



THE ORINDA NEWS

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MOFD's Residential Chipper Program to Return Mid September

By PAUL KILDUFF
Staff Writer

Orinda's popular residential wood chipping program, put on hold for the summer, will return as early as Sept. 15.

The program was halted June 15 to allow the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) to have its four full-time fire mitigation crew focus on property inspections designed to eliminate fire hazards, such as trees overhanging houses and overgrown shrubbery, according to MOFD board President Steven Danzinger.

However, reaction to stopping the free service for the summer months was not well received by politicians and residents.

"The City of Orinda was very disappointed in MOFD's decision to stop the chipper program over the summer. It has been a huge help in encouraging residents to clean up their properties to help with

fire prevention," said Orinda Mayor Darlene Gee.

Resident Melanie Light, chair of the Orinda Firewise Council who writes fire safety articles in this newspaper, said the chipper program was put on hold because the three board members who voted against it are in the back pockets of the firefighter's union.

"It was voted down in a block vote by the directors whose election campaigns were funded by the firefighters union: Steven Danziger, Michael Donner and Greg Baitx," said Light.

However, Danzinger, who cast the deciding vote, said catering to the interests of firefighters, and possibly hiring more of them with chipper funds, had nothing to do with the program's hiatus.

"They've got two more years on their contract," said Danzinger. "We are com-

[SEE CHIPPER page 5]



KATHY ENZERINK

Residents must hire a private company, like this one, until the Moraga-Orinda Fire District's free service returns.

Memory Care, Montessori School at Wilder Get Planners' OK

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

Countryhouse Memory Care, a 38-bed facility, and Montessori Impressions Academy passed muster from the Planning Commission July 14, and barring any appeals, general use permits will be issued.

Jatinder Kaur, former owner of Fountainhead Montessori in Orinda, plans to occupy Studio 4 at the Wilder Arts and Garden Center weekdays from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Maximum student capacity is 30 in addition to four teachers. Kaur received praise from several parents whose youngsters attended her school in the past.

"This is a huge benefit in our community," said Susan Wright.

Wilder homeowner Kathy Finch wanted to make sure resident children would have access to the adjacent playground while school was in session. "Wilder did not know about this," she said. "This is why you don't

[SEE WILDER page 12]

School Boards Develop Hybrid Plan But Classes Must Be Virtual

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

Students head back to school this month, without leaving home. All classes will be taught virtually to begin the school year.

Miramonte opens Aug. 11 followed by the elementary and middle schools Aug. 13. Monday is flex day in both districts. The big unknown is when teachers and students will meet face-to-face in the classroom.

Based on COVID-19 allowances and restrictions as of mid-July, the Orinda Union School District (OUSD) Board of Directors initially adopted hybrid learning plans for the start of school, but all that changed when Gov. Gavin Newsom mandated Contra Costa County schools switch to distance learning.

"We needed to proceed with imperfect information," said Orinda Board of Trustees President Cara Hoxie.

On July 14, the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) Board opted to begin with distance learning.

The OUSD distance learning plans follow hybrid models which can smoothly transition to in-class study.

Elementary students will be placed in

small Group A and B cohorts for morning classes, switching between teacher and independent learning. When Group A is receiving "essential academic instruction" from the teacher, Group B has independent work time. Afternoons allow small live groups to meet virtually and specialist time for art, music and physical education.

Students at Orinda Intermediate School will follow the Session Cycle Model, attending teacher-led classes in the morning or afternoon, with independent work time when not in class. Placed in small cohorts, each group will be taught two subjects, four days a week, for three weeks. Then the cohort rotates to two new subjects, again taught for three weeks and finally the last rotation to fill out the six-subject curriculum.

At the high school, full distance learning taught by Miramonte teachers begins Aug. 11. In-person learning opportunities will be phased in when allowed. County public health data and other factors will be reviewed and assessed Sept. 2 for potential transition to blended learning.

When planning for in-class learning in

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July 4 Fun



Lucy Keene, above, decked out like other Orindans to celebrate the shelter-in-place Fourth of July. The Orinda Association this year came up with a host of activities to encourage residents to celebrate safely, including going all out with decorations and submitting photos to an online gallery. See who topped the list on Page 7.

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NEWS

Local, National Candidates Emerge as Election Deadline Approaches

SALLY HOGARTY
Executive Editor

While Major League Baseball navigates a delayed, truncated season, the playing field of local, state and federal politics has barely begun training camp as old timers and new talent announce their intentions to run for office.

Filing for city council, school board, fire district and like entities began July 13 and continues through Aug. 7. If an incumbent in a race decides not to run, the filing period extends until Aug. 12.

In Orinda, the city council has two members up for re-election: Darlene Gee and Inga Miller. Both have decided to seek re-election.

Major issues for Gee include downtown revitalization, Orinda's roads and drains as well as fire protection. "There are lots of important things in progress right now, and I'd like to see them through," said Gee. "Fire prevention is so important, and we're just getting started on additional ways to keep our community safe. I want to keep pushing forward on our downtown as well. It's really important for our community in the long run."

Miller said it is a "great honor" to serve in her hometown. "The biggest thing now

is keeping everyone connected during this trying time," she said. "It's a challenge to stay in touch with our neighbors and keep them safe."

Fire prevention is a top priority for Miller, who said the community has come to accept Orinda's vulnerability. "People are learning about things they can do to help make their homes and gardens more fire safe, and we as a city need to support that," Miller said.

She also noted the importance of renovating the downtown area. "I remember as a youngster growing up here how lively the Village area was. We need to find a way to get that back while retaining Orinda's charm."

As of press deadline, July 21, no challengers had pulled papers to run for City Council.

With COVID-19 requiring a new game plan for education, the Orinda Union School District (OUSD) will require inventive strategies from its board as educators grapple with a combination of at-home and in-class learning models.

Incumbents Cara Hoxie and Hillary Weiner have decided to run again for the OUSD Board of Trustees. "I really like my job and being of service to our community. My priority right now is getting our kids

back to school and our teachers back in the classroom as safely as possible," Hoxie said. "What's going on right now isn't normal, and it won't be for a while as we deal with this pandemic."

Weiner said educating students during the pandemic while keeping students, teachers and staff safe, is a top priority. "Orinda schools are in the midst of an incredibly uncertain time, with severe budget constraints, education challenges during a pandemic, ongoing concerns about racial and social injustice, continuing safety concerns as fire season approaches, and many other issues. I want to continue the work that the current board has been doing, alongside the incredible team of district leaders, teachers, staff and community members."

[SEE ELECTIONS page 13]



DAVID DIERKS
Darlene Gee (L) and Inga Miller are seeking re-election to the Orinda City Council in November.

Comment on Housing Plan Due Aug. 10

By SALLY HOGARTY
Executive Editor

Housing remains a critical priority for California with more than 100 housing-related bills proposed at the beginning of the year. While that number has since been reduced substantially, there is still a myriad of proposals winding their way through the State Legislature with any pertaining to COVID-19 taking priority.

"It's quite a confusing array of legislation," said Mayor Darlene Gee. "SB474 would eliminate building any new housing in a high-fire zone while SB1120 would virtually eliminate single-family housing in favor of multi-family dwellings. That's the one that upsets me the most."

While Sacramento struggles with complicated and often contradictory legislation, local residents have the opportunity to guide the growth of the Bay Area's nine-county region by commenting on a long-range plan being developed by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG).

Plan Bay Area 2050 includes 25 proposed strategies that could influence the way people live, work and travel in the Bay Area over the next generation. The final blueprint is scheduled to be adopted this fall with an environmental analysis taking place during the winter. Scheduled for adoption in the summer of 2021, the plan attempts to integrate transportation, housing, the environment and the economy.

While the plan pinpoints policies and investments necessary to advance the goal of a more affordable and connected Bay Area, it neither funds specific infrastructure projects nor

[SEE HOUSING page 4]

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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President
Preservation and Perseverance



Carlos Baltodano

The pandemic has not only impacted our lives and our health, it has had a drastic impact on our local businesses. Most of Orinda's restaurants have been creative by offering meal pick up, delivery and even providing outside seating.

You can order a pizza from Zamboni's, or have a meal outside Europa, Fourth Bore or Shelby's. Not every business is able to accomplish this, and one that has not been able to open at all is the iconic Orinda Theatre.

Contra Costa County is not allowing any theater to open any time soon. Without patrons and ticket sales, our local theater is deeply in trouble. It appears the theater will not open this month or next; it may not be until October or November. Even then, it will be under specific health restrictions.

At the start of the pandemic, the theater's proprietors, Derek Zemrak and Leonard Pirkle, started a GoFundMe campaign to save the precious landmark. The goal has recently been raised to \$165,000 to cover the fixed costs while the theater remains closed. These costs average \$15,000 to \$18,000 a month and include rent, utilities, insurance and equipment maintenance.

