreaths Across America Day is Saturday, Dec. 17 at 12 p.m. at the historic Lafayette Cemetery, 3285 Mount Diablo Blvd.

Each year, millions of Americans come together to remember the fallen, honor those who serve and their families and teach the next generation about the value of freedom.

This gathering of volunteers and patriots takes place in local and national cemeteries in all 50 states – most recently at more

[SEE WREATHS page 25]



YONI MAYERI

Local veterans buried at the historic Lafayette Cemetery will be honored on Saturday, Dec. 17, with wreaths at noon.

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As Seen On

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**What's On Deck With Parks & Rec!**

**Gingerbread House Contest and Holiday Tree Lighting Event - Dec. 3, 5:30 p.m., Community Center and Park.**

**Senior Trip: Dec. 10, Great Dickens Christmas Fair, Cow Palace, San Francisco; \$75 per person**

**Children's Winter Break Camps Dec. 19-21**

**Orinda Parks and Rec seeking Instructors for Youth and Adult Classes. If interested, contact us at email below.**

**Go to [www.orindaparksandrec.org](http://www.orindaparksandrec.org) or call 925-254-2445 for questions and registration**

**Please Continue to Stay Safe by Following All Health Recommendations**

**ORINDA PARKS & REC**

Orinda Parks and Recreation Department  
925-254-2445  
[www.OrindaParksandRec.org](http://www.OrindaParksandRec.org)  
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28 Orinda Way – Orinda Community Center

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105 Ardith Drive, Orinda  
Sold at \$2,100,000 • Represented Buyer

#### 407 El Toyonal, Orinda

"I inherited a family home and I don't live in the area so Laura made all the arrangements to have the house fixed up at a reasonable cost. She went above and beyond to organize people and the projects that needed to get accomplished. She always kept me apprised of what was happening and the time table to completion. Because of Laura's knowledge of the community she was often one step ahead of any problems and as a result no delays occurred. She answered all my questions promptly. She explained the process perfectly and was able to present the home beautifully. As a result of her hard work we received substantially more money for the house than I could have hoped for."

#### 9 La Noria, Orinda

"Glad that I found Laura, she is like no other agent that I have worked with in the past. She was so detailed about preparing the home. Makes selling the house an easy and FUN experience. Will definitely recommend her for anyone looking to sell or buy a home."

#### 19 Candlestick, Orinda

"Laura moved the sale of our home to a very successful conclusion in a changing market. We were very pleased with her attention to detail, being always available &

answering all of our inquiries with straight forthright responses. She also held the house open every weekend, which was instrumental in the sale of our home. She recommended several trades people to improve our property and followed their progress to our satisfaction. We could not be more happy with her efforts."

#### 31 Nottingham Place, Clayton

"Laura did a great job representing us in the sale of our Lafayette home and subsequently the purchase and sale of our Clayton home. She also was effective in persuading the out of area agent to accept our offer on our replacement property. Her experience and knowledge of the local market was instrumental in the preparation, marketing and sale of our house. She helped us understand the sales process and was always available when we had questions or concerns. We highly recommend her real estate services."

#### 37 Vallecito Lane, Orinda

"The sell and buy transaction with Laura was very smooth. I bought a home in Rossmoor and sold one in Orinda. It took a year to find the perfect Rossmoor home and she worked with me every step of the way. Laura was very competent, knowledgeable, and responsive. I was extremely happy with the outcome, as I know the buyers on my home were too."

#### 75 Stanton Court, Orinda

"I have known and worked with Laura for years. She supervised the market preparation on my home and took it all very personal. We filtered through the multiple offers and ended up with the most reliable buyer at the best price. And then she worried about my purchase out of the area and was I being represented properly. She is just the best!"

#### 1 Madera Lane, Orinda

"Laura is the hardest working agent we have ever met. She went above and beyond. Her tenacity is remarkable. This deal never would have come together without her. We can't recommend her highly enough. Plus all dogs love her and that made it easier!"

#### 40 Camino Don Miguel, Orinda

"We have worked with and known Laura for years and when we decided to sell we of course worked with her. She worked with us to get the house ready for sale very effectively. She guided us through our disclosure obligations. The photos were gorgeous and we received multiple offers after four days on the market. We closed escrow in a week!"

#### 2 Bien Venida, Orinda

"We were lucky as we called Laura after seeing an advertisement. We had interviewed other agents but Laura was the only agent who was positive about selling our home. She supervised all the market preparation and the staging was wonderful. We were successful selling our home and we couldn't have been happier with the transaction. We kept thinking what if we had not called Laura. We don't think any other agent could have made our home so inviting. We are very grateful."

#### 5 La Noria, Orinda

"Laura is a terrific agent. We handed her the keys and moved out and she took care of all the market preparation including meeting the fire district requirement to remove dead trees. Her service providers were reasonable and the home showed beautifully. We were happy with the resulting sale and feel fortunate that we found Laura to work with."

#### 105 Ardith, Orinda

"Laura is an absolute pleasure to work with and we have her to thank for owing the house of our dreams! She is extremely responsive and works tirelessly to ensure each step of the process is executed successfully. She is also very knowledgeable and always has her clients best interests at heart."



## Laura Abrams

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## CAR TIME

## ◆ WORTH from page 1

nine counties,” Worth said.

Amy, her husband Tom and daughter Betsy moved to Orinda in December 1982 when Betsy was only 18 months old. A group of young mothers was busy raising funds for a tot lot at the new Community Center Park, adjacent to the old library. Worth joined the young moms and also started volunteering for the library. When the County Library Commission was established, she found herself the representative for Orinda.

“That’s when I really got involved with civic affairs,” said Worth. “I’ve always loved libraries and really enjoyed the county-wide work to provide a pathway for library health and stability.”

Before she knew it, Worth was recruited by City Council Members Joyce Hawkins and Dick Heggie to run for Sarge Littlehale’s position on the council.

“I agreed to run and found myself on the council and, since Sarge had been dealing with transportation, I became involved with that as well,” said Worth, who began her City Council service in December 1998.

Worth worked her way up through the ranks and eventually became chair of the Contra Costa County Transportation Authority and then the Regional Transportation Authority. She worked tirelessly putting Measure J on the ballot, which provided the funding for the Caldecott Tunnel’s Fourth Bore, a boon for Orinda residents.

“Transportation is really key for our residents. People chose to live here because of our wonderful schools, beautiful open space and access to BART and the freeway. Many residents have both parents working and often commuting to other cities while also raising their families,” she added.

Worth believes strongly in the public process and reaching out to a broad spectrum of residents and listening to what they

have to say.

“People are concerned about certain issues and want to be heard. Everyone has a unique perspective that is valuable to the decision-making process, and most of the time they are respectful,” she said. “I learned early on not to take people’s comments personally. When I was with another organization, a man was expressing his anger to me about something, but was clear that he wasn’t angry at me personally, but at the institution I represented. It’s an important distinction for City Councilmembers to realize.”

According to Worth, her supportive family made it possible for her to put in the hours necessary.

“I remember my three daughters sitting around the coffee table in our living room putting labels on library newsletters or helping pass out leaflets when they were little. My husband Tom has been such a good sport as well,” she added. “We met on a Cal Alumni Volunteer Board, so he kind of knew what he was getting into. And he’s always volunteered himself, including for Cal and the California Bar Association and also as president of the California Map Society.”

Worth also credits the City Staff and her fellow City Councilmembers with contributing to her success. Citing how Orinda has one of the smallest budgets for a city in Contra Costa County, she notes both the staff and the council “have to do a lot with a little.”

She also thanks the first City Council in 1985, after Orinda became a city, with setting the tone for careful, thoughtful stewardship.

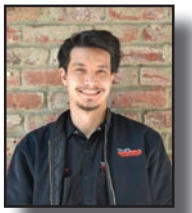
“We have such a great staff that truly cares about what they are doing and such incredible councils,” Worth said. “Councilmembers are volunteers and have been such smart, dedicated and committed individuals.”

As for her most gratifying moments in

## CAR TIME

FORMULA 1 IS BACK IN JAPAN  
FULL SPEED AHEAD

XAVIER ESTRADA



*Editor’s Note: Orinda Motors’ Xavier Estrada writes about his experience attending a Formula 1 Grand Prix Race in Japan, an experience that fuels the passion he has about cars working in Orinda.*

It’s been three years, due to COVID-19, since the famous and beloved Suzuka Circuit in Japan has hosted an F1 Grand Prix. In 2022, the race track, which can accommodate over 150,000 spectators for a Formula 1 event, was back in full force.

The most iconic feature of the track is its “figure eight” layout, with the 1.2 km

(0.75 mi) long back straight passing over the front section by means of an overpass. It is one of only two Formula One “figure eight” layouts on the world-wide circuit.

The entire event experience also encompasses parades, Honda Jet flybys, Honda’s Hall of Racing Cars and Motorcycles, booths packed with merchandise and food, interview stages, amusement park rides, F1 exclusive events and much more.

The Suzuka track, owned and built by Honda in the 1960s, has held many title-deciding races since it was included in the F1 calendar in 1987. *Legendary Grand* [SEE CAR TIME page 26]

her long career, Worth points to her work with other Bay Area cities on transportation and on the county libraries.

“People don’t realize how effective Amy was on their behalf,” said former City Councilmember Laura Abrams. “She really used her influence to protect the community from various things the state wanted to do over the years, and she was instrumental in getting the school bus program going, not to mention serving on the Solid Waste Authority Board and chairing the Mayors’ Conference numerous times. She went to many chicken dinners for the residents of Orinda!”

Given the magnitude of her job and some of the tough decisions she had to make, Worth admits there were challenging times.

“In order to be successful, you must put in a lot of emotional and intellectual energy.

Sometimes the feeling of being responsible for getting things done can really weigh on you,” she said. “You must recognize you’re going to have huge differences and not be able to please everyone. Before I make a decision, I make sure I’ve done my homework, and I understand the facts. Then I know I’ve made the best decision I could.”

Worth leaves office at the Dec. 13 City Council meeting after 24 years of public service. She plans on spending more time with her family and grandchildren, but still plans to be engaged with the Orinda community.

A reception honoring Worth takes place Dec. 4 from 3 – 5 p.m. at the Upper Library Plaza, 26 Orinda Way.

*Sally Hogarty can be reached at sally@theorindanews.com.*

Connections,  
not just transactions

85 Kathryn Dr., Pleasant Hill  
36 Miner Rd., Orinda  
684 Fox Run, Orinda  
85 Tarry Lane, Orinda  
38 Parklane Dr., Orinda  
1919 Ascot Dr., Moraga  
50 Meadow View Rd., Orinda  
461 Ridgeview Dr., Pleasant Hill  
30 Parklane Dr., Orinda  
27 Woodland Rd., Orinda  
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POLICE / FLOODING



# POLICE BLOTTER

October 15 through November 14

**Calls for Service**

- Death - Non-Criminal: 1 incident
- Failure to Obey Officer: 3 incidents
- Fraud/Forgery: 1 incident
- Hit & Run Misdemeanor: 1 incident:  
Moraga Way
- Identity theft: 3 incidents
- Outside Assist: 1 incident
- Petty Theft from Vehicle: 2 incidents:  
Moraga Way, undisclosed
- Property Found: 1 incident
- Property Receiving Stolen: 2 incidents
- Shoplifting: 2 incidents

- Tow: 2 incidents
- Vandalism: 2 incidents

**Arrests**

- DUI: 3 arrests
- Driving with Revoked/Suspended License: 2 arrests
- Possession of Dangerous Drugs: 1 arrest
- Warrant Arrest: 6 arrests

– Compiled by David Dierks  
Assistant Editor

◆ HOUSING from page 1

revisions to address HCD comments, state law review and next steps.

This PowerPoint, along with the entire Housing Element draft and Downtown Precise Plan (DPP) is available for public consumption at [www.planorinda.com](http://www.planorinda.com).

While the Zoom meeting ended publicly at 11:30 p.m., Mayor Dennis Fay explained what resolutions took place after the cameras were shut off.

“The Council adopted revisions to the staff report that limited the building height in the downtown commercial district to 45-feet,” said Fay. “This is, effectively, a four-floor limit. The combination of this height limit and the objective design standards will limit building mass, since the fourth floor will be set-back from the floors below.”

Councilmember Amy Worth explained the basic process of the Housing Element.

“California has a process that all the cities and counties in the state have to do every eight years,” she said. “They have to do an update to their housing element, but

what happens first at the state level, is the State HCD, along with the Department of Finance, these two agencies sit down and go through a process that determines the future housing for the next cycle; how many housing units will be needed across the state of California to accommodate the future.”

Fay talked about the considerable comments on the BART station and the Caltrans site on the north side of the Wilder Rd. freeway exit, and how it could affect health.

