



THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis
Volume 34, Number 12

www.TheOrindaNews.com

Delivered to 9,000 Households and Businesses in Orinda

12 Issues Annually
December 2019

Council Bans Non-hosted Short-term Rentals

By SALLY HOGARTY
Executive Editor

Following the shooting deaths at the Halloween night party at an Airbnb rental in Orinda, the City Council as expected banned non-hosted short-term rentals (STRs).

The council unanimously passed Urgency Ordinance 19-08 at its Nov. 19 meeting. The ordinance only allows for short-term rentals (less than 30 days) if the STR takes place on property owned by the host and containing the host's primary residence. If there are two structures on the property, the host can live in one and use the other as a STR, but the host must be present to monitor and regulate activity. STRs must be for a minimum of two days.

"We know the two-day minimum may present some problems for hosted short-term rentals that have advance reservations," said Vice Mayor Darlene Gee. "But we believe this is important for the safety and welfare of our residents."

Urgency Ordinance 19-08 is effective immediately and lasts for 45 days. The City Council may further extend the urgency ordinance for 10 months and 15 days after a noticed public hearing and may, subsequently, extend the ordinance for up to two years. The council will use this time to work on a new permanent ordinance [SEE STR page 8]



A large memorial to the victims of the Oct. 31 shooting in Orinda covers the old Theatre Square fountain at Brookwood Road and Camino Pablo.

SALLY HOGARTY

Quick-thinking Family Foils Terrifying 'Virtual Kidnapping'

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Staff Writer

Kasey Byrne was home in Orinda on a Saturday morning when she answered her cell phone from an anonymous caller. She heard "a girl, crying hysterically on the line." Byrne reacted to the unintelligible crying, telling who she thought was

her daughter, to "take a deep breath, calm down and tell me what's going on." Then, "a few seconds later, a man took the phone and started screaming threats and abuse at me," she said. "He shouted, 'I'm going to put a bullet in your daughter's head if you don't do exactly what I tell you.'"

Byrnes' 17-year-old daughter Eavan was [SEE KIDNAPPING page 4]

Orinda to Poll Residents on Extending Half-Cent Sales Tax

By PAUL KILDUFF
Correspondent

Orinda plans to poll residents early next year to gauge support for extending a half-cent sales tax that was established in 2012.

The tax, which generates about \$1.2 million in annual funding, is scheduled to end March 31, 2023, says City Clerk Sheri Smith.

"The polling will explore both keeping the tax at the current one-half cent, possibly increasing it to 1 cent and different lengths of time for it to be in effect," says Orinda's incoming mayor Darlene Gee.

The city polled residents when the tax was originally enacted, and asked Orindans how they wanted the money spent. Maintaining public roads was considered a

top priority and that's what has been done with the funds. The money is not used to maintain private roads — that's the responsibility of residents who live on those roads.

This time, the polling, being conducted by the city's longtime polling firm FM3, [SEE SALES TAX page 5]

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Only in Orinda



MIMI BOMMARITO

An assortment of contemporary jewelry can be found at **Sanvitalia** in Theatre Square.

Our columnist Mimi Bommarito set out to find holiday gifts without getting on a freeway or logging onto a computer. See what treasures she discovered in her bid to shop local. Page 14.

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Donations Being Accepted at OA Office Until Dec. 16 in Coat Drive

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

With the arrival of cold weather, The Orinda Association (OA) has partnered with the nonprofit One Warm Coat to help those in need of winter clothing.

The goal is to provide a free, warm coat to any person in need. The bin for donations is in front of the OA office, at the Orinda Library Plaza and will be available 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Friday until Dec. 16.

Kate Wiley, an OA board member who heads the drive, says, "I was drawn to One Warm Coat's simple yet efficient and effective program which was conceived in

San Francisco one Thanksgiving weekend in 1992. Since then they have hosted more than 34,000 coat drives and have given away more than 6 million coats. They do this by working with local agencies."