In the past 10 years, Zemrak and Pirkle have expanded the theater's community involvement and offered live performances through the Cabaret Series, free monthly movies and an annual film festival. Through

these efforts they have given the theater higher visibility and Orindans a place to go for good entertainment.

As of mid-July, more than 321 people had generously given to the GoFundMe campaign, and your participation and investment would be greatly appreciated.

"Everyone is going through extremely difficult times," Zemrak said. "The Orinda Theatre has been a historic part of the city and we need your help to thrive together."

He is asking supporters to go to the Orinda Theatre GoFundMe website and donate at least \$12, the price for one ticket, or make a larger donation.

Fire officials have made it clear Orinda is at high risk in the event of a fire. Fire safety is a top priority in the city and towards this end the City Council has formed a sub-committee to work with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) and other Lamorinda cities to coordinate efforts.

A Firewise Council, a consortium of leaders from 13 Orinda Firewise groups working on prevention efforts, is working with MOFD and other officials. The council's objective is to reduce the risk of wildfire in our neighborhoods and prepare for evacuations.

Our neighborhood, like others, has been organized as a Firewise community. Each area designates block captains to engage

[SEE PRESIDENT page 7]

Registration Open for Classic Car Tour

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

Ladies and gentlemen, crank the handle, turn the key or push the button. It's time to start your engines and take the 2020 Orinda Classic Car Tour.

Touted as the largest fundraising event for the Seniors Around Town free-ride program, the annual car show must go on, organizers said, but not the way it has in the past.

Instead of an event where people and cars mingle, this year's physical distancing version will involve more than 100 cars, dating back to the 1920s, following a prescribed, 45-minute route along major roads.

Still fine-tuning details, co-chair Diane Lautz said the plan is to have a group of 20 cars, with a lead car, departing Orinda Way in five-minute intervals beginning at 10:30 a.m.

The Dancing with the Cars party that typically accompanies this event is cancelled this year.

Registration is \$75 for vehicles and \$50 for motorcycles, which includes a box lunch at the end of the tour. To register, visit www.OrindaCarShow.com. The event is presented by Orinda Motors, organized by The Orinda Association and sponsored by a host of local businesses.

A link on Zoom is planned for real-time viewing in addition to photos and a video of the start of the tour for a future fundraising event. Both will be hosted by Steve Harwood, known around town as the voice of Orinda.

"Our goal is to keep owners, drivers and the cars safe so we invite everyone to get an up front view from their driveway Saturday morning, Sept. 12," said Lautz. "In lieu of making a donation at the car show, as in the past, we welcome online donations to support SAT and all its services."

Donations may be made at www.orindaassociation.org.

Kathy Enzerink can be reached at kathy@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
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Every Car Has a Story

My 16-year-old self in front of my first car, a 1960 Ford Galaxie.

My girlfriends and I had such fun "cruising" down Main Street in this beauty!

Sally Hogarty

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EDITORIAL

Editorial

Wishing the Best to One of Our Own

As a small nonprofit community newspaper, *The Orinda News* relies on our loyal advertisers, our supportive readers and our dedicated staff. Over the years, we have been fortunate to attract a wonderful group of local writers to bring you the news and events in your community but, much too soon, we must say goodbye to one of them.

Our editor Simar Khanna has accepted the position of managing editor of a San Jose nonprofit online news organization. This will be her last issue as editor of *The Orinda News*.

Simar began her position with us in February, 2019, bringing a wealth of experience from her years at the *East Bay Times*

and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. During her year and a half with *The Orinda News*, she enlivened our online presence and print edition with her many new ideas and innovations.

Her expertise, hard work and sense of humor will be missed. I personally will miss our many conversations and problem-solving sessions. While it's been wonderful having someone to bounce ideas off and discuss strategies with, I'm very happy for her new opportunity – as long as she doesn't mind a late night call every now and then!

All of us at *The Orinda News* wish Simar the best in her new position. Her employers are very lucky to have her!

– Sally Hogarty, Executive Editor



Letters to the Editor

Problems with Proposed Tax

Regarding the possibility of a new one percent sales tax on our November ballot, there are several problems that make such a tax very questionable at this time.

The proposal is to have the tax in place for 20 years; the expected revenues amount to approximately \$2.4 million annually, for a total of \$48 million, or \$63 million over 20 years if adjusted for 3 percent inflation.

At the June 30 City Council meeting, however, only \$3 million of these revenues were allocated to fire prevention, which most Orindans feel is the city's most pressing need; public storm drains will receive \$10 million.

That leaves \$35 million "to be determined." The city has expressed a desire to use revenues for infrastructure, such as road maintenance. Once again, such maintenance would benefit 80 percent of the city on public residential roads and leave out the 20 percent on private residential roads, even though all residents would be paying this tax (\$7,000 per household over 20 years).

Most of our private roads are private only because the city requires them to be. Additionally, the present sales tax (expiring in 2023) and the road bond issue (expiring in 2037) will have cost private road residents \$12,000 per household.

Importantly, a general sales tax doesn't require the city to dedicate revenues to any specific use, which means the city can at any time change its mind.

A safer way to fund fire prevention is not to rely on a general sales tax that might or might not fund it. We need a small fire prevention parcel tax (\$100 annually?) for a few (not 20) years.

Finally, the city must recognize the inequity of a general tax on all residents when it specifically eliminates 20 percent of its citizens from receiving the same benefits

that 80 percent will enjoy.

– Kathleen Finch

Equal Pay, Unequal Say

All Orindans pay their share of taxes for the safety and infrastructure maintenance of the city. Therefore, all Orindans should have equal say on how the funds are spent. But the City Council has lately totally ignored the voices of residents who live on private roads on how to spend the money equitably.

In the last meeting, the council received 58 letters voicing opinions on this matter, out of which 56 opposed on how the tax money is being allocated to repair all the roads in Orinda. The mayor did not even acknowledge receipt of the letters. Equal voice? Hardly.

What is puzzling and annoying is that the City Council is ignoring the fact that many residents who live on public roads utilize private roads as they go about their business, and vice versa.

What do we want?

1. Be heard fairly.
2. A portion of the taxes be allocated to repairing and maintaining private roads, which we all use.
3. A long-term solution for all roads for the betterment of Orinda be achieved collectively.

Remember, you don't want a potential buyer of your house driving through a non-maintained pothole-filled road, private or public.

– Alnoor Koorji

◆ HOUSING from page 2

ects nor changes local policies. Cities and counties retain all local land use authority.

"It's really important for people to give their input into the plan," said Vice Mayor Amy Worth, who also has been an MTC

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commissioner since 2007. "Under federal law, we are required to do regional transportation plans and under state law, we are responsible for presenting regional housing needs. Plan Bay Area combines these two entities into one."

According to Worth, Plan Bay Area is in the early stages with its transportation committee currently putting together the draft transportation plan followed by housing later in August or September.

"Following the draft plans, an Environmental Impact Report will be done. ABAG should be voting on the housing component around August 2021 and by January 2022, cities will receive the number of housing units allotted to them," Worth said.

Cities then have the often daunting task of making sure they have zoning

in place to accommodate the allocated numbers.

The public comment period for Plan Bay Area 2050 continues through Aug. 10. By going to www.planbayarea.org/2050-plan/blueprint/blueprint-public-comment, residents can find out more about the plan's draft strategies and provide feedback.

MTC and ABAG have been holding virtual meetings through Zoom as well as Telephone Town Hall meetings. The Zoom meeting for Contra Costa County was held July 20. Remaining Town Hall meetings are 2 - 4 p.m. Aug. 1 (Spanish) and 4 - 6 p.m. Aug. 6 (English). To join, call 877-229-8493 and use access code 119791.

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

Send letters to: Editor, *The Orinda News*, P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563, or email to editor@theorindanews.com.
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For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 (jill@aspenconsult.net), Elana O'Loskey at 925-984-1751 (elanao@mac.com) or Kathy Enzerink at 252-626-2109 (kathy@theorindanews.com). The deadline for the September issue is **August 8, 2020**.

NEWS

MOFD Begins Fire Inspections: Here's What to do if You Get a Citation

By MELANIE LIGHT
Contributing Writer

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) has been out and about inspecting homes and issuing citations.

If you get one, don't worry. There is no fine and MOFD wants to work with you on this. If you get estimates for the work which are out of reach, MOFD is willing to work out a plan for getting it done.

Here is the process for a fire code violation citation for people who just don't want to do the work or who do not call MOFD to work out a plan.

If a property owner receives an assessment, the homeowner has 30 days to remedy the violations, after which a MOFD inspector will check to see if the work is done. If the work has not been done, the homeowner will receive a Notice to Abate letter and will have another 15 days to do the work. A re-inspection will be performed

after the 15 days.