“The BART station is likely a good site to consider in future Housing Elements but has some timing issues for this cycle,” he said. “The BART site also has environmental issues since it is surrounded by the freeway. Because of that, carbon monoxide from auto exhaust stays close to where it is created and may be a health issue for those living in housing there.”

Fay added, “This environmental concern will fade as the fleet of autos in California transforms to EVs (electric vehicles). As for the Caltrans site at the Wilder Rd. interchange, it has some terrain constraints, and the 20 units/acre the staff recommended

# Will Rivers Run Through Us?

By MICHAEL ROEMER  
Contributing Writer

*A River Runs Through it* was written by a University of Chicago Shakespeare Professor Norman Maclean after his retirement. His memoir is a story about Montana fly fishing, a father’s faith and ministry and a family’s failure to avoid tragedy.

Throughout history, rivers have also run through Orinda. Our creeks often offer solace, but heavy rainfall across watersheds and down canyons can turn creeks to rivers and even deadly debris flows. Since 1850, scientists like Clausius and Clapeyron have proved many times over that a warming atmosphere holds a greater amount of water vapor. This year, NASA satellites caution us there is an unusually high amount of water vapor circulating around the world. We have seen evidence of those cloud rivers as they turned into floods from Yellowstone to Pakistan. There were even two rain-delayed playoff games weeks ago in arid San Diego.

It is the extremes, more frequent and more intense, we need to prepare for. We may suffer through more record-breaking drought for years to come, but at the same time, this can be punctuated by a series of

stalled atmospheric rivers. One such event followed a drought lasting 20 years when 30 days of rain and snowmelt between Christmas Eve, 1861, and January 24, 1862 flooded 300 miles of the San Joaquin Valley, and forced Gov. Stanford to return home from his Sacramento inauguration by rowboat. The Capital was moved to San Francisco. California went bankrupt.

Rainfall distributed over a winter refreshes gardens and recharges aquifers. But prolonged excessive rain saturates hillsides, triggers landslides, washes out roads and cuts utilities to homes. In 2019, a woman barely survived a ride inside her Sausalito home as it slid down a rain sodden hillside collapse, and in 2018, my friend’s sister was killed in her Montecito doorway by a catastrophic debris flow.

The coming holidays are a time for celebration, but not time to forget “go-bags.” We evacuate from hazards in part to spare firefighters and rescuers from risk. Firefighters frantically escaped debris flows in August during the McKinley Fire. Homes on roads with a single exit need special plans, because engines may be blocked and helicopter rescues are not always immedi-

[SEE RIVERS page 12]

is likely a practical number. I have confidence that working with Caltrans we can get this site declared surplus and available for development.”

He sees this revised Housing Element draft as something the new councilmembers can approve with ease.

“I am hoping that the action Tuesday night by the current City Council will make it easier for the new City Council to approve a final Housing Element in January 2023,” said Fay.

City Manager David Biggs said the City

Council made another decision at that meeting.

“They [HCD] also asked we add language about how Measure J funding requirements relate to having a certified Housing Element,” said Biggs. “And at this point, we will have to await the State’s comments on the next draft. Those comments will influence what additional changes staff might recommend to the Planning Commission and City Council in February before final approval.”

[SEE HOUSING page 22]



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EDITORIAL

# Editorial

## A Very Happy Holidays to All

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas as holiday wreaths, courtesy of the Orinda Garden Club, go up around town along with festive lighting and decorations in our downtown businesses. The Orinda Garden Club is assisted by local Boy Scouts who will hang the wreaths Dec. 3 and take them down Jan. 7. See page 4.

Wreaths will also honor those who served and made the ultimate sacrifice on Dec. 17 at the Lafayette Cemetery. Also, on page 4.

And, this year Orinda has not one but two tree lighting ceremonies: the Hospice Tree of Lights in Village Square and the Parks and Rec Department's tree lighting and gingerbread house contest in the Community Center Park. Both take place on Dec. 3 with the Hospice Tree of Lights beginning at 4:30 p.m. and festivities at the Community Center Park starting at 5:30 p.m. See page 1 for details.

For more entertainment, try the Orinda Ballet Academy's holiday ballet *A Sweet Dream Nutcracker* Dec. 9 – 11. See

page 10.

We would also like to congratulate one of our local businesses Morrison's Jewelers on its 100-year anniversary. Family owned since 1923, the company has been run by four generations of the Berryhill family. Happy Anniversary!

And speaking of local business, we hope you will remember them when you do your holiday shopping. Many have struggled through COVID to serve the Orinda community. Your support will be gratefully appreciated.

After a very long two-plus years with COVID casting a shadow over the holidays, it's nice to see a more festive spirit this year.

Whether you celebrate Christmas (Dec. 25), Hanukkah (Dec. 18 – 26), Kwanzaa (Dec. 26 – Jan. 1) or another cultural event, we at *The Orinda News* wish you a happy and healthy holiday season.

*Sally Hogarty, Executive Editor and Charleen Earley, Editor-in-Chief*



SALLY HOGARTY

Wreaths from the Orinda Garden Club have graced the walls above the Orinda Library fountain for years. Thanks to the Boy Scouts, they will once again be seen this holiday season.

## Letter to the Editor

### Satellite and Artificial Intelligence Mapping Best for Orinda

On Oct. 11, our City Council missed a huge opportunity to save our town, unanimously voting to take no action on the proposal (approved by the Measure R Commission) by Dr. Radke and his team at U.C. Berkeley.

Dr. Radke's team has built a satellite and artificial intelligence mapping capability allowing each Orinda household to

be advised, plant-by-plant and tree-by-tree, exactly how to make its property as fire-safe as possible. The cost would amount to only two months of Measure R funds (Measure R having been sold as fire mitigation, but the funds are used for street repair).

Dr. Radke stated when fires burn hot, evacuation routes are obliterated; when fires burn very hot, firefighters are not permitted to enter at all.



dickling@gmail.com

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The City Council argued we already have a firebreak; Dr. Radke warned how easily firestorms jump firebreaks.

The City Council argued Orinda residents would not take advantage of the opportunity to make their own property safer; this is an insult to all Orindans – whose homes are their principal asset.

The City Council argued they don't want Orinda to be the first town to ben-

efit from this technology (his proposal presentation has already been requested by another town), yet Orinda's own application for fire mitigation grant funds quoted from the introduction to Dr. Radke's proposal.

The City Council – voting to take no action – is timid and lacks the imagination necessary to avoid an imminent risk to us all.

– Bob Finch

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Letters to the Editor are printed on a space-available basis and should be no longer than 250 words. They must include the writer's first and last name, signature and telephone number. Send letters to: Editor, *The Orinda News*, P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563, or email to [editor@theorindanews.com](mailto:editor@theorindanews.com). Letters to the Editor for the January issue are due Dec. 8.

For advertising rates, contact Kathy Enzerink at 252-626-2109 ([kathy@theorindanews.com](mailto:kathy@theorindanews.com)) or Jill Gelster at 925.528.9225 ([jill@aspenconsult.net](mailto:jill@aspenconsult.net)). The deadline for the January issue is December 8.



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CHILDREN



Posing at one of their dress rehearsals, front (L-R) Gemma Leach, Emma Sabo-Nichols, Maya Elkind and Ava Allaire; back (L-R) Frances Giquinto, Phoebe Higgins, Gianna Galando, Mia Jeric, Ella Pierce, Bailey Brothers, Emily Charo, Sadie Elkind, Chloe Sabo-Nichols and Arya Samanta.

PATRICIA TOMLINSON

## Orinda Ballet Academy Brings A Sweet Dream Nutcracker to City of Orinda

Owner and Artistic Director Patricia Tomlinson of Orinda Ballet Academy & Co. and her dancers, will bring the magic of the season in their 14th annual performance of the Holiday Ballet *A Sweet Dream Nutcracker*, Dec. 9-11 at the Orinda Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way.

Shows are Friday, Dec. 9 at 6:30 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 10 at 1:30 p.m. and 6 p.m., and Sunday, Dec. 11 at 1:30 p.m. Tickets are \$23 (children) and \$25 (adults). Professional guest artists Michael Wells and Julia Meister join Orinda Ballet Academy students, performing the roles of Uncle Drosselmeyer, Nutcracker Prince, Snow Queen and Sugar Plum Fairy.

For tickets and information, visit [www.orindaballetacademy.com](http://www.orindaballetacademy.com).

## Mindful Littles 4th Annual Peace and Freedom Carnival Teaches Kids

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

Happy children went from one activity to another in the plaza area of the Orinda Community Park on Nov. 6, where projects centered on helping others. It was the 4th Annual Peace and Kindness Carnival for Bay Area families, sponsored by Mindful Littles.

There were 22 stations, three concentrating on projects designed to help local veterans in advance of

Veterans Day.

Tanuka Gordon, founder of Mindful Littles, said the kids loved the “Peace Begins with a Smile” and “Dream Catchers” stations, both created by Lamorinda Tooth Buds, a pediatric dentistry practice in Lafayette.”

Gordon said they are the only non-profit organization dedicated to restoring connectedness through high-impact mindful service experiences.

“Our unique program combines mindfulness and authentic service experiences into

a holistic model for the whole community,” said Gordon.

“Research shows experiencing compassion has positive health benefits, including reduction in anxiety, stress and depression, plus increased mental and emotional resiliency and connectedness,” Gordon added. “Backed by several years of research, Mindful Littles offers workplaces, schools and community organizations both mindful service experiences and compassion training workshops.”

Content manager for the organization,

Lisa Sadikman, said the first time she took her daughter to a Mindful Littles event, they assembled peace kits for veterans.

“I wasn’t sure she’d understand what we were doing, but Tanuka had arranged for a veteran and his daughter to be at our event to tell their story. That made a big impression on my daughter,” said Sadikman. “She was so excited to make and give something special to veterans, to thank them for their service.”

[SEE PEACE page 27]

*Orinda Ballet Academy & Company*  
Artistic Director, Patricia Tomlinson

# "A Sweet Dream Nutcracker"

**Orinda Library Auditorium**  
Friday, December 9, 6:30pm  
Saturday, December 10, 1:30pm & 6:00pm  
Sunday, December 11, 1:30pm

Advance Ticketing, Children \$23 & Adults \$25  
All Door Tickets \$25 - General Seating  
[Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com)  
Additional Information:  
[OrindaBalletAcademy.com](http://OrindaBalletAcademy.com)

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Photo's courtesy of Alejandro Gomez

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JEFF HEYMAN

On Nov. 6, children and parents from the Bay Area enjoyed the 4th Annual Peace and Kindness Carnival held at the Orinda Community Center. Three of the 22 stations centered on helping local veterans.

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ORINDA THEATRE



JEFF HEYMAN

California Independent Film Festival Opening Night at the Orinda Theatre's grand 750-seat auditorium.

## CAIFF Returns to Orinda Theatre

The California Independent Film Festival (CAIFF) returned to the Orinda Theatre on Nov. 10 after a two-year hiatus. Attendees celebrated at the opening night reception, which featured cocktails and ap-

petizers prepared by Orinda's Saffron Indian Bar and Restaurant. *Last Film Show*, India's submission to the 2023 Academy Awards, opened the festival, which ran through Nov. 17 and featured some 25 films.



JEFF HEYMAN

Derek Zemrak, Triporn Olsen and Ben Olsen on the red carpet. The Olsen Group is one of the CAIFF sponsors.



JEFF HEYMAN

Attendees enjoyed the CAIFF Nov. 10 opening night reception.

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## Bobby Conte is Back at Live At the Orinda! Concert Series

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

Dec. 4 brings Broadway star Bobby Conte to the stage at the Orinda Theatre as part of the Live At the Orinda! concert series. The show begins at 5 p.m.

Conte recently played PJ, co-starring Patti LuPone, in the Broadway, Tony Award winning, gender-bent revival of *Company*.

A San Francisco native, Conte said he's happy to be back in home territory. He entitles his concert *Along the Way*, also the name of his album, which revolves around a young man slowly ridding himself of his ignorance as he strives to carve his own path in this terrifying world.

The singer made his Broadway debut originating the role of Calogero in *A Bronx Tale*, directed by Robert De Niro and Jerry Zaks. Other New York stage credits include *My Fair Lady*, directed by Michael Arden and *Starting Here, Starting Now*, directed by its lyricist, Richard Maltby, Jr.

Conte said he likes singing before a live audience.

"It's like I'm doing something bigger than myself, and I get lost in the story telling," he said. "I feel very present with my audience and react to how they respond to what they are hearing."

He grew up listening to Frank Sinatra.

"I was with my grandparents a lot and he was their star," said Conte. "It's special to perform some of his songs thinking of them. Family is very important to me."