If the work has not been completed to fire-code standards, an abatement order will be sent by mail to the owner of record and be placed on the property.

If the violation is still not remedied, a lien hearing will be scheduled and be held at a regular MOFD board meeting. If the work is started at any time before the hearing, the lien process will be stopped.

If the property owner fails to comply with the fire code the following year, that property is marked as being a seasonal nuisance and in subsequent years, MOFD will simply perform the work and assess the costs to the owner in the form of a lien.

If code violations are abated by MOFD and a lien is placed on the property, no interest is charged and the lien will not affect the owner's credit. The lien does not have to be paid until the home sells.

The new fire code will require a home to

be in compliance before a sale is completed. So the excess fuel is going to have to be removed, one way or the other.

Given that a home with unmitigated fuel is a wildfire hazard, potentially life-threatening to its neighbors and can affect the insurance premiums of neighbors, it makes sense to get the work done now.

And what is the most important work to do now?

Ideally, it is to remove pine and eucalyptus trees and clear out the brush and fire-ladder plants, leaving an oak savannah. It turns out that oak trees are not that combustible and there are fire science studies to show that an oak tree canopy doesn't make a wildfire worse.

Pine trees and eucalyptus trees contribute

to a wildfire: pine trees have pitch which is basically like lighter fluid and eucalyptus tree oil forms a gas at high temperature which explodes, sending embers far beyond the site of the fire.

After everything is cleared out, you will have a lot of bare dirt, perfect for a fire-resistant ground cover. FiresafeMarin has a list of 24 ground covers as well as a wonderful section about firescaping in general. To learn more, go to <https://firesafemarin.org/plants/fire-smart/advanced-search/41>.

Melanie Light is chair of the Orinda Firewise Council, a consortium of leaders from 13 Firewise groups working on prevention efforts. She can be reached at info@melanielight.com.

◆ CHIPPER from page 1

mitted to true fire mitigation. We want the community to be as fire safe as possible. It has nothing to do with politics."

According to Danzinger, the main reason the chipper program was put on hold was because it had become too popular and MOFD could not afford to run it and do inspections during the summer months. For 2020, MOFD budgeted \$33,000 for chipping and spent \$50,000. The chipping budget when the program resumes is \$100,000, Danzinger said.

He also points out that two main sources of income for MOFD besides property taxes – fees for ambulance transports and home inspections for new homes and remodels – are down significantly. This is due to people not wanting to go to the hospital because of COVID-19 and a slowdown in house building and remodeling, also due to the pandemic.

MOFD ambulances also respond to traffic accidents along Highway 24, but with less driving there are fewer accidents as well.

In 2021 it's projected that MOFD will generate \$521,000 from ambulance rides, down from \$1.8 million in 2020, and \$74,000 on home inspections, down from \$400,000.

As for MOFD having a \$1 million surplus that could have been tapped to retain the chipper program this summer, Danzinger admits that's true. But he points out that the district is looking at a \$1.5 million shortfall next year and will have to dip into

its rainy-day fund to cover the difference.

One aspect of the chipper program Danzinger believes residents don't fully understand is the number of moving parts involved in implementing just one chipper appointment. "It isn't just sending the chipper out there and everything is done," said Danzinger.

"We want the community to be as fire safe as possible. It has nothing to do with politics."

– Steve Danzinger

First there has to be an inspection of the debris to be picked up by one of MOFD's fire mitigation staffers – no tree stumps or other large debris are allowed. And it's not just for one resident — four are supposed to go in at a time.

Once the debris to be chipped gets the okay, then the wood has to be brought to the curb by residents – MOFD is not going into backyards. Inevitably, this causes neighbors who were not included to add their own stuff to the chipper pile, some of it not allowable, or to complain about not being included.

After chipping is completed, the chips are supposed to be "broadcast" back to the property where they originated, but many residents don't want them messing up their lawns, etc. In this case, MOFD has to bring a truck out to collect the chips and find a place to deposit them. For now,

[SEE CHIPPER page 12]



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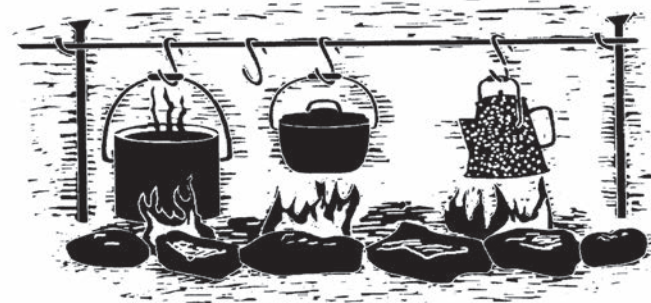
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A Message from the Bahá'ís of the United States



The Bahá'ís of the United States join our fellow-citizens in heartfelt grief at the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and so many others whose lives were suddenly taken by appalling acts of violence. These heartbreaking violations against fellow human beings, due only to the color of their skin, have deepened the dismay caused by a pandemic whose consequences to the health and livelihoods of people of color have been disproportionately severe. This has come to pass against a backdrop of longstanding racial injustice in virtually every aspect of American life. It is clear that racial prejudice is the most vital and challenging issue we face as a country.

Yet, amidst these tragedies, there are also signs of hope. Countless citizens have arisen to proclaim the truth that we are one nation, and to demand specific actions to address the pervasive inequities that for too long have shaped our society. We have remembered who we aspire to be as a people, and are determined to make a change for the better. This moment beckons us to a renewed commitment to realize the ideal of *E Pluribus Unum*—out of many, one—the very ideal upon which America was founded.

To create a just society begins with recognition of the fundamental truth that humanity is one. But it is not enough simply to believe this in our hearts. It creates the moral imperative to act, and to view all aspects of our personal, social, and institutional lives through the lens of justice. It implies a reordering of our society more profound than anything we have yet achieved. And it requires the participation of Americans of every race and background, for it is only through such inclusive participation that new moral and social directions can emerge.

Whatever immediate results might come from the current demonstrations, the elimination of racism will require a sustained and concerted effort. It is one thing to protest

against particular forms of injustice. It is a far more profound challenge to create a new framework for justice. Our efforts can only succeed when we learn to build relationships with each other based on sincere friendship, regard, and trust, which, in turn, become pillars for the activities of our institutions and communities.

It is essential for us to join hands in a process of learning how to create models of what we want to see in every dimension of American life, as we learn to apply the principle of oneness through practical engagement and experience. To this end, we offer the following thoughts.

An essential element of the process will be honest and truthful discourse about current conditions and their causes, and understanding, in particular, the deeply entrenched notions of anti-Blackness that pervade our society. We must build the capacity to truly hear and acknowledge the voices of those who have directly suffered from the effects of racism. This capacity should manifest itself in our schools, the media, and other civic arenas, as well as in our work and personal relations. This should not end with words, but lead to meaningful, constructive action.

There are already significant efforts underway to learn how to create models of unity in neighborhoods and communities throughout the nation. Bahá'ís have been persistently engaged in such efforts for many years. The aim is not unity in sameness—it is unity in diversity. It is the recognition that everyone in this land has a part to play in contributing to the betterment of society, and that true prosperity, material and spiritual, will be available to us all to the degree that we live up to this standard. We should earnestly discover what is being done, what truly helps to make a difference, and why. We should share this knowledge throughout the country as a means of inspiring and assisting the work of others. If we do this, we could soon find ourselves

in the midst of a mass transition toward racial justice.

Religion, an enduring source of insight concerning human purpose and action, has a key role to play in this process. All faith communities recognize that we are essentially spiritual beings. All proclaim some version of the “Golden Rule”—to love others as we do ourselves. Take, for example, the following passage from the Bahá'í Scriptures in which God addresses humankind:

Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest.

To understand and firmly believe that we are all children of God provides us with access to vast spiritual resources, motivating us to see beyond ourselves and to work steadily and sacrificially in the face of all obstacles. It helps to ensure that the process is consistent with the goal to create communities characterized by justice. It gives us the faith, strength, and creativity to transform our own hearts, as we also work for the transformation of society.

We believe that the tribulations now encompassing much of the world are the symptoms of humanity's failure to understand and embrace our essential oneness. The interrelated threats of climate change, gender discrimination, extreme wealth and poverty, unfair distribution of resources, and the like, all stem from this deficiency and can never be resolved if we do not awaken to our dependence upon each other. The world has contracted to a neighborhood, and it is important to appreciate that

what we do in America impacts not only our own country, but the entire planet.

We should also never forget that the richness of our diversity, and our founding ideals of liberty and justice, attract the eyes of the world to us. They will be influenced by what we achieve, or fail to achieve, in this regard. It is not an exaggeration to say that the cause of world peace is linked to our success in resolving the issue of racial injustice.

The oneness of humanity is the foundation of our future. Its realization is the inevitable next stage in our life on this planet. We will replace a world society based upon competition and conflict, and driven by rampant materialism, with one founded upon our higher potential for collaboration and reciprocity. This achievement will mark the universal coming of age of the human race. How soon we achieve this, and how easily, will depend upon the commitment we demonstrate to this cardinal principle.

We have come to a moment of great public awareness and rejection of injustice. Let us not lose this opportunity. Will we commit to the process of forming “a more perfect union”? Will we be guided by “the better angels of our nature” to choose the course of wisdom, of courage, and of unity? Will we choose to truly become that “city upon a hill” to serve as inspiration to all humanity? Let us then join hands with each other in commitment to the path of justice. Together we can surely achieve this.

Bahá'u'lláh said: “So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.” May that light grow brighter with every passing day.

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AROUND TOWN

Fourth of July – Orinda Style

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

Orindans decorated porches, fences, staircases, mailboxes, themselves and their pets July 4 in celebration of Independence Day.

Old Glory was everywhere. Decorated cars were espied along Orinda Way, horns honking, everyone waving.

Andy Radlow, “The Parade Guy,” rode his festive bicycle along what is typically the entire parade route.

“Turns out I was a little sentimental and decided to make it a parade of one,” he said. “Does this count to keeping the parade alive even during COVID-19, 2020?”

The Orinda Association’s Fourth of July co-chairs, Diane Lautz and Bill Waterman, acknowledged those who sent entries to a photo gallery, which may be viewed at www.OrindaParade.com.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pretty as a picture, **Tess Morehouse** is prepared for a virtual parade.

Best of the best photos were submitted by Mary Anne Anderson, Steve Anderson, John and JoAnn Cahill, Friends of Wagner Ranch Nature Area from Mallika Dandamudi, Elle Hoffnagel, Joel Jackson, Rebecca Bauer-Kahan family from Shawn Kumagai, Patricia Keene, Bobbie Landers and the Landers family, Carol Morehouse, Barbara Nestal, Lisa Violet, Marie Waterman and Jim Wiltshire.



KATHY ENZERINK

Red, white and blue bunting adorns balconies near Theatre Square.

“Stay tuned for 2021,” said Lautz. “Plans are already underway to make it the Best Hometown Parade ever. And, we’ll be celebrating the 70th anniversary of The Orinda Association. Mark your calendars.”

Kathy Enzerink can be reached at kathy@theorindanews.com.



KATHY ENZERINK

A woman in a patriotic outfit strolls through Theatre Square July 4.

◆ PRESIDENT from page 3

other neighbors on fire safety and potential evacuations. The aim is to share information, emails and evacuation notices. It is also important to identify any vulnerable person who may need assistance.

The first thing to do is sign up to receive emergency alerts from the Contra Costa County Sheriff’s Office at <https://cwsalerts.com>.

Also, please take the time to view the safety and wildlife preparedness video on the Orinda Association website at <https://orindaassociation.org>.

Whether it is the iconic theater or beautiful outdoor spaces, let’s join efforts to protect these treasured resources.

Carlos Baltodano can be reached at cbaltldc@comcast.net.

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ARTS

Galleries: Orinda in 2D, Our Feathered Friends, Dazzling Porcelain

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

For months, the Lamorinda Arts Council has been scheduling exhibits at the Orinda Gallery with the hope shelter-in-place orders would be relaxed. This month there is a remote chance art could be on the walls and in the cabinets at the library but given the COVID-19 numbers, the council has pivoted and is presenting a virtual gallery through photographs and bespoke videos by the artists.

Presenting photography by the Boscoe family, Orinda in 2D by Lance Jackson and high fire porcelain by Jacqueline Proulx, the council has asked the artists to create a video of their exhibit in addition to directing people to their websites and providing photographs.

The expression "birds of a feather flock together" applies to the Boscoe family of Orinda. Each member is showing bird photographs of widely different species.

All use a Panasonic Lumix DC-FZ80, which they describe as a good all-around birding camera as it has a decent zoom but is still light enough to carry. Maggie Boscoe is also the council's gallery curator.

George Boscoe raises exotic parrots. Venus, a talkative female blue-fronted Amazon parrot has accompanied him more than once to artist receptions in the Library Gallery. George Boscoe's most recent bird expedition took him to the Tambopata Macaw Project in the southern Amazon basin in the Peruvian region of Madre del Dios.

Maggie Boscoe's theme for her bird photographs is "The Beauty of Birds." Perhaps the word exotic could be inserted as her photos are either from Costa Rica, Africa or the Galapagos Islands. Like her daughter Sara, Maggie's interest in photographing birds began on a family trip to Costa Rica. Next, she brought her birding camera to Africa where she photographed

exotic birds only to be found in that locale.

Before she knew it, she was on her way to the Galapagos Islands because that's where she could find the blue-footed booby. For non-birders, the bluer the male booby bird's webbed feet are, the more attractive he is to potential mates. The male's wing span is about five feet and they live an average of 17 years in the wild. Her 8" x 10" photo proves she found him.

Upon returning home from Costa Rica to Los Angeles, Sara Boscoe Bain discovered L.A. County is a birders paradise because of the diversity of species matched by varied topography. The 8" x 10" photo, *Wood Duck, Franklin Canyon, Los Angeles*, is a great example of Bain's skill at capturing one of the few moments when this active bird remained still. View her virtual exhibit at <https://youtu.be/lKIJ9uTxpoU>.

Jackson, of Orinda, has been drawing and painting since childhood. He trained as a painter/designer at Washington University and Rhode Island School of Design. During his 15 years in print journalism, illustration and design at the *S.F. Chronicle* and *Examiner* "he was among the nation's first to use the Macintosh as a creative, expressive drawing tool," according to Saginaw Valley State University reviewer Mike Moser. Moser reviewed Jackson's 2019 exhibit entitled, "Narrative."

"My father used to draw caricatures, which we all found enjoyable; I continue with it since it is a skill requiring practice. Something akin to playing music; it is habit forming as well," said Jackson. A freelance artist and illustrator, he is also an adjunct professor at both UC Berkeley Extension and City College of San Francisco. By all accounts Jackson is known for pushing the limits where technology and creativity meet.

His focus for this virtual exhibit is 10-plus 20" x 16" paintings of current Orinda details such as flowers from Safeway, fast food examples, two landscapes and the Orinda Theatre.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Maggie Boscoe's Blue Footed Boobie, Galapagos Islands.

"I like to think that my work remains fresh depicting recognizable places and current events. Of course I could be wrong. 'Everything has been done before and yet everything is new,'" he said.

Jackson adds he is interested in drawing and painting portraits. "Drawing is my way of communicating," he said. "The image is a possible form of dialogue, the beginning of a conversation."

Learn more about his work at www.lancejackson.net.

Proulx of Walnut Creek grew up in Quebec, Canada, and has been in love with ceramics since she was 16. At about age 50, when she was close to retirement, she had her own studio in Montreal. She then moved to the Island of Orleans (*Île d'Orléans*) on the Saint Lawrence River about three miles from Quebec City. She got organized there in her studio on the

[SEE GALLERIES page 9]

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ARTS

◆ GALLERIES from page 8

beach and did raku and all kinds of firings, mostly mid-range. When her two grandchildren were born she moved to Walnut Creek to be near them and her daughter.

Proulx's series, *Cobalt Blue Bowl with Flowers*, are high-fired porcelains with a hand-painted underglaze applied in the manner of watercolors. The cobalt blue underside of the bowls makes the translucent white interior field sparkle. The white field sets off her hand-painted poppy-like petals which sing around the sides of the bowl.

View her video which gives you an idea of what these look like, <https://youtu.be/5zL-U6eYH80>. For more of her work go to www.clayandfire.org.

Wilder: Paintings in Pursuit of Beauty and Spirit

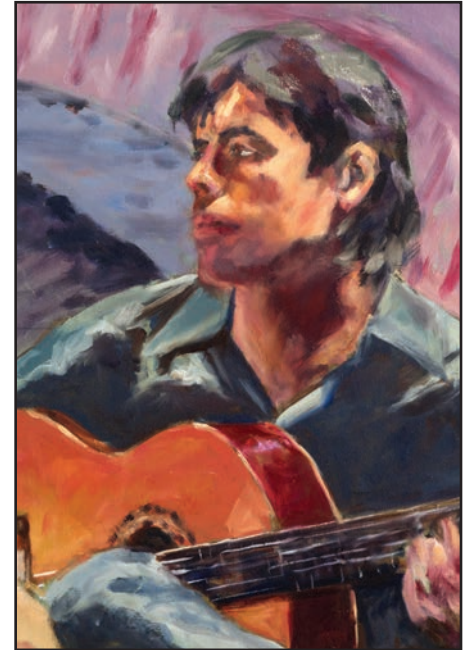
Anderle, who lives in Walnut Creek, minored in Fine Art at UC Berkeley and has maintained a love for the practice and appreciation of art throughout his life. In retirement he rekindled his interest in drawing, watercolor and oil painting at Walnut Creek Civic Arts and through self-



The Orinda Theatre by Lance Jackson.

instruction. View his virtual exhibit on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/jquOwojATJw>. He said portrait subjects inspire him,

especially those taken from photos shot at random during his travels to Europe, South America and Asia. *Flamenco Guitarist*, a 16" x 20" oil painting, captures an intense musical moment in a Seville nightclub. He is a regular contributor to The Memory



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Flamenco Guitarist by John Anderle.