A graduate of the University of Michigan, which has one of the top music programs in the country, Conte began his concert career right after finishing college. He



COURTESY OF BOBBY CONTE

Live At the Orinda! concert series returns with Broadway star, **Bobby Conte**, performing at the Orinda Theatre, Sunday, Dec. 4 at 5 p.m., located at 4 Orinda Theatre Square.

also starred as Danny Zuko in *Grease* at the Paper Mill Playhouse and Enjolras in *Les Miserables* at the Muny, while pursuing his BFA.

"I also had the opportunity to sing at the Fairmont in San Francisco, which was a real privilege for me," said Conte.

For more information and tickets, visit [www.orindamovies.com](http://www.orindamovies.com).

*Bobbie Dodson can be reached at [bobbiedodson109@gmail.com](mailto:bobbiedodson109@gmail.com).*



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MIXOLOGY

# Mixology Event Draws Hundreds to Orinda for Creative Cocktails

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff writer

Over 200 guests attended the 9th Annual Mixology event sponsored by the Lamorinda Arts Council at Orinda Theatre Square on Oct. 22.

Member Shelly Rose said, “This is the largest fundraiser for our organization and we love having the opportunity to bring our community together for this unique event.”

Both professional and amateur bartenders created luscious craft cocktails as the audience and judges sampled and voted for their favorites.

The Mixologist of the Year went to Cynthia Songco from Casa Orinda with a drink titled “Henny Penny.”

“This Is for My Peaches” earned second place for Brandon Blackman of Night Owl in Castro Valley, while third place went to Katie Gazay from the Forge in Oakland.

Her drink is called “Gardens of the Galaxy.” Songco, who joined the Casa Orinda team in January 2020, had a setback due to the pandemic, but that roadblock gave her time to put her creativity into action.

“COVID-19 hit, so I was out of work for two years,” she said. “During that time, I had to find a way to make money. So, I pressed fresh juices and sold batch cocktails by word of mouth. This brought out the creative side of me. I tried lots of different types of drinks. Though I was surprised to learn that Claudia Tata of Casa Orinda had entered me, I thought, ‘Why not try?’”

Deciding on a fall cocktail, Songco began experimenting.

“I tried different syrups – fig, apricot, beet and persimmon. Not getting the flavor I wanted, I tried a cranberry compote, and it was fantastic,” said Songco. “Its ingredients are cinnamon, star anise, orange zest, orange juice, vanilla and cranberries. I figured



JEFF HEYMAN

Over 200 guests attended the 9th Annual Mixology event, held at Orinda Theatre Square on Oct. 22, where both professional and amateur bartenders created luscious craft cocktails as the audience and judges sampled and voted for their favorites.



JEFF HEYMAN

Top winner Mixologist of the Year, **Cynthia Songco** from Casa Orinda, made the winning cocktail titled “Henny Penny” at table 13 at the 9th Annual Mixology event.

it would be a crowd pleaser since Thanksgiving and other holidays are upcoming.”

Songco next used Rittenhouse Rye 100 proof Whiskey for a reason.

“I needed the high proof so the compote wouldn’t overpower the whiskey,” she said. “Something was missing, and then I came up with whiskey sour. I decided to add ginger syrup for spice. This was the missing secret ingredient I was looking for! After playing with ratios for two days before the competition, I felt I had it. The complexity and balance were right on.”

Songco is happy to share her recipe for “Henny Penny.”

- 1.75 oz. - Rittenhouse Rye
- 1/2 oz. - Cranberry compote
- 3/4 oz. - Lemon juice
- 3/4 oz. - Simple syrup
- 1/2 oz. - Egg whites
- Dehydrated Cranberry Sprinkle
- Dehydrated Orange Wheel

Patrons from all over the Bay Area came to support the local restaurants and bars while also supporting local artists and arts programs.

Attendee Ibis Schlesinger said she’s attended every Mixology event since it’s inception.

“The drinks the mixologists serve are incredibly inventive,” she said. “An added plus is the great food our local restaurants provide. It’s a thrill to be part of this community that showcases creativity.”

*Bobbie Dodson can be reached at [bobbiedodson109@gmail.com](mailto:bobbiedodson109@gmail.com).*

◆ RIVERS from page 7

ate. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) data and warnings will enable us to get out early and save our search and rescue volunteers from danger from the rivers that would run through us.

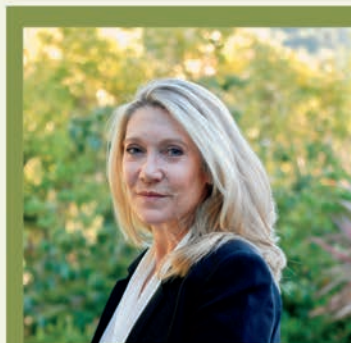
*A River Runs Through It* is a classic of American literature, a testament to the vulnerability, but also the resiliency of a family bound by devotion to the magic of a trout stream. Also highly recommended is *West Without Water: What Past Floods, Droughts, and Other Climatic Clues Tell Us About Tomorrow*, by B. Lynn Ingram and Frances Malamud-Roam. Both are available at Orinda Books just in time for holiday giving.

*Michael Roemer can be reached at [mikeroemer@gmail.com](mailto:mikeroemer@gmail.com)*

NEWLY ELECTED CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS



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JANET RILEY



Thank you Orinda! We are grateful for your support and honored by the opportunity to serve you.

THANKS TO THE COMMUNITY



I personally want to thank my supporters, donors, endorsers and especially my family for believing in me. I also want to give special thanks to my Campaign Team. They were incredibly positive, tireless and gave so much of their time to this campaign.

Thank you to those in District 3 who voted for me. I felt strongly that I could make a positive difference for our community as MOFD District 3 Director. My first experience running for an office was a real eye opener. It was challenging, exciting, and rewarding. I particularly enjoyed touching base with the community – renewing old friendships and forging new ones.

I have a strong belief that the new MOFD Board will always put the best interests of our Communities first and listen to the Community members who entrusted them with this position

– Vince Dell’Aquila.

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32 Dos Posos, Orinda \$2,300,000



11 Los Altos Rd, Orinda \$2,295,000



3 La Cuesta, Orinda \$1,900,000



102 Ravenhill Rd, Orinda \$1,850,000



130 Sleepy Hollow Ln, Orinda \$1,850,000



65 Silverwood Dr, Lafayette \$2,395,000



828 Crossbrook Ct, Moraga, \$2,875,000



178 Corliss Dr, Moraga \$2,685,000



1850 School St, Moraga \$2,515,000



Have a Very Happy Holiday Season!



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STUDENTS

# National Charity League Hosts “Non-Partisan Civics for Teen Girls”



SHIRLEY DEFRANCISI

Acalanes and Lamorinda Chapters of the National Charity League hosted their first non-partisan civics for teen girls event at Miramonte High School on Oct. 23. A panel of local female elected officials shared advice on how teens – even those not yet old enough to vote – can become more civically engaged. Panelists in front (L-R) Assemblymember **Rebecca Bauer-Kahan**, District Attorney **Diana Becton**, Lafayette School Board Trustee **Suzy Pak**, Orinda Councilmember **Amy Worth**, Moraga Town Council Vice-Mayor **Renata Sos** and Orinda School Board Vice President **Hillary Weiner**.

By ELLA HACK  
Contributing Writer

Over 200 teen girls from Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda filled the Miramonte High School gymnasium stands on Oct. 23, not to cheer for a sporting competition, but to attend Lamorinda’s first “Non-Partisan Civics for Teen Girls” event.

The Acalanes and Lamorinda and Chapters of National Charity League (NCL) organized the panel of female elected offi-

cialists in Contra Costa County to discuss the importance of being engaged and informed citizens.

The local chapters of the NCL hope this event will serve as a blueprint for other chapters across the nation to encourage more girls to share their voices and become involved in the political process.

Abigail Weiner, a student at Miramonte High School and member of NCL, shared why her chapter helped organize the event. “It is important for young women to

participate in voting in order to share a new and younger generation’s perspective and to express their opinions to have a say in the political world,” said Weiner.

The distinguished panel included District Attorney Diana Becton, the first woman and person of color to serve as Contra Costa District Attorney since the office was established in 1850; Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, the current 16th California Assembly District representative; Suzy Pak, a trustee on the Lafayette School Board; Renata Sos, a member of the Moraga Town Council and Vice Mayor; Hillary Weiner, current Vice President of the Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees; and Orinda City Councilmember and former Mayor Amy Worth, who has served Orinda for 24 years.

Kay Lankford and Kirstin Parker, both seniors at Miramonte High School and members of NCL, emceed. They encouraged panelists to share their experiences as women in the political world before fielding questions from the audience.

Key audience questions included, “Why is it important for women to hold elected office?” and “What is the hardest and most rewarding part of your job?”

The panelists shared their inspiring sto-

ries of how and why they entered politics. They also described the unique skills and perspectives women bring to the political process.

Panelists appealed to the teens in the audience to get involved in local issues by attending city council and school board meetings, joining committees, interning and letting their elected representatives know – via calls and emails, presentations and other means – what issues matter to them.

Girls 16 years and older were invited to pre-register to vote at [registertovote.ca.gov](http://registertovote.ca.gov).

Bauer-Kahan explained the importance of this year’s midterm elections and reasons to vote, even when the ballot doesn’t include a Presidential contest. She emphasized that many local offices and issues directly impact our community.

All panelists focused on the importance of listening, keeping an open mind, analyzing the facts, weighing all sides of an issue, and then doing what one thinks is best for the community as a whole, for both office-holders and their constituents.

Teen attendees also worked together by class to make several hundred patriotic

[SEE CHARITY page 18]

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STUDENTS

# Four Orinda Singers Perform in Professional Production of *Matilda*

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Executive Editor

Musicals featuring a plethora of young performers are often light-hearted affairs, but that isn't the case with *Matilda the Musical*. Full of substance, as well as beautiful music and fun dance numbers, *Matilda* takes on bad parenting and bullying.

Based on Roald Dahl's 1988 novel, the musical features Lamorinda Idol singers Miranda Klein, Keenan Moran, Sofia Rose and Henry Vanhouten. It currently plays through Dec. 23 at Berkeley Playhouse, 2640 College Ave., Berkeley.

*Matilda* tells the story of a young English girl mistreated by her parents and

bullied by her school's headmistress, Miss Trunchbull. The highly intelligent Matilda, however, finds support from her teacher, Miss Honey. Her psychokinetic powers also come in handy.

"I definitely don't have parents like Matilda – just the opposite," said Klein, an Orinda resident and fifth grade student at Head Royce School, who plays Matilda. "Unfortunately, I don't have her psychokinetic powers, but I do love playing this character. It's hard work, and the songs hit some pretty high notes, but I'm surrounded by such amazing actors. I just love it so much."

The show began performances Nov. 4, following an intensive rehearsal schedule.

Miramonte Students Perform *A Midsummer Night's Dream*



JENNIFER LINARDON

Miramonte High School students performed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on Oct. 27-29, under the direction of Heather Cousins, theater arts teacher and director. (L-R) **Alana Ruesga, Carson Straub, Sabrina Hernandez, Ella Bradley, Soren van Loben Sels, Lane Trani, Colin Perusse, Mercy Meeks,** (below) **Gabe Meezan and Sarah Meeks** on the swing.



LILY BLACK

Veteran Lamorinda Idol performers and Orinda residents (L-R) **Sofia Rose** (Nigel), **Keenan Moran** (Eric), **Miranda Klein** (Matilda) and **Henry Vanhouten** (Michael) appear in Berkeley Playhouse's production of *Matilda the Musical*, running through Dec. 23 at the Julie Morgan Center in Berkeley. Not pictured is Lamorinda Idol performer Camden Greathouse from Danville.

Fortunately, Berkeley Playhouse divided the younger performers into two casts – Miracle and Acrobat.

"The Miracle Cast is named after the first song in the show. It's such a fun number about how the parents think all of us kids are miracles, but we know we're really mischievous," said Rose, a sophomore at Campolindo High School who plays Nigel, one of Matilda's classmates.

Rose noted both casts rehearsed together, with one cast writing down blocking and choreography, while the other cast performed before switching.

"I love playing Nigel. He's kind of crazy and fun," Rose said.

Vanhouten, a junior at Campolindo, has become a master at juggling as he manages a very heavy homework load, singing lessons, his job at Starbucks and performances. He plays Matilda's older brother Michael.

"It's definitely been a rough year, and I'm really glad the show is double cast so I have some down time," said Vanhouten, who plays Crutchy in *Newsies* at Campolindo right after *Matilda* closes.

Vanhouten says his character isn't very smart, yet his parents constantly tell him he is.

"My challenge is to show he's not bright, but still make him fun. He doesn't have a lot of lines, but he's on stage a lot, so I've created various mannerisms for him," Vanhouten said. "It's interesting playing a character who is constantly praised and, basically, gets whatever he wants. But his happiness is at the cost of Matilda and their relationship."

According to Vanhouten, the dark side of Matilda is one element that makes it an amazing show.