Project, a nonprofit organization which distributes original painted portraits to dispossessed and orphaned children around the world.

To learn more about the Lamorinda Arts Council's virtual presentations, go to www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries.

Elana O'Loskey can be reached at business.orinda@gmail.com.

Lamorinda Idol Goes Virtual

Forget Netflix, Hulu or anything on cable. Hours of entertainment can be found on youtube where more than 100 finalists in the Lamorinda Idol competition have posted audition videos.

The Lamorinda Idol competition moved online this year, and finalists were announced July 15. As usual, the quality of auditions from the K-12 students was extremely high, according to Shelly Rose, program manager with the Lamorinda Arts Council.

Finalists in each category created additional videos in July for the second round of judging to take place Aug. 1-10. Audience voting links are expected to become available Aug. 1. The competition will culminate with an online awards ceremony Aug. 16.

To see the list of finalists, along with links to their audition videos, and more information about the awards ceremony, go to <https://lamorindaarts.org/events/lamorinda-idol-winners-announcement/>.

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AROUND TOWN

Everyday 😊 Orinda

Orinda: Loving It, Leaving It

MIMI BOMMARITO



I've always been suspicious of attractive things. Orinda was no exception. I'm a subscriber to the cautious adage "if something seems too good to be true, it probably is." So it really took me a while before I trusted this place. California was for cool people, and I wasn't sure I could deliver. Try as one might, you can't unlearn the term Flyover State.

This place has earned its bragging rights. Recall the first time you crested the hill on Rheem Boulevard (before the much-needed stop sign at Zander Drive). Suddenly you glimpse this sweeping, unexpected vista of Rheem Valley. My jaw dropped. This is my schlep to pick up hamburgers? Well, heck yeah. Or the first time to glance out over the sports fields at Sleepy Hollow Elementary.

Surreal. What was the catch?

Once it settled that, yes, I truly do live in a place this cinematically exquisite, the bigger question that lurked below now surfaced. If my life were a Pixar flick, a little animated frog or, since I live so close to Glorietta, a gopher, would cozy up next to me and ask: "So, if this place is so beautiful, why does everyone constantly want to leave?"

I don't mean permanently, I mean leave as in travel, escape. Up until the pandemic, my little animated gopher and I have noticed: Orindans do not lollygag, as we say in Flyover States. Our herd was forever galloping somewhere. I state this, not in judgement, as I jumped right in. Although I was more like that wild-eyed, straggler

wildebeest, frantically hoofing to keep up with the rest of the stampede who has just trampled Mufasa in *The Lion King*.

Right away I noticed the kids' new friends were welcoming and cheerfully available on the weekdays, but disappeared to Tahoe on the weekends. If your kid's birthday fell during ski season, forget about a party. Spring Break resembled episodes of *Black Mirror* where all the citizenry has disappeared. Our streets echoed just the slightest bit.

This unnerved me at first. I love to travel, but here I felt I had to travel, or I was doing my life and my family a huge disservice. A three-day weekend? We must go somewhere! New friends would state, unflinchingly, they took their toddlers on flights to Japan. Japan! And this was not a cautionary tale. They would go again next year!

This was growth for me. The gauntlet had been thrown. I would be that mother, too. My kids were crossing an ocean. Fast forward about 12 years, and my daughters will unapologetically state they only remember the scenes we captured in photographs from

these back-and-wallet breaking vacations.

Europe and Asia beckoned, but also many exciting attractions nearby in every compass direction — skiing, hiking, camping, surfing, beaching, sailing, wine tasting, museum-ing. Why would anyone stay home?

I adapted to this mobile culture immediately. Home was soon relegated to a common hub to shower and refresh the clothing in our duffle bags. I also immediately bought into signing our kids up for 50,000 activities. Because kids should be well-rounded, right? I certainly was not trying to re-create a bucolic, athletic childhood I wished I had. Okay, maybe a little bit (swim team). Okay, maybe a lot (Sharlyn's Dance Experience). Or maybe I actually *liked* waking before dawn on Saturday morning to drive 90 miles and see if a town called Turlock truly lived up to its name.

The irony became laughable: We paid a dear price to live in Orinda so that we could behave as if we couldn't wait to get away from it. I knew this was ridiculous.

[SEE EVERYDAY page 14]

Miner Road Bridge Walls Completed



COURTESY ORINDA GARDEN CLUB

Workers put finishing touches on the bridge at Miner Road.

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

The walls along the Miner Road bridge are once again beautiful.

A sinkhole on the road was repaired in 2017 and new walls were erected on both sides of the bridge which passes over Lauterwasser Creek in Orinda.

Prior to the sink hole there were low rock-faced walls lining the bridge; they were replaced by larger white concrete walls. The wall veneer facing the residential and golf course properties was completed with beautiful rock work. The sides viewed by passersby were sterile, concrete structures.

Several people, including many Orinda Garden Club (OGC) members, said more should be done to beautify the concrete walls. Pam Goode was asked by Cathleen Sodos, then OGC president, to assist her

in looking into how the appearance of the walls could be improved.

When the sinkhole repair was completed, the OGC's work began. The garden club spearheaded a word-of-mouth fundraising campaign, collecting \$25,000. The proposal was brought to the City Council in summer 2019 and unanimously approved.

Then COVID-19 broke out and plans were put on hold. In late May, the city granted permission to proceed.

The main work was completed in less than two weeks. By mid-July, the project was waiting for a couple of missing cap stones in the rock order and the recognition plaque to be placed in a square place holder. Completion was anticipated by Aug. 1.

Elana O'Loskey can be reached at business. orinda@gmail.com.



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AROUND TOWN



Seasoned Shopper

Something New is Blooming

BARBARA KOBSAR



Welcome to the new flower vendor Aimee Thornhill from Brentwood Blooms. Planning, planting, nurturing, picking and arranging are all in a day's work.

Her small quarter acre of land produces an array of flowers and ornamental herbs to make beautiful bouquets to sell at the farmer's markets in Orinda and Livermore. August will produce more beautiful sunflowers, cosmos and zinnias. The flowering basil plants and sprigs of rosemary are cut to add some character and extra fragrance to Thornhill's creations.

This month is bursting with plenty of fresh-picked produce. Look for eggplants, grapes, plums, figs, peppers and cucumbers. Tomatoes and melons are at their prime.

Each tomato season seems to bring more varieties. Old-fashioned beef steak and Celebrity along with the yellow Golden

Jubilee tomatoes are some of the best choices for the ever-popular fresh tomato and mozzarella salad.

Slice the tomatoes and mozzarella at least one quarter inch thick and arrange with the basil leaves in an alternating pattern in a serving dish. Drizzle with olive oil and balsamic glaze, and sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Make your own balsamic glaze by adding 1 cup of balsamic vinegar to a small saucepan and simmering for 20 – 25 minutes partially covered until reduced to a thicker glaze.

Melons are another favorite this month and you'll find both muskmelons and watermelons. Muskmelons are a diverse group made up of many shapes, sizes and colors. These may look familiar to you as the cantaloupe and Persian melon with netted skins and honeydew, Crenshaw and

Juan Canary with smooth skins.

Watermelons scream summer as a juicy refreshing taste treat. Red varieties remain dominant but orange, yellow and seedless varieties are something to watch for.

The big question looming at the melon stand is which one to pick. Choose any melon that is free of bruises, soft spots or cracks. The rind underneath the netting on cantaloupe should be golden or orange, the stem end should yield to gentle thumb pressure and the aroma should be nothing but fragrant.

Ripe honeydew melons should be a dull, pale yellow and heavy for their size. Watermelons should also be very heavy for their size (they are 92 percent water) and have a creamy, buttery yellow ground spot where the watermelon sat on the ground to ripen.

The Orinda farmers' market is open 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays on Orinda Way in Orinda Village. For more information, go to www.cccfm.org, [facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket](https://www.facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket) and [Instagram@OrindaFarmersMarket](https://www.instagram.com/OrindaFarmersMarket) or call the market hotline 925-431-8361.