"I think it's very relevant and applies to [SEE MATILDA page 16]



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STUDENTS

# Orinda Junior Women's Club's 2023 Youth Ink Writing Contest

By Charleen Earley  
Editor-in-Chief

Youth Ink 2023, hosted by the Orinda Junior Women's Club, is an Orinda Middle School writing contest to support literary arts in the community. The annual creative writing contest is open to all middle school students who live in or attend school in Orinda.

The Youth Ink 2023 prompt is *Strength*. Entrants do not have to adhere to the prompt and imagination and creativity are encouraged. The purpose of the contest is to give adolescents the opportunity to experience 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. To be considered for an award, submissions must be accepted via email from Dec. 12 to March 5, 2023. Full entry details are on the Youth Ink 2023 submission forms, available through Orinda Intermediate School, several local private middle schools, the Orinda Public Library and online by Dec. 5 at [www.orindajuniors.org](http://www.orindajuniors.org).

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

# Poul Anderson Writing Contest

By Charleen Earley  
Editor-in-Chief

The Friends of the Orinda Library announced the start of the 2023 Poul Anderson Creative Writing Contest, open to all students who reside or attend high school in Orinda. Entry categories are

Science Fiction/Fantasy, Essay/Memoir/Biography, Poetry and Short Story. Students may submit one entry in any of the four categories for a total of no more than three entries.

The submission deadline is noon, April 14. A panel of local judges, who are involved professionally in reading, writing or publishing, will judge entries. Awards will go to the works judged best; that is, there will not necessarily be one award in each category.

Underwritten by the Friends of the Orinda Library, up to four winners will each be awarded \$500 prizes at the end of the school year. The winning entries will be posted on the Friends' website.

The contest is named in honor of the late Poul Anderson, a popular science-fiction writer and Orinda resident, who was a true friend to the community for

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**Dons Take Win over Matadors**



MARK BELL

"Running Back **Bennett Destino**, heads upfield for one of his 7 carries for 44 yards on the night," said Mark Bell, photographer. "It was a barn burner of a first half on Oct. 28, full of long bombs, safeties, trick plays and interceptions, eventually giving way to a tornado of yellow flags, whistles and big penalties in the second. Ultimately the Acalanes Dons leave their Lafayette home field with the 'W,' but the Miramonte Matadors made them earn it. Final score: 53-28."

40 years. Entries must be submitted as PDFs or Word attachments to an email, sent along with a contest entry form to [contest@friendsoftheorindalibrary.org](mailto:contest@friendsoftheorindalibrary.org).

Additional instructions for submissions are on the 2022 Contest Entry Form, at

[www.friendsoftheorindalibrary.org](http://www.friendsoftheorindalibrary.org). For questions about the contest, please email [contest@friendsoftheorindalibrary.org](mailto:contest@friendsoftheorindalibrary.org).

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

◆ **MATILDA** from page 15

many kids my age and all the stuff we deal with," said Vanhouten. "I honestly think it's helpful to see extreme scenarios where issues such as bullying and bad parenting apply, because it's kind of a warning."

Playing Eric, another of Matilda's classmates, is St. Perpetua fifth-grader Keenan Moran.

"This is a really big story to tell. From parents not knowing what their children are really like, to a family running away from Russians. It's crazy, and [Miss] Trunchbull

is pretty strange as well," said Moran. "It's not an everyday school play, and some bad parts make me feel sad, but there's no time to dwell on that because then I'm doing a quick costume change for the next number. My favorite song is Bruce. The choreography is such fun and involves eating a big chocolate cake!"

To catch these Lamorinda Idol singers in *Matilda*, call 510.845.8542 or visit [www.berkeleyplayhouse.org](http://www.berkeleyplayhouse.org).

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



BEN KRANTZ

Gregory Lynch (Miss Trunchbull) and Orinda resident Miranda Klein (Matilda) perform in Berkeley Playhouse's production of Roald Dahl's *Matilda the Musical*, directed by Dane Paul Andres. Performing at the Julia Morgan Theater through Dec. 23.



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PET OF THE MONTH / ART EMBRACES WORDS

Pet of the Month



MAGGIE MILLER

"This is **Oliver**, our five-month-old French Bulldog puppy," said Maggie Miller. "We're not sure he's 100% dog. He sleeps like a hibernating bear, snores like a person, howls like a wolf, won't give us the time of day like a cat and has a tongue as long as an anteater. We love him though!"

Art Embraces Words for Halloween

The Lamorinda Arts Council presented a special Halloween version of their Art Embraces Words event Oct. 29 at the Lafayette Library. Attendees came dressed as their favorite literary or artistic character and prizes were awarded by costume judges Jill Gelster and Kim Bonney of the Orinda



COURTESY OF ELANA O'LOSKEY

**Elana O'Loskey** organized the Halloween Art Embraces Words event, seen here wearing The Cunning Little Vixen mask inspired by Janacek's opera of the same name.



COURTESY OF LAMORINDA ARTS COUNCIL

Artist **Jan Lainoff** appeared as "Marie Antoinette Meets Dia de los Muertos" - the title of her painting. Marie Antoinette famously wore just such a wig with a ship on top of it so Lainoff was playing with that image.

Starlight Village Players.

Authors Jo Mele and Brian Shea read from their work; Marlene Dotterer read Camille Minichino's work. Artists Jennifer Granat, Helen Chu-Hirschberg, Bill Carmel, Ruth Stanton and Jan Lainoff displayed artwork with a spooky theme.

Visit [www.lamorindaarts.org](http://www.lamorindaarts.org) for more information..



COURTESY OF LAMORINDA ARTS COUNCIL

**Melissa Claros** appeared as a Vampaneze Assistant to a Romanian Vampire. Whereas Vampires live by a code (they can't kill, for example) the Vampaneze can do whatever they want.



COURTESY OF LAMORINDA ARTS COUNCIL

**Marilyn Mattson** (L) accompanied by her sister, Marsha Joy.

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◆ CHARITY from page 14

zipper pulls for soldiers. This project was requested by NCL philanthropy partner Blue Star Moms, a national, non-political, Congressionally chartered veteran service organization that has been supporting the troops since 1960.

Local news outlets, including KQED Public Radio and KTVU Fox 2 News, covered the event.

Tess Gundacker, a senior at Acalanes High School who represented NCL in interviews with both media outlets, shared her thoughts on why she attended: "I think this event is really important, because we

are promoting more females in civic and government positions and giving girls a vision for their future careers."

NCL is a national organization of mothers and daughters committed to philanthropy, culture and leadership. NCL donates close to three million hours annually to over 6,000 charities in the United States. The Acalanes and Lamorinda chapters are comprised of approximately 250 girls in seventh through twelfth grades and their mothers. For more information, visit [www.nationalcharityleague.org](http://www.nationalcharityleague.org).

*Ella Hack can be reached at [editor@theorindanews.com](mailto:editor@theorindanews.com).*

Warmest thoughts and best wishes for a wonderful Holiday and a Prosperous New Year!

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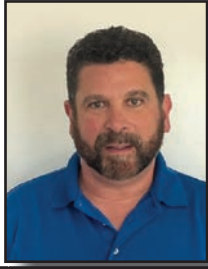
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ORINDA ART SCENE

Orinda Art Scene

DECEMBER IN THE ART GALLERIES AT THE ORINDA LIBRARY AND WILDER



DAVID FONSECA

Art Gallery at the Orinda Library: Bay Area Studio Artists (BASA)

The BASA show “It’s in Our Nature” will be on view in the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library, Dec. 2 through Dec. 31. Learn more about these artists and their work at the reception on Sunday, Dec. 4, from 3 – 5 p.m., where light refreshments will be served.

Orinda residents might notice the show’s title is similar to BASA’s mural (“In Our Nature”), which hangs on the Brookwood Road side of the CVS building. The mural, celebrating the natural world, was part of the Artify Orinda program. This exhibit, however, will go far beyond the expanse of that mural’s nature scene.

The exhibit features some of the artists’ favorite works, pieces that best express their true nature. Some of these are recent works, while others are long-time favorites.

Numerous works will be displayed on the gallery walls, as well as in the two large glass cases at either end of the gallery. The glass cases hold small paintings, many of

which appear on miniature easels. Since these smaller, more intimate pieces rarely get shown by the group, you won’t want to miss them.

Eight members of BASA are included in this exhibit: Suzun Almquist, Jeanette Baird, Lassie Colebourn, Ellen Reintjes, Ruth Stanton, Joanne Taeuffer, Sharon Tama and Marcy Wheeler.

“We view our exhibit title as being broad and open-ended,” said Orinda artist Tama. “To be sure, there will be scenes from nature, including botanical beauty, moments captured from the savannas of Africa and other earthly wonders.”

Tama added, “But the title also reflects human nature, whether in repose, frenetic activity or simply executing the nonchalant tasks of life. What is it about our actions, emotions or mere posture that speaks to our individuality?”

BASA has both worked and shown work together since 2010 in a variety of Bay Area venues.

“This exhibit also reflects the eclectic



JOANNE TAEUFFER

BASA artist **Joanne Taeuffer's** *Pas de Deux* is from a series of paintings of dancers inspired by vintage photos and conveys her continuing love affair with painting expressive figures in motion.

nature of our group in both style and subject matter, from realism to expressionism,” said Tama.

No strangers to sharing their beautiful art with Orinda, BASA last year was part of the COVID-19 Retrospective at the Orinda Library where 16 of their paintings were shown. They also exhibited their ‘Trailblazers’ show at Orinda Books that same year, featuring paintings of some of BASA artists’ heroes, including fellow artists as well as political and entertainment figures.

For more information about BASA, visit [www.bayareastudioartists.com](http://www.bayareastudioartists.com).

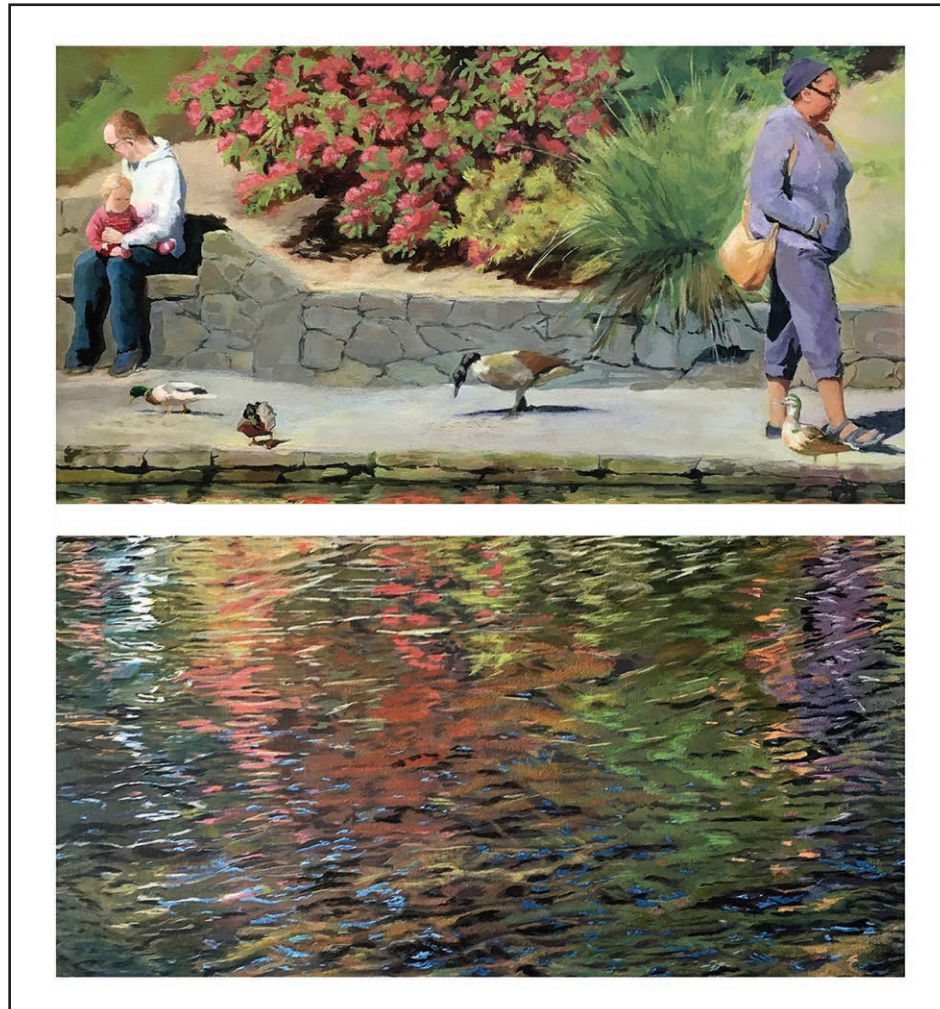
Art Gallery at Wilder: Celebrating 40 over 40 Continues

Julen Lapporte, the award-winning portrait photographer based in Lafayette, is continuing her exhibit “Celebrating 40 Over 40” at The Art Gallery at Wilder. The exhibit celebrates women over 40 and their stories.