BARBARA KOBSAR
Aimee Thornhill of Brentwood Blooms, a new flower vendor at the Orinda Farmers' Market, shows off some of her arrangements.

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

◆ SCHOOLS from page 1

the future, officials grappled with many issues, including minimum minutes of daily instruction, transportation to campuses without school buses, avoiding lunch time, how to best teach students when away from the classroom and a long list of additional health and safety issues.

"Nothing we choose will be perfect for everyone," said OUSD Board Vice President Liz Daoust.

On-campus challenges include cleaning and sanitizing, moving students between classrooms, drop-off and pick-up times (more than half of Orinda Intermediate School students used the bus or County Connection last year) and child care.

While at school, all students third grade and above must wear face coverings. Younger students are encouraged to wear them and there are protocols in place if a student develops a fever while at school.

Opinions from teachers and parents varied during OUSD special meetings July 8 and 13. Allison Bingham, who teaches fifth grade at Glorietta Elementary, said she is concerned about ventilation.

"Please let us teach remotely, at least for a couple of months," she said. "I will not feel safe with 28 students in my classroom."

Middle-school science teacher Sue Bou-

dreau said she loves her students, school community and colleagues, but is "appalled by the hybrid schedule."

She pointed out there would be no group or lab work and she would not be able to look over the shoulders of her students. "I feel it is dangerous, expensive chaos... I feel thrown to the wolves."

Delaying in-person teaching until mid-September was suggested by OIS parent Mark Lovell.


Parent Chip Ferguson said there needs to be more than five minutes between classes for cleaning and sanitizing. "This really sucks... It's a mess, he said."

Lindsay Westin expressed a desire for more on-campus time for students.

Parent Kelly Kopelson said parents have already made "professional sacrifices" and would not choose total distance learning. She suggested camps for days off, tutors and child care centers to support students and parents.

Parent Shoshana Chazan suggested the board concentrate on distance learning. "If the governor doesn't want us to sit in a movie theater for 90 minutes, I don't want my son to sit in a classroom for three hours."

Kathy Enzerink can be reached at kathy@theorindanews.com.



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NEWS

◆ WILDER from page 1

have comments from us.”

Roxanne Christof expressed concerns about the center’s bathrooms being “open to the public while sharing with babies from the Montessori school.” She questioned why the school application was not brought up previously with the Wilder sub-committee.

Kaur responded to the concerns, stating Studio 4 will be available for rent in the evenings and weekends and even if the playground is required to be fenced, it will always be available to the public.

The Commission approved a three-year use permit with an annual review for the school.

Countryhouse Memory Care, a one-to-two-story, 32,084 square-foot congregate care project with 38 beds to be built at 1 Wilder Road, received unanimous approval despite opposition from several residents.

Senior Planner Adam Foster said the site is in a public semipublic (PS) zone and is not subject to Wilder standards as a planned development.

This was echoed by Planning Director Drummond Buckley and the applicant Emmanuel Ursu, who said Wilder design guidelines do not apply to the project.

Shona Armstrong, an attorney for the Wilder Owners Association, said the developer “weaseled out of consistency of the General Plan... and it does not comply as a congregate care facility.” There is no evacuation plan which “seems to be swept under the rug,” she said.

Ben Zarrin, a developer and Wilder resident since 2013 said, “Treat the Wilder community and applicant the same.”

Several residents stated a memory care facility is needed, but “not at this location.”

One condition of approval is this will be a complete memory care, not an assisted living facility.

“A memory care facility addresses a need in Orinda and Lamorinda,” said Commissioner Ann Parnigoni. “It is needed in our community.”

Kathy Enzerink can be reached at kathy@theorindanews.com.

Fitness Tip of the Month

Diets Don't Work

Diets don't work because even if we follow them we add other bad stuff. It's that other bad stuff that's getting us in trouble. Create a realistic eating plan, that may include some of the bad stuff... and gradually eliminate the bad stuff over time.

The good news is if your eating plan is good, it will keep you from being hungry... which will make it easier to lose the bad stuff.

For more information, contact Sheena with Living Lean personal training and eating for elite fitness at 925-360-7051 or www.thelivingleanprogram.com.



Downtown Planners Set Goals, Objectives; Discuss Lack of Vibrancy, Development

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

Enhancing the economic vitality of downtown with mixed-use businesses and multi-unit development top the list of goals of a panel working on the future of downtown.

A vision statement and list of proposed objectives were presented at the June 23 joint Planning Commission and Downtown Precise Plan (DPP) sub-committee meeting.

The list includes creating a safe and inviting space, maintaining a semi-rural sense of place, adapting to a diverse and enduring hub, establishing a balance with a mindful change, promoting unique art and event experiences and fostering a better quality of life.

Visioning is an “exercise to promote greater awareness of societal change,” said Mayank Patel, senior planner for the project who resigned in June. “It creates a stronger sense of control over its density.”

Commissioner Robert Hubner said, “Downtown needs to be vibrant ... the neighborhoods are OK as semi-rural.”

“Why haven’t we kept the downtown

vibrancy?” asked City Council and DPP sub-committee member Inga Miller.


Lack of restaurant and grocery store choices was noted by commissioner Ann Parnigoni. “We leave Orinda to dine out and to food shop,” she said.

According to Vicki Pedersen, whose family inherited part ownership of the crossroads center (home to CVS, BevMo and others), current “laws do not allow meaningful development.” Due to height and density restrictions, “we can’t go up ... there’s no incentive to develop the property.”

Andres Douzoglou, who moved Beyond Aero bicycle shop to Orinda last year, said he is encouraged by the plan. Referring to the Phairs building, which has been empty for many years, he said, “It’s a bit of a nuisance; an eyesore for sure.”

Director of Planning Drummond Buckley said current maximum density regulations have not created an incentive to develop the downtown commercial district. “We will definitely be looking at this and bonus density options,” he said.


Kathy Enzerink can be reached at kathy@theorindanews.com.



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◆ CHIPPER from page 5

Miramonte High School is allowing them to be dumped behind the baseball diamond for weed abatement.

Despite all the hoops, the chipper program is a winner with Orindans. “It’s a free program — everyone loves free,” said Danzinger who points out that renting a chipper for private use is about \$200. “It’s not an expensive item to rent,” especially if other residents chip in.

Although 190 tons of debris were chipped last year, Danzinger said it won’t make a big difference if Orinda and Moraga experience a firestorm. “It’s only part of a fire prevention program.”

Meanwhile, Danzinger said he is more concerned about progress on fire inspections. They are not going so well. As of

mid July, of the 1,528 parcels inspected, 348 failed. MOFD has three to four years to inspect 14,000 parcels district-wide.

One idea floated by Fire Chief Dave Winnacker to help fund fire mitigation efforts is to follow the lead of the Southern Marin Fire District, a department MOFD is often compared with because it has similar terrain and housing density.

In southern Marin, residents pay an annual \$75 parcel tax for fire prevention efforts and as a result have 35 full-time fire prevention staffers. “We have four,” said Danzinger who adds that Winnacker is only suggesting a parcel tax for five years. If enacted, such a tax would raise \$1 million a year for MOFD.

Paul Kilduff can be reached at editor@theorindanews.com.

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ELECTIONS / CALENDAR

◆ ELECTIONS from page 2

The number of challengers who had pulled papers to run for OUSD Board of Trustees was not available by July 21.

Wildfire is always a hot topic for Orinda residents and candidates' priorities will be carefully scrutinized by voters. Two Moraga-Orinda Fire District board positions are up for re-election in November but Orinda only votes for the District 5 director.

Craig Jorgens currently holds that position and he will seek re-election. "I pointed out in my last election the importance of prevention, early detection and fiscal prudence," said Jorgens. "I am very encouraged about the passion with which many

Orindans in my district are now building their neighborhood Firewise programs and utilizing MOFD's free chipping services."

The number of challengers for MOFD District 5 was not available by July 21.

For supervisors, state assembly and state senate, California uses a "Top-two Primary" format, meaning the top two candidates in March's primary election advanced to the November general election. District 2 Supervisor Candace Anderson ran unopposed in the March primary securing her next term.

Orinda resident and State Senator for District 7, Steve Glazer, will face Julie Mobley in November.

Glazer said he plans to continue his fight protecting California's air and water from polluters, standing up to the gun lobby, beating the tobacco and vaping lobby, and holding PG&E accountable.

Mobley said her experiences as an engineer and research and development manager, as well as a mom and community volunteer, have given her a unique perspective on the state's biggest challenges.

Orinda resident Rebecca Bauer-Kahan hopes to retain her seat as State Assembly District 16 representative over challenger Joseph Rubay.

Bauer-Kahan's legislative priorities include protecting women's health, helping local governments earn more funding from competitive state transportation grants, working to fund public schools and strengthening gun safety laws.

Rubay lists offering affordable health-care, improving the quality of education and ensuring government transparency among his main concerns.