“With a strong societal focus on beauty and youth, women are often perceived

as being less relevant as they age,” said Lapporte. “I seek to focus on the gifts that come with aging. The vibrancy to choose to dance with our fears and to live a life with joy and wonder.”

[SEE GALLERIES page 20]



RUTH STANTON

BASA member and Lafayette resident **Ruth Stanton's** *Reflections* are two separate canvases - each 14” height x 26” width and hung one above the other. This diptych is from photographs taken when visiting the Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden in Portland, Oregon.

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RETIREMENT

# Retirement Plans: Not Something to Run Away From

By S. K. GUPTA  
Contributing Writer

“I married you for breakfast and dinner, not for lunch!” said my bride of 33 years. I had just turned 60 and told her I was planning to retire in six months. She was unequivocal in her resistance to my early retirement.

My dad worked until 78 and her dad worked past 76. So, a potential retirement at just 60 challenged her perspectives. Our company offered us a very generous early retirement package, and it would have been less-than-smart (stupid!) not to accept it. A month later, she and I went on one of our rare couple’s vacations. Just the two of us. No kids, friends or relatives. At the end of the two weeks, she decided she could live with me for lunch too!

**Ready for retirement:** Over the years, I had learned a good retirement requires three things. One must be ready financially, intellectually and emotionally. Sometimes, health plays a part too. For many, work provides not just financial stability but also a purpose. The atta-boys of a job well done and intellectual challenge on a constant basis. For many, it is also their regular social circle.

One of my saddest observations while working was to see retirees come back to work. Not because they needed the money, but because they had nothing else to do.

**The challenge of retirement:** A couple of years ago, I got a call from a longtime



JAMES HOSE JR. | UNSPLASH.COM

Whether considering retiring at age 60, 70 or 80, one doesn’t need to be scared, considering there is no shortage of opportunities to stay engaged – mentally and physically.

acquaintance who was contemplating retirement and was wondering how he would stay busy. I asked him, “Are you financially, intellectually and emotionally ready for retirement?” I discovered that his work was his life. He had no hobbies. Not a fan of the Golden State Warriors or the 49ers. Not a golfer, biker or sailor. He enjoyed playing Sudoku, but as he said, “how much Sudoku can I play in a day?” So, he was truly worried – and fearful. He was ready financially and intellectually, but not emotionally.

I asked him a number of questions, and we finally converged that he really liked helping people. We then brainstormed on how to use his joy of helping people in a post retirement world. He is now on two non-profit boards and also enjoys being a docent at a museum.

**Post-retirement plans:** When I retired, I had three ideas to keep busy: earn a PhD, teach at a college and write a book. Professor Gupta or Dr. Gupta sounded exotic at the time.

The day after I retired, I got on a flight to join my wife in India. For the first time in decades, I didn’t have any emails to check. It was true freedom after having had a very stressful and demanding job for the last 10 years of my career. I enjoyed it and I decided to take a year off before I started anything.

**Actual retirement:** A few months after retiring, I was driving past the offices of my previous company and realized I had not turned around to look at the facility. I

knew then I had moved on, and would not miss the company where I worked for 28 years and 21 days – but who was counting?

I started playing golf and a friend introduced me to hiking. My wife and I traveled to many different countries after she decided she might as well help me get to my goal of visiting 100 countries! I did a deep dive into our finances and our spending habits. I took yoga classes and tried to learn how to relax.

I spent the next eight-plus years creating and building a non-profit organization to help Asian Americans, something I had developed a passion for in the previous decade. I had obviously given up getting a PhD, but still hoped to write a book. I did teach classes on soft skills to middle management people to help them break through their personal glass ceilings. It was a busy life with constant travel and interaction with hundreds of folks. I didn’t miss paid work.

**First step:** “How can I help?” are the magic words that often open doors. There is so much to be done if one can park their ego at the door; there is no shortage of opportunities to stay engaged – mentally and physically. Whether we retire at 60, 70 or 80, our country is full of opportunities to contribute. Let’s open our minds and find them. These opportunities will help us overcome the fear of retirement.

**Retirement examples:** So, I now look around in my friends’ circles to see what they are doing. One friend loves to cook and

[SEE RETIREMENT page 22]

◆ GALLERIES from page 19

She said this isn’t just a collection of beautiful portraits.

“It’s a collection of beautiful souls,” said Lapporte. “[It’s about] women standing together and celebrating our similarities and differences mixed with our spirit and energy that makes each one of us a beautiful being.”

Lapporte talked about her journey on aging.

“Being a bit of an old soul, I started to come into my own in my 40s and life is only getting better with each passing year,” she said. “Now that I’m 55, I have the courage to truly embrace all that I am: a messy, flawed, beautiful, continuous work in progress. I’ve found the patience to welcome complex emotions and embrace life with deep empathy for myself and others.”

Find out more at [www.studiojule.com](http://www.studiojule.com).

The Wilder Art and Garden Center is located at 20 Orinda Fields Lane. The virtual exhibit runs through Jan. 6. To schedule a viewing by appointment, contact Curator Ani Breslin at [anistonbreslin@berkeley.edu](mailto:anistonbreslin@berkeley.edu). For more information, call the Lamorinda Arts Council at 925.359.9940.

**Orinda Books Artists of the Month**

It’s a family affair as Paul, Tia and Joel Kratter, and Gerry Wallace are showcasing their art at Orinda Books in December. The group is made up of Paul, his wife Tia (an Orinda native) and their son Joel. Gerry Wallace is Tia’s mom.

Wallace, an Orinda resident, has a special holiday show on Dec. 2, along with her family. Some of her ceramics are displayed year-round at Orinda Books.


Paul is a fine art painter with a background in illustration. He taught a variety of classes on illustration at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco and his work is published and shown extensively. Learn more about him at [www.paulkratter.com](http://www.paulkratter.com).

Visit Joel’s Etsy page to view his wildlife paintings at [www.etsy.com/shop/JoelKratterArts?ref=l2-about-shopname](http://www.etsy.com/shop/JoelKratterArts?ref=l2-about-shopname).

There’s more information about Tia, who worked as a background painter at Disney and as an Art Director at Pixar, at [www.tiakratter.com](http://www.tiakratter.com). Her work includes a variety of acclaimed films, including *The Little Mermaid*, *Aladdin* and *Beauty and the Beast*.

The December events are Friday, Dec. 9, from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Paul and Gerry) and Saturday, Dec. 10, from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Tia, Paul and Joel).

Dave Fonseca can be reached at [davef52@gmail.com](mailto:davef52@gmail.com).



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## CALENDAR / CLUBS

## On the Calendar in December

- Orinda Library.** Storytimes are on Wednesday at 10:30 a.m.. Open Mon. through Thu., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Fri. and Sat., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 26 Orinda Way, Call 925.254.2184 or visit <http://ccclib.org>.
- Poul Anderson Creative Writing Contest Registration open.** For contest questions, email [contest@friendsoftheorindalibrary.org](mailto:contest@friendsoftheorindalibrary.org). See article p. 16.
- Wildier Art and Garden Center** virtual exhibit runs through Jan. 6. See article p. 19.
- 1 **Friends of the Orinda Library Dealers' Sale** 10-noon. Library Sorting Room.
- Orinda-Tabor Sister City Foundation** Gingerbread House Making Contest. Entries accepted at the Community Center and Community Park, 5 p.m. Age Categories 0-5; 6-10; 11-13; 14-18; adult. Attach name, address and phone number to entry. All entries must be edible. On display through Dec. 3. [www.orindataborsistercityfoudation.org](http://www.orindataborsistercityfoudation.org).
- 2 **Art Gallery at the Orinda Library** display through Dec 31. Artist reception Dec. 4 3 - 5 p.m. See article p. 19.
- Orinda Books** showcases the art of Paul, Tia and Joel Kratter and Gerry Wallace. Also, Dec. 9, from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Paul and Gerry) and Dec. 10, from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Tia, Paul and Joel). See article p. 19.
- 3 **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. 10 and 17. The Market is closed Dec. 24 and 31. See article p. 25.
- Hospice Tree Lighting Ceremony** 4:30 p.m., located at Village Square, 31 Orinda Way. [www.HospiceEastBay.org](http://www.HospiceEastBay.org). See article p. 1.
- Orinda Intermediate School Choir** 5:30 p.m., at the tree lighting at the Orinda Community Center.
- Orinda Parks and Rec** Holiday Tree Lighting, 5:30 p.m. at Community Center and Community Park. See article p. 1.
- 4 **Amy Worth Retirement Reception** 3 - 5 p.m. at the Upper Library Plaza, 26 Orinda Way. See article p. 1.
- Live at the Orinda!** presents Bobby Conte. Orinda Theatre, 5 p.m. See article p. 11.
- 7 **Orinda Chamber of Commerce** forum for business owners and commercial property managers and owners to learn about and discuss, the City of Orinda Downtown Precise Plan. 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. register at [info@orindachamber.org](mailto:info@orindachamber.org).
- Miramonte High School Winter Band** Concert 7 p.m. MHS Theater. Contact [dwarford@auhsdschools.org](mailto:dwarford@auhsdschools.org).
- Orinda Library** Mr. Daniel brings interactive music in Spanish and English for preschoolers and younger. 10:30-11 a.m.
- 8 **Orinda Books Pat's Book Club** reads and discusses *MATRIX* by Lauren Groff. 11 a.m. Email [info@orindabooks.com](mailto:info@orindabooks.com) for reservations.
- 9 **Orinda Intermediate School Choir** 6 p.m. - Winter Concert, OIS Multi Purpose Room. Contact [cholling@orinda.k12.ca.us](mailto:cholling@orinda.k12.ca.us).
- 10 **Orinda Ballet's A Sweet Dream Nutcracker**, 6:30 p.m., Orinda Library Auditorium. Also Dec. 10-11. See article, p. 10.
- Miramonte High School** Winter Choral Concert 7 p.m. MHS Theater. Contact [dwarford@auhsdschools.org](mailto:dwarford@auhsdschools.org).
- 11 **Orinda Parks and Rec** Senior Trip. Great Dickens Christmas Fair, Cow Palace, San Francisco; \$75 per person. Go to [www.orindaparksandrec.org](http://www.orindaparksandrec.org) or call 925.254.2445.
- Diablo Women's Chorale** holiday concert. 3 p.m. Also Dec. 11 at 3 p.m. Walnut Creek United Methodist Church, 1543 Sunnyvale Ave., Walnut Creek. Tickets at [diablowomenschorale.org](http://diablowomenschorale.org).
- 12 **Orinda Academy** Open House 10 a.m. - Noon. 19 Alterinda Road. RSVP at [www.orindaacademy.org](http://www.orindaacademy.org).
- 13 **Del Rey Elementary Band** Winter Concert 9 a.m. Contact [cholling@orinda.k12.ca.us](mailto:cholling@orinda.k12.ca.us).
- Youth Ink 2023** registration is open. [www.orindajuniors.org](http://www.orindajuniors.org). See article p. 16.
- 14 **Sleepy Hollow Elementary Band and Choir** Winter Concert, 9 a.m. Contact [cholling@orinda.k12.ca.us](mailto:cholling@orinda.k12.ca.us).
- 15 **DAR National Wreaths Across America** day, 12 p.m. at the Lafayette Cemetery, 3285 Mount Diablo Blvd. See article p. 4
- 16 **Miramonte High School** Winter Break through Jan. 3, 2023.
- Orinda Parks and Rec** Children's Winter Break Camps, Dec. 19-21. Go to [www.orindaparksandrec.org](http://www.orindaparksandrec.org) or call 925.254.2445.
- 17 **Orinda Library** Holiday Dance Party for Toddlers, 10 - 11 a.m.
- 18 **Orinda Library** Holidaywgs. Our Paws to Read therapy dogs will listen to your stories of festivity or woe. Craft and bingo. 2 - 3 p.m.
- 19 **Orinda Library** Noon Year's Eve. Celebrating with a craft, countdown and dancing. 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

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

## Club Meetings in December

Some clubs are meeting in person, while others still offer Zoom meetings. Use contact for more information.

**American Association of University Women-Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch** (AAUW-OML) AAUW provides fellowships and grants for post-graduate academic work and community projects. Visit <https://oml-ca.aauw.net> for more information.

**Community Gentle Yoga**, via Zoom, Mondays and Thursdays 9-10 a.m. Contact Gaby Mozee at [gcmozee@gmail.com](mailto:gcmozee@gmail.com).

**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) or [www.moragaadobe.org](http://www.moragaadobe.org).

**Friends of the Orinda Creeks.** Fourth Wednesday. 3 p.m., 925.408.1840. [www.orindacreeks.org](http://www.orindacreeks.org).

**Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition.** Third Wednesday, 10 a.m., 925.687.8844, ext. 227. <https://bit.ly/3egD3EZ>.

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

**Lamorinda Republican Women Federated.** Third Thursday. For more information, visit [www.lamorindarepublicanwomenfederated.org](http://www.lamorindarepublicanwomenfederated.org).

**Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary.** Meets weekly over 7 a.m. breakfast at the Veterans Memorial Center, 3780 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. Guests welcome, no reservations needed, [www.lamorindasunrise.org](http://www.lamorindasunrise.org).

[lamorindasunrise.org](mailto:lamorindasunrise.org), [lamorinda\\_sunrise@gmail.com](mailto:lamorinda_sunrise@gmail.com). Meetings: Dec. 9, Club Assembly; Dec. 16, Member Magazine Reverend Ray Welles.

**Montelindo Garden Club.** Membership is open to all. Visit [montelindogarden.com/meetings.html](http://montelindogarden.com/meetings.html) for meeting and club details. 349 Mt Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. Doors open at 9:30 a.m. Free.

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

**Orinda Chamber of Commerce** Third Wednesday at, 4 - 5 p.m. -Board Meeting. Contact Roy Hodgkinson for Zoom link at [president@orindachamber.org](mailto:president@orindachamber.org).

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

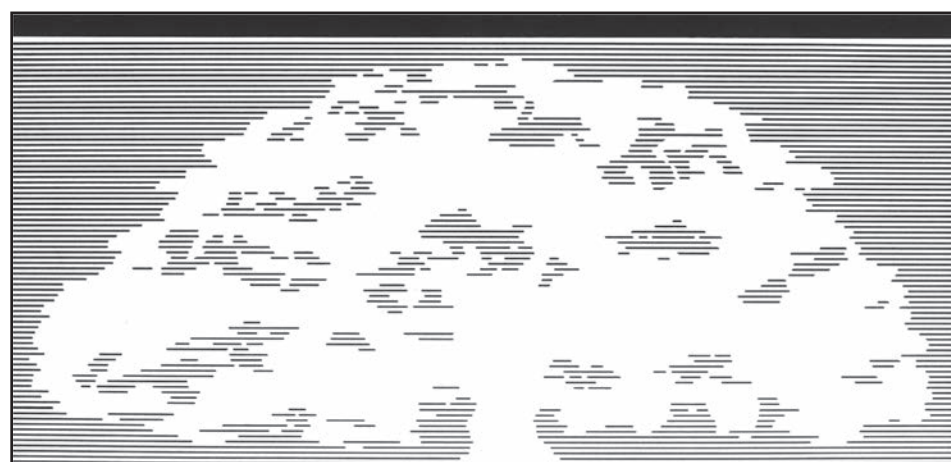
**Orinda Hiking Club.** Every weekend and first Wednesday, Ian at 925.254.1465 or [www.orindahiking.org](http://www.orindahiking.org).

**Orinda Historical Society.** Call 925.254.1353 or email [information@orindahistory.org](mailto:information@orindahistory.org), <http://orindahistory.org> for times and location of meetings and appointments.

**Orinda Junior Women's Club.** Second Tuesday, 7 p.m. Contact [membership@orindajuniors.org](mailto:membership@orindajuniors.org) for location of meeting. Work together to improve community and build new friendships.

**Orinda Masonic Lodge #122 F&AM.** 9 Altarinda Road, Orinda Masonic Center. 925.254.5211, <https://orindalodge.org>.

**Orinda Rotary.** Wednesdays, 12:15 p.m. at the [SEE CLUBS page 22]



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CLASSIFIEDS

◆ HOLIDAY from page 1

Tree Lighting event, which begins at 5:30 p.m. at the Community Center and Community Park.

Free to the public, this event is held in conjunction with another new event, the

community's first ever Gingerbread House Making Contest, created and sponsored by the Orinda-Tabor Sister City Foundation.

Festivities for the evening include announcements and viewing of Gingerbread House Contest winners, a performance by the Orinda Intermediate School Choir, the Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony, refreshments, activities for youngsters, photo opportunities and more.

"We hope this event becomes an annual occurrence while anticipating learning a lot this year, hopefully leading to bigger and better affairs in the years to come," said Director of Parks and Recreation Todd Trimble.

For more information, visit [www.cityoforinda.org/calendar.aspx?eid=645](http://www.cityoforinda.org/calendar.aspx?eid=645).

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

◆ CLUBS from page 21

Founders' Auditorium, 28 Orinda Way, Guests welcome to join Rotarians. Contact Rodney Lal, president, at [RodneyLal@yahoo.com](mailto:RodneyLal@yahoo.com) or call 925.366.8077.

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

**Orinda/Tábor (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation.** Fourth Thursday, 7 p.m., social, 7:30 p.m. meeting via Zoom. For more information, 925.254.8260. See Calendar for special event listing.

**Orinda Teen Advisory Council.** For information, contact Recreation Coordinator Matt Delmartini at [mdelmartini@cityoforinda.org](mailto:mdelmartini@cityoforinda.org).

**Orinda Woman's Club.** Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. Garden Room of Orinda Library. Email Jean Barnhart at [jeanr.barnhart@gmail.com](mailto:jeanr.barnhart@gmail.com).

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

**Sons in Retirement (SIR).** Lamorinda Branch 174, second Wednesday at 11:30 a.m. For info, call Tyler at 925.963.5741 or Bill at 925.963.0442 or [www.branch174.sirinc2.org](http://www.branch174.sirinc2.org).

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

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**Donate Your Vehicle** to The Orinda Association. Very easy! Call 925.326.5868.

**Orinda Volunteer drivers needed** for one ride per month. Call SAT at 925.402.4506 to set up an appointment.

**Unwanted Eye Glasses** are collected for Lions Club at The Orinda Association office, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda.

◆ RETIREMENT from page 20

periodically attends classes at the Culinary Institute of America. Another took up painting and held a very successful exhibition earlier this year. It was his first exhibition and he is 75. Another keeps working part-time as he says, "It keeps my mind busy." We also have a friend who watches TV all day when not driving his grandkids to and from school and taking them to their sporting events.

When we moved to our new development, I discovered Lynn, a young 80-year-old who set up a robust Block Captain system as part of our emergency preparedness. Her husband works with a non-profit and enjoys golf. Recently, while chatting with a fellow Ham radio enthusiast, I discovered he is a retired doctor. Another is a former pilot! I have met a lot of people who say they want to travel when they retire. Some have invested in RVs or serious camping gear. However, a few keep talking about it and never leave town.

At a recent coffee meet, I noticed a number of folks had a fire department coffee cup. I discovered they volunteer at the local

fire department. I had heard of volunteer fire departments, but not of volunteers at a regular fire department. While hiking one day, I ran into a group of folks who volunteer at East Bay Parks regularly. One of our neighbors regularly drives for Seniors Around Town. A previous boss helps run a Farmers' Market.

I continue to be amazed at the number of different options that exist for retirees to contribute to society and get the intellectual and social benefits work used to provide. Growing up in India, it was hard to imagine all these different options. When our grandparents retired, they – at best – got involved in some religious or charitable organization.

**The last word:** It has been a dozen years since my bride (now of 45 years!) told me she hadn't married me for lunch. She has totally accepted me being home for lunch, but somehow her golf, bridge and stitch-and-bitch sessions find me fending for myself at lunch! Absence makes the heart grow fonder!

S. K. Gupta can be reached at [sk.gupta.us@gmail.com](mailto:sk.gupta.us@gmail.com).

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◆ HOUSING from page 7

Biggs felt the meeting to review the draft was helpful to city staff members.

"The refinements which the City Council made helped provide guidance to staff which we can also share with State HCD as coming from the City Council," said Biggs. "On balance, we believe we have a Housing Element – with hopefully limited additional changes as required by HCD – that can be certified by them after final approval. This should result in Orinda avoiding any possible negative consequences of not meeting State deadlines."

Councilmember Worth, along with city staff, said she feels the frustrations of balancing the state housing requirements while maintaining Orinda's small town charm and what the community wants collectively.

"You know, sometimes what gets frustrating is that 'one size fits all' doesn't

always 'fit all.' So, I think what we've tried to do is to say, okay, how can we accommodate the state's housing requirements and planning requirements?" said Worth.

Worth said this Housing Element draft, along with the DPP, presents a real opportunity for the Orinda community.

"This is what communities across the Bay Area are trying to address," concluded Worth. "In other words, as the retail world changes, how do we continue to have a have a vital, downtown unity? When you think about it, we've done a lot of public investment – the beautiful park, the library, the community center sidewalks – and so we want to be able to have people be able to experience the downtown. The challenge is for cities to deal with state requirements!"

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

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## OBITUARIES

# Long-time Community Advocate Pete Wilson Passes in November

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Executive Editor

A force of nature, community activist and environmentalist, Peter Sedgwick Wilson passed away Nov. 1 at his home in Lost Valley surrounded by family.

An Orinda resident for the past 58 years, Pete was passionate about preserving Gateway Valley when the first developer, Pacific New Wave, proposed a large residential housing development, hotel and golf course

for the 978-acre working cattle ranch.

The original proposal would have impacted a critical wildlife corridor, including putting at risk two endangered species – the Alameda whipsnake and the red-legged frog. It also would have affected acres of wetlands and perennial streams.

To prevent this from happening, Pete became ever vigilant and even sued the City of Orinda under the Brown Act for being denied the right to speak on Gateway at three closed Planning Commission

meetings.

Pete and his wife Amelia (Mimi) helped establish Save Open Space Gateway Valley, which joined with the Sierra Club and Golden Gate Audubon to fight the development. Their successful efforts resulted in a much smaller development and acres of open space for wildlife and hiking trails.

“Pete and Amelia were the driving force to save Gateway Valley,” said long-time Orinda resident and former Mayor Laura Abrams. “People who live in the cul-de-sacs have them to thank for their privacy. If the valley had been totally developed, traffic would be going through the residential neighborhoods to get to Moraga Way.”

Always looking for ways to better his community, Pete also helped establish the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and served on the board for 12 years.

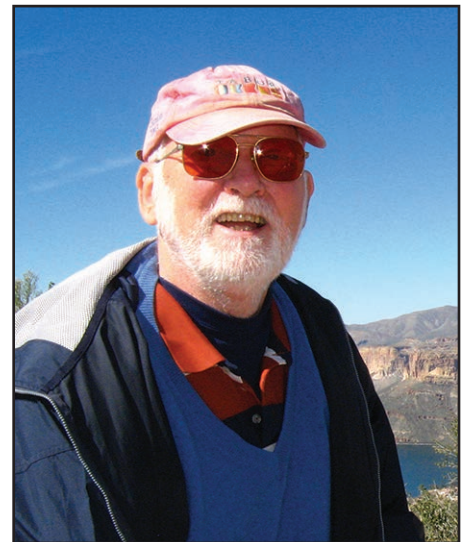
“Pete and Mimi’s legacy to Orinda is Gateway Valley,” said retiring City Councilmember Amy Worth. “And they stayed engaged in their community for a long time. Not that long ago I was talking with them about traffic calming measures for Lost Valley.”

Born in New York City in 1935, Pete graduated from Trinity College in Hartford, CT, before attending the Coast Guard Academy, graduating as a lieutenant and serving primarily in the North Atlantic Ocean.

Joining the insurance industry, Pete moved to Southern California in 1963 before coming to the Bay Area in 1964.

When not advocating for Orinda, Pete loved to travel, and he and Mimi visited close to 100 countries.

“What can I say about my best buddy and co-traveler? In the 49 years of our marriage, we negotiated the wilds of Africa’s Timbuktu, plunged ocean depths, Orinda



COURTESY OF WILSON FAMILY

A 58-year Orinda resident, **Pete Wilson** was instrumental in preserving Gateway Valley and establishing the Moraga Orinda Fire District. A passionate community activist, he passed away at his Lost Valley home surrounded by family and the open space he loved.

politics, a 25-year environmental tangle, supported East Bay Regional Parks District and jumped through endless government hoops to establish MOFD. It was a terrific and satisfying journey for us,” said Mimi Wilson.

Pete is survived by Mimi, daughter Katherine Wilson Dureault, stepdaughters Chrys Randolph and Mary Lou Best, four grandchildren and three great grandchildren. A celebration of life was held at the Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church Nov. 11.

Donations in Pete’s honor can be made to Rescue One Foundation ([www.rescue1foundation.org](http://www.rescue1foundation.org)) or Save Mt. Diablo (<https://savemountdiablo.org>).