On the federal level, Congressman Mark DeSaulnier is running for re-election in the 11th Congressional District. He said he wants to return to Congress to address healthcare, fix the economy for working families, pass infrastructure funding, and safeguard the environment.

DeSaulnier's challenger is Nisha Sharma, who lists the cost of living, infrastructure and homelessness in the Bay Area as top priorities.

Election Day is Nov. 3. Voters can register at www.cocovote.us/registration-and-voting-options/register-to-vote. Local residents can register up to 15 days prior to Election Day. After that deadline, a person can obtain a conditional voter registration.

For those voting by mail, ballots are sent out 29 days before Election Day and can be mailed to the county or dropped off at any polling location.

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

On the Calendar in August

Orinda Library Online events. Daily storytimes and events can be viewed at: [https://ccclib.bibliocommons.com/events/search/fq=program:\(5e2b7849df59234500450f71\)](https://ccclib.bibliocommons.com/events/search/fq=program:(5e2b7849df59234500450f71)).

1 **Orinda Farmers' Market**, 9 a.m. Orinda Way in front of Rite Aid and the Community Park. www.cccfm.org or market hotline at 925-431-8361. Also August 8, 15, 22 and 28. See article p. 11.

Orinda Idol Finals judging to take

place Aug. 1-10. Audience voting links available. The competition will culminate with an online awards ceremony Aug. 16.

To see finalists audition videos, and more information go to <https://lamorindaarts.org/events/lamorinda-idol-winners-announcement/>. See article p. 9.

3 **Mindful Littles**, Mindful Service Learning Camp. A virtual camp. Kids will join in lively, engaging service-learning projects around the theme Different Hearts, United As One. Through Aug. 7. Incoming Kindergarten-2nd: 9-10 a.m. Incoming 3rd-5th: 10:30 a.m. -noon. Cost \$125 per child. For more information, email info@mindfullittles.org. Register at: <https://mindfullittles.org/events/>.

6 **Orinda Starlight Village Players** Zoom mystery game, *A Night of Creeps, Haunts and Murder*. Free. To register for the game, email info@orsvp.org. Also, August 13, 20 and 27.

7 **Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**. Dr. Michale Yassa, Perfect Memory. Meetings via Zoom video conferencing. 7 - 8:15 a.m. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82609498205>.

11 **Miramonte High School** first day of school. See article p. 1.

13 **Elementary and Intermediate schools** first day of school. See article p. 1.

14 **Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**. Ana Lukner Rolji, Rotary in Slovenia. Meetings via Zoom video conferencing. 7 - 8:15 a.m. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82609498205>.

21 **Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**. Dr. Linda Halderman, COVID-19 Update Weekly meetings via Zoom video conferencing. 7 - 8:15 a.m. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82609498205>.

28 **Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**. Claire Roberts, Member Magazine Weekly meetings via Zoom video conferencing. 7 - 8:15 a.m. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82609498205>.

New Group Formed


Amidst the civil rights movement that has swept over the nation this summer, a new committee of the Miramonte High School Parents Club hopes to do its part.

Aiming to support equality and a sense of belonging for all families, the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion group provides resources on racism and multiculturalism, including a list of literature on its website. The group has started a Racial Justice Reading Group which kicks off its first meeting with the New York Times best seller *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi.

Orinda Books plans to order extra copies of the book and has offered to donate 20 percent of the sales to Dr. Kendi's Center for Antiracist Research at Boston University. Miramonte English teacher Steve Poling will lead a Zoom meeting 7 p.m. Aug. 25 to discuss the book.

For more information, follow the group on Instagram @mhsparentsdiversitygroup or visit their webpage <https://www.miramonteparents.com/diversity-and-inclusion-at-miramonte/>.

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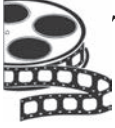
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ENTERTAINMENT



THE REEL LESS TRAVELED
ORINDA THEATRE ISSUES
CHALLENGE



Tom Westlake

One cannot say too much about Derek Zemrak. Long-time movie aficionado and collector, he has hitched his wagon to the Orinda Theatre and is showing no sign of letting go anytime soon.

Idea after idea flows from his mind, all in the service of one goal: To save the Orinda Theatre.

Some ideas work, such as the Friday night popcorn and wine service; others, not so much.

“Under the Marquee,” for example, will have to go on (hopefully) temporary hiatus. While it’s sad to see this go, Zemrak has come up with another idea to raise funds. He calls it “The One Ticket Challenge” in which he is asking everyone in the Contra Costa County area to buy a \$12 ticket.

If everyone here tells their friends to buy tickets, that would be even better. Of course, you could buy more than one. (You can *always* buy more!) There are levels of patronage. These are not real tickets, but like his gofundme drive (www.gofundme.com/f/orinda-theatre), which as of mid July had raised more than \$48,000, the donations could help keep the theater open.

But wait, there’s more! Ask anyone who has been near the theater lately and they will tell you, aside from its primary function, it’s also a museum, of sorts. Zemrak has been an avid collector of movie memorabilia and now is selling pieces of it to keep the theater going.

Ranging from popular mainstream merchandise to the really obscure, the collection likely has something for even the most

learned cinephile. Go to www.facebook.com/orindatheatre/ for more information.

Cine Cuvee continues its Friday night popcorn and wine pick-up service. Get details at www.facebook.com/cinecuvee/.

So, in the interest of keeping the Orinda Theatre open, there are myriad of options. Now it’s all up to you. No pressure at all.

Meanwhile, the International Film Showcase is continuing its virtual film festival. For details, go to internationalshowcase.org.

For those of us confined at home with plenty of time, I recommend some films which stand out in the herd. These, for the most part, will not have anything to do with current world affairs or won’t even be all that topical. We can all take a break from that!

The first is *Cabaret*. I may have mentioned seeing films at an impressionable age can be very dangerous. Oftimes we look upon these movies and, in retrospect, discover it wasn’t all that great. For me, *Cabaret* is *not* one of those films. It stands up to repeated viewings and manages the rare feat of always offering something you might not have noticed before.

Released in 1972, it was one of many films of that time made by maverick director Bob Fosse. Like films of other directors of the era (Coppola, Altman and Lucas, to name a few), it initially was received doubtfully by the studios but greeted enthusiastically by the public.

Going on to win eight Academy Awards, the film redefined movie musicals in a way that hadn’t been seen since *Oklahoma*,

released about 17 years prior. It also dealt with a very dark period in Germany’s history.

It managed to keep people engaged, mostly with its cinematography and rousing musical numbers, which were choreographed by Fosse. The contributions of Liza Minnelli, Michael York and especially Joel Gray are immeasurable. See this film. You will be better for it.

My next recommendation is light years away from *Cabaret*. It’s considered a children’s film, but it has got to be one of the most hypnotic, lyrical (but not in the musical sense) children’s films ever made.

Released in 1979, *The Black Stallion* seemed to come out of nowhere. As I recall, there was not a lot of pre-publicity and when it did come out, the most publicized thing about it was that it was produced by Francis Ford Coppola, at the time a major selling point due to his success with *The*

Godfather.

Why I single out this film is its overall tone, notably its lack of bombast. The story is a simple one but it’s the telling that counts. Indeed, there’s a whole sequence, lasting nearly half an hour, with no real dialogue at all, which alone should tell you that you are in for a unique cinematic experience.

In addition, Kelly Reno, Terri Garr and the legendary Mickey Rooney make this one of the more memorable films to come from that particular time in film history. Surrender to this movie and give it your full attention. Both you and the film deserve it.

Until next time, keep gravitating towards those wonderful flickering images made of light and dreams. That’s where the reel magic lies.

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

◆ EVERYDAY from page 10

And yet, if I weren’t researching a getaway or, at the very least, making reservations for sports tournaments in some far-flung inland greenhouse, my life felt severely out of kilter. Self-worth was measured in Hilton Honors points.

And then, from out of nowhere, a pandemic. Shut us all down, equally. Surprisingly, I’m pretty okay with it. I still lustily peruse my TravelZoo Top 20 email, although these days the features are more comical than enticing. Seriously. Forget the luxurious amenities. Who can’t wait to plunk down money on a trip whose best selling point, in all caps, is FULLY REFUNDABLE?

I am, at least temporarily, relieved of feeling my home is merely a place to catch my breath.

How many times have we said to ourselves, “If I have to be quarantined, how lucky am I to be quarantined in Orinda?”

The natural beauty soothes my soul, especially during the unsettling first weeks when we had no idea what madcap course this contagion would take. Out on a neighborhood run, I could briefly hit the pause button on the chaos.

The life I watch on television is largely a dumpster fire these days. I suppose my limited exposure to the outside world is what is allowing me to remain positive. I’m extremely grateful to live among intelligent, cooperative humans who wear masks to grocery shop and respect social distancing guidelines. No confederate flags or Dixie paraphernalia in sight. Compassionate, concerned, open-minded citizens who bravely gather, despite the pandemic, to show their support for an important cause like Black Lives Matter.

Staying home, when home is here, is very attractive indeed.

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



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An architectural rendering of **The Station** and courtyard.

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Staff Writer

If all goes as planned, The Station, a 19,350 square-foot mixed-use project at 25A Orinda Way, could break ground before January.

“With our use permit in hand and a great deal of optimism, our team pushes forward to break ground by the year’s end,” said developer Paul Ugenti. The process of obtaining electrical, mechanical, plumbing, foundation and other required permits from the county can take two or more months. Construction begins with an 18-foot pit for the sub-grade garage.

Plans for the development include food, beverage and artisan crafts from around the Bay Area, as well as an exercise facility, Ugenti said. “Our goal is to offer these new retail and restaurant opportunities to local businesses first in the hope we can provide a post-COVID path to success,” he said.

Adjacent to the fitness center, the anchor, Market Hall, will house suites/stalls for artisan retail, pre-packaged and take-out food along with indoor and outdoor courtyard dining areas.

During the June 9 Planning Commission meeting and approval process, Orangetheory Fitness was specifically mentioned as a possible tenant at The Station. Ugenti clarified the application provides the “ability to have a fitness – not a general fitness,

but specific to a boutique... something like an Orangetheory.” The scheduled class-oriented business could range from yoga, pilates to cycle, he said.

There are currently eight health and fitness centers in Orinda.

Anytime Fitness opened its doors in Theatre Square May 2019. A global franchise brand, it offers 24/7 access to members and drop-in clients are welcome when staff is on site. “We offer classes too, but we’re a very different model,” said Jami Edgell, general manager. “We’d rather work with them (Orangetheory) as healthy competition is healthy for business.”

In Forma Integral Fitness has been in business since 1986. Tristan Tool and Tiffany Aubrey bought it June 15, 2019.

“The building is beautiful and the project will breathe life into Orinda,” Tool said about The Station. “We wish there was a different type of anchor business as In Forma offers almost the same services and we’re basically next door.

“Orangetheory is a national gimmicky brand, but whatever gets you moving off the sofa, I’m in favor of,” he said.

Michael Karp, owner of the Fourth Bore, said he is excited about the project and, “the city needs more creative and healthy food concepts. Now, we need to connect both sides of town.”

Kathy Enzerink can be reached at kathy@theorindanews.com.

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tem allows everyone to hear her without difficulty.

Garden yoga involves using mats, blocks belt and chairs outside on the grass while doing a variety of gentle stretching poses. Dowell always ends with a reading of some kind designed to help slow down her students.

Michelle Houston, who takes the twilight yoga class Monday evenings said, she never wants to take indoor yoga again. “Jeanne’s expert explanations of the postures and quiet words of wisdom allow us to meditate and focus while the birds chirp in the background as the sun sets. There’s nothing like it,” she said.

Classes are 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. Monday and 10 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. Thursday and Friday. Call Dowell at 925-408-5940 or email her at jeannedowell@yahoo.com.

To send items for consideration, email O’Loskey at business.orinda@gmail.com.

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Casa Orinda Curbside

Casa Orinda opened for curbside take-out, including drinks, July 16. “We’re meeting every requirement for PPE equipment (masks, face shields) and distancing. Also, we have cleaned the restaurant top to bottom and are ready for curbside orders,” said General Manager Claudia Tata.

To place an order, call 925-254-2981 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Wed. – Sun. Their beginning menu is limited and can be found online. You may order fried chicken (served with mashed potatoes and gravy, vegetables and biscuit); French dip prime rib sandwich; chicken wings; broiled hamburger; or a weekly Mexican special from Chef Lino Rios.

Orders for beer, wine and/or cocktails (ages 21 and older) can only be made when included with an order for food. Drinks



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Casa Orinda Head Chef **Lino Rios** cleans up the kitchen where food to go is prepared.

are provided in closed-top cups. Curbside pickup is set up in the parking lot adjacent to the restaurant.

Tata said they are ready to reopen whenever COVID-19 restrictions allow. Management is very concerned for their 42 employees who are doing well, all things considered. Many volunteered to help with the clean-up to ensure safety measures are in full force both for employees and eventually, patrons.

Casa Orinda is at 20 Bryant Way. Visit www.casaorinda.net for more information.

Aspire PR Company

Alison Stout, who lives in Orinda, is the founder and owner of Aspire PR Company, a lifestyle and hospitality communications firm. She has worked in public relations and branding for more than 20 years. Early on she worked in PR for two years in the New York City fashion industry.

“Working in a showroom on Fifth Avenue across from the Empire State Building as well as at a retail showroom in Soho helped me learn how to manage the cutthroat industry of PR; it really jump-started my career,” said Stout.

She was fortunate to work with a large PR firm in San Francisco for many years specializing in travel and hospitality. They worked with luxury hospitality brands, destinations, consumer household products, boutique hotels and both world-renowned and small, family-run wineries.

Traveling the world with global clients, she said she built relationships with local,



ELANA O’LOSKEY
Alison Stout, president of Aspire PR Company.

national and international media. The firm always focused on offering more than traditional PR and often became an extension of their clients’ teams.

When Stout opened Aspire in 2011 she said she used similar strategies along with always offering results-driven, measurable outcomes. She attributes much of her success to long-term relationships with former clients and strong relationships with both editorial teams and freelance writers. “These relationships are invaluable when a client is looking for a last-minute strategic partnership for an event or promotion,” said Stout.

Working often with clients in the wine country, she realized they shared a certain simpatico about the lifestyle and hospitality industry. She believes many people living and working there quite simply love what they do and the part of the world they live in. That attitude is what creates and sustains the unique quality of wine country hospitality which comes in many guises. Stout enjoys working with them for the same reasons.

When asked how she handled travel and hospitality during COVID-19, she replied, “It’s been quite a challenge; we quickly pivoted to begin working with clients in education and consumer products – I’ve been wanting to explore both areas further.”

Another strength she said Aspire had already developed is crisis communication. Aspire had to develop these skills because

Stout said their wine country clients were affected by wildfires; clients throughout California had to deal with power outages; more recently they’ve had clients taking action against racial injustice and using resources to concretely move forward toward equality for all.

Stout grew up in Orinda and said she loved her childhood years here. Now living in Orinda with her husband and two daughters, she said she can’t imagine a better community with which to share experiences. Outside of work she loves anything outdoors, traveling, cooking and has started the process of becoming a Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteer.

Contact Stout at 415-307-1682, email alison@aspireprco.com or visit www.aspireprco.com.

Garden Yoga

Orinda’s very own nonagenarian, Jeanne Dowell, taught her first yoga class in her backyard in 1977. Guess what? Since COVID-19 restrictions on indoor classrooms, Dowell has returned to the backyard to teach garden yoga.

After checking with Contra Costa County COVID-19 regulators, she observes their best practices to hold outdoor yoga classes while maintaining physical distancing. She provides separate exits and entrances and students wear masks. A wireless PA sys-

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MICHELLE HOUSTON
Students at **Jeanne Dowell’s** garden yoga twilight class stretch on the lawn overlooking the view.

Orinda Motors Presents



The 16th Annual Orinda Classic Car Show Enter Your Car In The “Orinda Classic Car Tour” - We Will Drive Again!

The Orinda Association Is pleased to announce that instead of hosting our regular Car Show, on the morning of Saturday September 12th we invite all car owners to enter their vehicles in this exciting “Tour” and enjoy driving along with up to 100 fellow car enthusiasts throughout the area.

Here are some updates:

- **LESS THAN 50 TOUR SLOTS REMAIN. RESERVE YOUR SPACE NOW!**
- **CHECK OUT THE TOUR’S ROUTE ON OUR WEBSITE.**
- **ORINDA CLASSIC CAR SHOW HOSTED VIDEO:** All who enter their vehicles will be featured in a special video tribute hosted by Steve Harwood going out to more than 2000 show supporters.
- **OWNERS: YOUR ENTRY FEES WILL SUPPORT GREAT LOCAL CAUSES** - the Orinda Seniors Around Town Ride and food delivery program (SAT) and three other local charities.

Other great details to follow!

So enter your car or motorcycle into this year’s show!

Register all cars and motorcycles online today!

All vintage, modern or exotic cars are welcome, plus motorcycles of any years or makes and more!

Enter Your Car Today at www.OrindaCarShow.com

We thank our partners and sponsors including: Alliant Insurance, Orinda Motors, Mechanics Bank, John Muir Health, Canopy Health, Clark Pest Control, Finola Fellner, Compass Real Estate, Clark Thompson, and many more.



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Buzz Weldy with his 1965
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