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

# Remembering Stephen Arnon, Dedicated Public Health Physician

By THE ARNON FAMILY

Dr. Stephen Soulé Arnon of Orinda died peacefully in his sleep on Aug. 17 at age 75, while on a hiking trip with longtime friends in Wyoming. A brilliant scientist and pioneer in infectious disease research, he spent his entire 45-year career as head of the Infant Botulism Treatment and Prevention Program at the California Department of Public Health, now in Richmond.

Steve was born in Oakland on Oct. 14, 1946, the third of five children. His father Daniel I. Arnon was an eminent professor in what is now the Plant & Microbial Biology Department at U.C. Berkeley and his mother was a librarian and homemaker. After finishing high school in Berkeley and Carmel, Steve’s adventurous spirit led him eastwards to Harvard, where he received his A.B. (1968), his MPH (1972) and his MD (1973).

In 1976, Steve and his colleagues identified a rare new form of botulism, which occurs only in babies under one year of age, now called infant botulism. It’s caused when the spores of the bacterium (*Clostridium botulinum*) is accidentally swallowed by an infant, germinate and produce botulinum toxin in the intestine. The illness can be severe, leading to paralysis, long stays in the ICU and sometimes death.

Steve devoted his entire career to studying all aspects of infant botulism, working with his team to create the world’s only licensed medicine for this disease, a not-for-profit drug he named BabyBIG®.

Treatment with BabyBIG® shortens the average patient’s hospital stay by almost one month; since first introduction in 1992, in total more than a century of hospital stays have been avoided through its use. It has saved the lives of thousands of babies.



COURTESY OF ARNON FAMILY

**Dr. Stephen Soulé Arnon** of Orinda, Oct. 14, 1946 – Aug. 17, 2022.

Steve possessed an abiding love of the wilderness and the mountains and was an ardent conservationist. In the 1990s, he helped save 110 acres in Orinda, which became the Orinda Oaks Open Space Preserve.

An avid mountaineer, he climbed all the 14,000-foot peaks in California and several in the Western United States. One ascent he was most proud of was Mount St. Elias, the second-highest peak in both Canada and the United States.

Not every climb went without a hitch, however – he once got trapped with four others by a blizzard on New Zealand’s Mt. Cook/Aoraki. The group was forced to bivouac in an icy crevasse for a week and was rescued by helicopter.

Steve is survived by his wife Joyce of 37 years and his children Eric and Christina. They, along with innumerable relatives, friends and medical and scientific colleagues, will miss him greatly.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Nature Conservancy.

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## OBITUARIES

# Remembering the Late Laurie Rothermel's Wonderful Life

By MIMI BOMMARITO  
Staff Writer

When longtime Orindan Laurie Rothermel hopped in the car to head to San Francisco International Airport, she remembered her passport but forgot to bid the family pets goodbye. The cats were unconcerned, but for some reason we are all convinced our dogs expect this courtesy. "We have time —" I began.

"Oh, he'll be fine," she reasoned, explaining her adult daughter would soon arrive to pet sit. "Huddy knows I love him."

Rothermel bubbled with anticipation like a flute of champagne — only her passion for her family outranked her passion for travel. She and husband Mark Fillinger, still adorably smitten after 34 years of marriage, embarked on an empty-nesters' delight: a

two-week trip to Portugal and Spain.

Rothermel didn't rush back inside to bid Huddy goodbye because no one, herself included, would have predicted the impending sequence of events. Two days later, on Sept. 23, while enjoying a modest walking tour of a picturesque town near Lisbon, Rothermel suffered a sudden cardiac incident of uncertain origin. Family and friends were stunned as the tragic news rippled back over the Atlantic.

While her sudden passing shattered hearts, in contrast, her life warmed them.

Raised in Sacramento, Rothermel graduated from Foothill High School, followed by the University of California at Davis where she met her future husband. After several years in Manhattan, the couple returned to their California roots, settling in Orinda in 2003.

Following the imaginary "Orinda Mom Handbook," Rothermel happily immersed herself in volunteer activities that enriched her daughters' lives — "room-momming," leading Girl Scout troops, juggling endless Meadow swim parent obligations.

As her daughters advanced in age, they attended Julia Morgan School for Girls in Oakland, an institution the Fillingers passionately believed in, so much so, that Rothermel accepted a job offer to work as their office manager in 2011.

Her career spanned 10 years, her roles expanding to include fundraising, registration management and small-group advising for seventh-graders.

Rothermel and I enjoyed countless dog walks, often struggling with how to define our next chapter. Our children launched, how would we "make it, after all" — like a couple of technology-averse Mary Tyler Moore's with reading glasses, exposing our

greys while flinging our berets skyward — now that we could no longer blame the demands of motherhood for keeping us from our Nobel Prizes.

Why were we so obsessed with accolades? Why isn't our "World's Best Mom" coffee cup enough sometimes?

Let's consult the Jimmy Stewart holiday classic, *It's a Wonderful Life*. It's lasting charm resides within its ultimate message: Good souls have no grasp of the positive impact they make on their community merely by being loving, responsible and considerate humans.

Rothermel was superlative in every aspect of her humanity. And if she's encountered any type of spiritual Check

Point Charlie, our girl sailed through like a Disneyland junkie clutching a Fast-Pass signed by Walt himself.

She attended marches, didn't talk smack about others, shunned social media and insincerity, listened with intent. Like a refreshing craft cocktail, she was the perfect blend of smart and straightforward, infused with delightful humor and garnished with kindness. I would unflinchingly pay an absurd post COVID-19 price tag, plus a generous tip, for her.

Daughter Chloe Fillinger, wrote, "Her abundant wisdom, her effortless passion for improving the lives of others, her sound advice and her pure kindness and goodness

[SEE ROTHERMEL page 25]



TERRY RIGGINS

Laurie Rothermel passed away Sept. 23, while vacationing in Portugal.

## Edward Denny McClure Passes

By THE KAPLAN FAMILY

Edward "Ted" Denny McClure died of heart failure on Saturday morning, Nov. 5. Born May 16, 1947, he was the eldest son of the late Frank and Augusta McClure (longtime Orinda residents) and a Miramonte High School graduate, Class of '65.

After completing his B.S. Degree in Forestry and Conservation at the University of California, Berkeley, he worked as a firefighter and forester for the U.S. Forest Service in national forests near Placerville, CA; Gunnison, CO; and Boise, Idaho. He subsequently became a ski instructor at Boise, Swiss and Austrian ski resorts while traveling extensively throughout Europe.

In his thirties, he began a third career as a computer programmer. He returned to the Bay Area where he completed computer-related coursework, becoming an expert

in C++ and other computer programming languages. He worked for more than two decades as a programmer consultant for the State of California.

A long-term resident of Albany, California, Ted will be remembered for his active lifestyle hiking and biking, his passion for playing and teaching chess and Mexican Train domino games with family and friends and his love for Chinese and Thai food.

As a teen, he enjoyed sailing in an El Toro sailboat on Oakland's Lake Merritt. Later in life, he enjoyed walks along San Pablo Bay.

He is survived by his two sisters, Anne McClure Kaplan (Andrew) of Rancho Mirage, CA, and Julia Del Guzzo (Luciano) of New York City, and his brother, the Rev. Coke McClure (Tamara), of Pocatello, Idaho.

Plans are to celebrate Ted's life at a Memorial Service next April at Canyon Hill Cemetery, Caldwell, Idaho.

Your Orinda team  
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BARBARA KOBSAR



Like other vegetables in the cabbage family, brussel sprouts are an ideal complement for many traditional turkey dinners. Chefs and home cooks alike are finding more creative ways to use these sweet, nutty tasting "little cabbages" packed with nutritional benefits.

Brussel sprouts grow on two to three-foot stalks, topped by a crown of leaves giving the plant the appearance of a small palm tree. Once the leaves begin to yellow, the 50 or more brussel sprouts are ready to be harvested as they mature from the base of the stalk upwards.

Choosing the right brussel sprouts is key to actually enjoying them. Their cabbage-like flavor is overpowering only when they are too mature or stored too long.

Eye the sprouts first – bright green leaves without signs of withering are fresh and best. Leaves should be tightly layered together and feel firm when squeezed. Choose 1 to 1 1/2 inch size sprouts – a few yellow outer leaves are okay and can be trimmed off.

If you find brussel sprouts on the stalk, give them a try. They stay fresh longer than loose sprouts. Set the stalk in some water and cut or twist the sprouts from the stalk



BARBARA KOBSAR  
Nutrition packed "little cabbages," called brussel sprouts have a sweet, nutty taste and are perfect for the holidays.

just before preparing. You'll get a variety of sprout sizes from the stalk, so after preparing, cut the larger sprouts in half, lengthwise.

To prepare sprouts, remove any limp or discolored leaves, trim off the ends and rinse. You can cut an "x" in the stem end of each sprout – some say this ensures more even cooking, while others say it lets in water to make the sprout soggy! I was a fan of the "x" technique, but now leave the sprouts alone.

Simple simmering in a small amount of water for 8 to 10 minutes produces a nice tender sprout. Serve with a little butter and lemon juice and a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese.

I prefer roasting the brussels. This method can convert a brussel sprout hater into a brussel sprout lover.

Simply toss the prepared sprouts onto a baking pan, drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Bake at 400 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes until tender and golden brown around the edges. Ready to serve.

Dress up the sprouts if you're in the mood – drizzle with a bit of balsamic vinegar or lemon juice and toss with Parmesan cheese, thyme and pepitas. Or, one can crisp-up a little prosciutto and mix into the cooked brussel sprouts just before serving.

If you prefer softer vegetables, pour 1/2 cup of water into the pan before baking, cover with foil and bake for 20 minutes. Uncover and continue roasting for 10 to 15 minutes until the sprouts are browned and liquid is evaporated.

Brussel sprouts freeze well. Blanch the prepared sprouts in boiling water for 3 to 4 minutes. Drain well and place in a single layer on a baking sheet to freeze. Once frozen, pack in freezer bags and store for up to 12 months.

The Orinda Farmers' 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 at [OrindaFarmersMarket](https://instagram.com/OrindaFarmersMarket) or call the market's hotline at 925.322.6228.

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

◆ WREATHS from page 4

than 3,100 participating locations – as part of National Wreaths Across America Day.

Hosted by the Acalanes Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) this is a free and public ceremony. The ceremony will include a Presentation of Colors by the VFW Post 8063 Color Guard, military wreath-laying by service members and veterans and comments by emcee, Scott Butler, DAR Regent Mary Carrillo and other dignitaries.

Following the ceremony, wreaths get placed at the graves of nearly 300 veterans who lie at rest. The public is invited to assist Scout Troop 284 place the wreaths as they say each veteran's name out loud to honor the individuals.

Learn more about the event at [www.wreathscrossamerica.org/CA0565](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/CA0565).

Vanessa Crews can be reached at [vcrews@mac.com](mailto:vcrews@mac.com).

◆ ROTHERMEL from page 24

will be missed, every single day."

Older daughter Kiley Fillingger concurred: "My mom was a kind, warm light who loved fiercely and made sure everyone in her life knew it."

Like the baffled George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life*, Rothermel is perhaps equally surprised by the volume of positivity and light she imbued into the lives of everyone who knew her.

A Celebration of Life is forthcoming, most likely Spring, 2023. Mark, Kiley and Chloe Fillingger remain in a state of awe and gratitude for the generous outpouring of support and kindness from the community.

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



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ROTARY

World Polio Day in the City of Orinda



JEFF HEYMAN

On Oct. 24, members of the Rotary Club of Orinda, (L-R) **Sylvia Hua, Susan Farmer, Rodney Lal, John Donnelly, and Yenjean Hwang**, and back row (L-R) **Ally Fattore** (Rotarian and board member of Orinda Chamber of Commerce), **Amy Worth** (Orinda City Councilmember) and **Mike McGill** (board member of Orinda Chamber of Commerce), met at the newly relocated Nation's to raise awareness through a proclamation with City of Orinda as part of Rotary International's mission to eradicate the crippling childhood disease to end polio now. During the Orinda City Council meeting on Nov. 1, Orinda Mayor Dennis Fay declared a Proclamation making Oct. 24, World Polio Day in the City of Orinda and encouraged all citizens to join him and Rotary International in the fight for a polio-free world. The Rotary Club of Orinda has been a proud part of Orinda, Lamorinda, the East Bay and Rotary International for almost 75 years and their work improves lives at both the local and international levels – from helping families in need – to working toward a polio-free world.

◆ CAR TIME from page 6

Prix names such as Ayrton Senna, Michael Schumacher and Sebastian Vettel won their World Drivers' Championships there. The last Championship won in Japan was in 2011 by Vettel, who at the time was with Red Bull Racing.

This year (Oct. 6 – 9) Max Verstappen, with Red Bull Racing, was eligible to win his second Drivers' Championship at Suzuka, if everything fell into place for him and his team. Honda partnered and powering Red Bull Racing was the main sponsor of the Grand Prix. The company hoped its driver, Verstappen, could win the Championship on home ground, just as Senna had accomplished with Honda in the late '80s and early '90s.

A wide online agreement suggests Japanese fans are the "best F1 fans." Spectators arrive at the track sporting team gear; moreover, many show up wearing creative costumes supporting their teams and drivers. The Japanese fans' enthusiasm for the sport, paired with culturally derived respectful natures, supports the widely known "best fans" complement I experienced first-hand.

Days leading up to the race were wet and gloomy, with the exception of a couple

dry spells. Luckily, qualifying was dry, allowing all the drivers to push for better lap times to place higher on the grid for the race.

Of course, on race day it rained the hardest. The driver's parade started dry, but by the time the Prime Minister of Japan gave his event-opening speech, it began to pour. The race started, but the weather took its toll on a few drivers on the first lap.

Visibility and grip were horrible; Carlos Sainz, a notable star, crashed his Ferrari and other drivers and teams took major damage to their cars in the resulting chaos, forcing a red flag. The session stopped for over an hour before the restart, with the race concluding under a clock as opposed to the traditional number of laps.

Verstappen was able to hold the needed P1 (first place), while his teammate Checo clinched P2 as the result of a last lap penalty, granting Verstappen his second World Drivers' Championship at Honda's home race.

I was fortunate enough to attend. The experience was surreal and memorable.

*Xavier Estrada can be reached at [xavier.estrada.freelance@gmail.com](mailto:xavier.estrada.freelance@gmail.com).*



XAVIER ESTRADA

"At the Grand Prix in Suzuka Circuit, Japan, from Oct. 6 – 9, I'm in the pit lane and track side at the F1 Japanese Grand Prix 2022," said **Xavier Estrada**. "Podium finishers: First Place Max Verstappen, Second Place Checo Perez and third place Charles Leclerc."



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LOCAL AUTHOR

# Alison Burns Presents Her Second Book – This One About Orinda

By ANNABELLA BOOTH  
Contributing Writer

Do most residents know how Orinda came to be the city it is today? Author Alison Burns created a book titled *Orinda*, which includes an abundance of photos capturing Orinda’s history.

It informs readers how the town came to be, and the significance behind its birth and history.

*Orinda* highlights facts about the discovery of the town. With over 200 photos dating all the way back to the 1800s, it tells stories of local landmarks and details that may not have been heard before.

“There is a lot of Orinda that we do not know about because it has been taken away, and this book guides you through what used to be in Orinda, and what is now,” said Burns, who moved to Orinda in 2015 from San Diego. “You can see the

history as you drive by and spot what used to be once you know the history behind it.”

Burns shares how it was most interesting finding out much of what was first built decades ago is still standing today.

“Edward Ignacio de Laveaga in 1923 laid out this whole blueprint of what he wanted in this town. He did much in six years, but then the depression hit in 1929, and everything stopped. Much, however, of what he built in the early ‘20s is still here,” said Burns. “On Orinda Way, he decided he would have a firehouse, a garage and the first building, all things he wanted that are still here.”

Burns is also author of the book, *Legendary Locals of Encinitas*. She has lived in places all around the world, from Singapore (for 10 years) to the Netherlands and experienced many cultures. She is currently president of the Orinda Historical

Society.

Burns has worked tirelessly to revamp and rebuild the Orinda Historical Society, which reopens Dec 1, located at 26 Orinda Way next door to The Orinda Association office.

“We want children to know their history. Then they can take that home and tell their parents all about it, and people will be so much more aware of Orinda’s history,” said Burns. “It’s not just knowing where you’re going – you need to know where you’re coming from as well.”

*Orinda* is available for purchase for \$23.99 at the Orinda Historical Society, Orinda Books, The Orinda Association and online at Arcadia Publishing, Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

Annabella Booth can be reached at [annabellabooth@gmail.com](mailto:annabellabooth@gmail.com).



JEFF HEYMAN

Local author Alison Burns holds her new book *Orinda* outside the Orinda Community Center. The book features Orinda’s history.

◆ PEACE from page 10

Sadikman added, “Fast forward four years, I now work at Mindful Littles and Lilah, 11-years-old, comes to help at our service events. Teaching children at a young age how they can help others is so empowering for them. We’ve seen the way our Mindful service experiences restore human connection and encourage compassion again and again. It really touches your heart.”

In early 2016, Gordon said she began experiencing critical gaps in family community service, leading to the creation of the non-profit.

Gordon explained how Mindful Littles got started.

“When my older daughter was almost 5-years-old, I made a commitment to engage in regular volunteerism with my children,” she said. “I found a family volunteering opportunity at a local crisis center. Once a month after my workday, she and I would head to the center to pack rice and beans for those in need.

“I remember feeling stressed sitting in traffic trying to make it to the non-profit site on time for the service project. Often, we were already exhausted when we arrived. Further, the non-profit staff was understandingly overwhelmed having to organize an age-appropriate event for young families.”

Gordon added, “For a crisis center distributing thousands of pounds of food each month to feed hungry community members, it felt more burdensome than helpful to bring our families to serve.”

Gordon said that the change was dramatic: “What stood out to me most was leaving the service project without a full understanding of who we were helping or the meaning behind our work. After having spent my entire career designing customer experiences that deeply engage and delight humans, I realized this disconnection meant we were missing a major opportunity in community service; we were not engaging perhaps the most important audience in compassion, our children. It was then that I decided to take matters into my own hands and began the Mindful Littles journey.”

With the help of local parent volunteers, the first Mindful Littles Service Experience was organized on Oct. 2, 2016, as a grassroots initiative in the founder’s backyard. Fifteen neighborhood Bay Area families gathered to mindfully engage in service – making heart-felt hygiene kits for foster care youth in need. The first project deeply impacted the group. Clearly, according to Gordon the event had planted the seeds for a “compassion movement.”

Gordon said they expanded into new

demographics and communities in 2019.

“Moved deeply by our Peace Kits for Paradise service project, the Paradise Unified School District hired Mindful Littles to bring our compassion training programs to all elementary schools to help children in Butte County cope with the aftermath of a devastating wildfire,” said Gordon. “Our Journey into Paradise reinforced our commitment to help wherever we could.”

Mindful Littles’ mission statement reads, “The mental health crisis happening in our country touches us all. Providing the younger generation with mindfulness, compassion and volunteerism, helps alleviate that crisis. Doing good encourages us to be good.”

Bobbie Dodson can be reached at [bobbiedodson109@gmail.com](mailto:bobbiedodson109@gmail.com).

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## BUSINESS BUZZ

## Business Buzz

## PUTTING A PERSONAL FACE ON LOCAL BUSINESS

ELANA O'LOSKEY



## Saffron Indian Restaurant and Bar Celebrates Fourth Anniversary

Saffron Indian Restaurant and Bar (Saffron) opened in 2018, emphasizing their devotion to food, using light, fresh ingredients, from all parts of India. This passion attracted a loyal staff with an international flair, all of whom are now considered family. Locals who like Indian food have become regulars in the restaurant's Orinda Theatre Square location.

Head Chef Amrit Lal Sharma and his wife Renu Bala Sharma founded Saffron. Today, their son Sachin Kumar Sharma, along with Ravi Kant Pathak (son-in-law to Amrit and brother-in-law to Sachin), manage most of the operations.

The respect and admiration Operational Administrator Pathak has for his fellow staff members shines through when he describes their talents, their loyalty and commitment to keep the menu up to the standards set by Head Chef and mentor, Amrit Sharma. The family now owns a home in Orinda as well as operating Saffron.

According to the National Restaurant Association, more than 110,000 restaurants in the United States shut their doors in 2020 (either temporarily or permanently). In 2022, the Association estimates one in three U.S. restaurants failed.

Pathak, who hails from Punjab, gives credit to how Saffron has flourished during these difficult times: "The spirit and excellence of the staff, mixed with the open, friendly people of Orinda who welcomed us."

Staff members include Anil Kumar Ror from Haryana in Northern India and Martinho da Cunha from London; da Cunha often spells fellow staff members who need a break. Mohammed Sharfudeen, from Sri Lanka, is known for the diversity of cooking methods he brings to Saffron.

Vijay Singh is from India, but his family members are from Mexico. Singh likes to mix Indian food with Mexican spices for an interesting fusion of cultures and flavors.

Senior Chef Rohit Sohpaal has been in the restaurant business since he was 18. Both he and Senior Chef Singh were trained by Head Chef Amrit Sharma.

"Singh and Sohpaal keep the kitchen humming," said Pathak.

Saffron's extensive menu includes 10 varieties of naan (garlic being a local favorite), appetizers, soups and salads, a selection of vegetarian and gluten-free dishes, tandoori grill sizzlers, chicken, lamb, seafood, Biryani, kids' meals, desserts and a full bar.

Locals give rave reviews for their chicken Tikka Masala and basmati rice, fragrant with whole cardamom pods.

Masala is a mixture of spices ground into a paste. At Saffron, eight house-made masalas flavor different dishes, including fish, smoked eggplant, okra curry with mango powder, dahl and chicken dishes. Bright red sun-dried Deggi Mirch chilis, a special strain from India with a deep, smoky flavor, are used in some dishes.

Pathak said, "All Indian restaurants use similar spices – it's just the amount of each spice as well as how it is ground that makes a masala unique."

Their masalas include ginger, mango powder, turmeric, coriander, cumin, ajwain and mustard seeds, fenugreek, saffron, cardamom, cinnamon and black pepper.

For more information, menu, restaurant hours or to make reservations, visit Saffron at [www.saffronorinda.com](http://www.saffronorinda.com). Located at 2 Theatre Square #153, call 925.217.1211 or email [info@saffronorinda.com](mailto:info@saffronorinda.com).

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



(L-R) front, **Martinho da Cunha** and Operational Administrator **Ravi Kant Pathak**, (L-R) back **Anil Kumar Ror**, **Mohammed Sharfudeen**, **Vijay Singh** and **Rohit Sohpaal** at Saffron Indian Restaurant & Bar, which opened in 2018 and despite challenges, is celebrating its fourth anniversary.

## Kibi's Café Brings Traditional Vietnamese Cuisine to Theatre Square

By ANDREA MADISON  
Staff Writer

If you take a stroll into downtown Orinda's Theatre Square, you will find Kibi's Café, a small corner restaurant serving fresh Vietnamese fare. If you find yourself stopping in for a bite, you may even get a chance to chat with the café's owner, Hoang Ho.

The Orinda Kibi's, which occupies 2 Orinda Theatre Square, Suite 151 in the building that once housed the bakery Republic of Cake, is the second location Ho has opened in the East Bay, with a soft opening in Aug. 2022.

The first Kibi's was opened in downtown Walnut Creek in Jan. 2018 and survived the upheaval of COVID-19 and a three-month closure, although Ho admits, "the pandemic hit heavily" for restaurants.

"I feel fortunate to have had the support of the community at the Walnut Creek location during the pandemic," she said. "Without the support of the community, we wouldn't have made it."

Ho emigrated from central Vietnam in 2015, and the food she serves at Kibi's reflects that region's tastes, featuring a balance of freshness and healthiness that she called "the core of Vietnamese culture."

Growing up as a grandchild of farmers, Ho, who was surrounded by fruit and vegetable farms and traditional Vietnamese street food, sees food as a way to connect with the community.

"I wanted to do something on my own; just build it," Ho said of her venture, noting she "started very small" with the Walnut Creek café. She is a single mother of two, with both cafés' namesake being a combination of the nicknames of her daughter and son, respectively.

A balance of rice, vegetables and protein, Ho said, are the three elements that make up Vietnamese cuisine. The menu at the café includes bánh mì sandwiches with a selection of fillings such as grilled chicken and pork; gỏi cuốn, or summer rolls, also with a selection of fillings; and bún, noodle

salads, with a variety of fresh vegetables and meats.

Also available are vegan and vegetarian food options, plus traditional Vietnamese coffee, house coffee and Thai iced tea. The menu board at the Orinda location notes more options are coming soon.



Kibi's Café features traditional Vietnamese cuisine. **Hoang Ho**, the owner of Kibi's Café, named the restaurant after the nicknames for her daughter Ki and her son Bi.

Ho spoke of the rise in food prices because of the pandemic, saying it has been tough to balance the increase in food prices with menu prices. Quality remains top priority at Kibi's, with Ho deciding against using ingredients such as prechopped vegetables for convenience.

"That way, we can maintain the consistency of the freshness," she said, admitting the behind-the-scenes environment of a restaurant involves hard work due to the many different aspects of the business.

Ingredients such as aioli, pickles, dipping sauces and meats are "proudly and exclusively homemade," as noted on the Kibi's Café website. Customers can use the site to preorder their food from either location.

Kibi's Café in Orinda is open Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, closed on Sundays.

Ho emphasized her happiness with the new Orinda café.

"I feel very fortunate to have this space," she said.

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