The OA is working with White Pony Express in Pleasant Hill to distribute the coats. "Their mission is to end hunger and pov-

erty in Contra Costa County by redistributing the abundance around us to those in need, and this program certainly does that. There is a direct service with coats given and delivered within a few days to people who are cold," Wiley says. "This year, we especially want coats for children, but all sizes are welcome. As you give, please bring in items that are of the same caliber that you would give to loved ones, family members, or that you might wear – clean, in good repair, or new."

Wiley says a friend of hers, after her husband died, gave all his jackets to One Warm Coat. Another year, having no more of her own to give, she went to thrift stores, purchased good serviceable items and donated them. Others go out and buy new products.

This is the fourth year the OA has conducted a coat drive. Last year more than 400 coats were received.

"With the homeless and those in poverty increasing, we hope for many more this year," Wiley says.

Sleepy Hollow Holiday Walk Returns Dec. 7

On Saturday, Dec. 7, starting at 9 a.m., families, neighbors and four-legged friends will take part in the Sleepy Hollow Holiday Walk, going for a festive stroll around the neighborhood in celebration of the season. The walk was first organized 19 years ago by Sleepy Hollow resident Kaye Chavalas and has been an annual tradition since, with Pam and Gary Schroeder joining as co-hosts in recent years.

The event begins and ends at 76 Tarry Lane, where participants can enjoy refreshments and holiday cheer. Santa Claus is scheduled to make an appearance and will be available for visits and photos. The Moraga Orinda Fire Department and the Orinda Police Department also will be in attendance, with new Orinda Police Chief David Cook planning to stop by. Open to public; no RSVPs necessary.

Garden Club Plants Daffodils

Come April about 1,500 newly planted daffodils are expected to start blooming at the Camino Sobrante triangle and Highway 24 off-ramp.

Orinda Garden Club members began planting 12 varieties of narcissi bulbs on Nov. 8. Many of the bulbs are *Narcissus poeticus*, commonly known as Pheasant's Eye, while other varieties include Sailboat, Pueblo and Mt. Hood. Narcissi are a great choice for public spaces and home gardens

because they naturalize easily and are deer- and pest-resistant.

The bulbs were planted as part of a larger project to increase visibility for drivers by removing overgrown plants and replacing them with smaller shrubs with seasonal blooms.

"The bulb varieties were chosen to create a long span of blooming. We used mostly white flowering bulbs to comple-

[SEE DAFFODILS page 3]

Middle School Writers Invited to Compete in Youth Ink 2020

The Orinda Junior Women's Club is sponsoring Youth Ink 2020, the annual creative writing contest open to middle school students who live in or attend school in Orinda. This year's writing prompt is "The Gift," though as in previous years, entrants do not have to adhere to the prompt; imagination and creativity are encouraged.

Representatives for the club say they hope the contest gives children the opportunity to experience the literary arts and enjoy the creative writing process.

Awards for Youth Ink 2020 will be presented at a ceremony in late April, with the

following cash prizes: \$250 for first place, \$125 for second place and \$75 for third place. Gift certificates for 10 honorable mentions also will be presented.

Youth Ink submissions will be accepted via email Monday, Dec. 2, through Friday, Feb. 28 and must be received during that time in order to be considered for an award. Full entry details can be found on the Youth Ink 2020 submission forms, available through Orinda Intermediate School, several local private middle schools, the Orinda Public Library, and online beginning Dec. 2 at www.orindajuniors.org.


Orinda Park and Rec Foundation Seeks Board Members

Proponents of parks and recreation, those who enjoy being outdoors or whose children are active in Orinda's recreational programs are encouraged to join the Orinda Park and Rec Foundation Board of Directors (OPRF).

OPRF was formed in 1975 by residents wishing to convert the surplus Orinda Elementary School site into a community center. Since that time, the foundation has raised more than \$2 million to fund recreational programs and purchase land for open space and parks.

The board meets monthly on Tuesday evenings at the library. For more information, go to OPRFoundation.org or contact Carolyn Mills at 925-254-5292.

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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President
Remembrance and Hope



Carlos Baltodano

This holiday season brings both great sadness and hope for a better future. On Halloween night, five young lives were lost in our city at a party held at a non-hosted Airbnb rental. A poster and flowers at the old Theatre Square fountain express our collective feelings.

“Our hearts go out to the families and friends of those who lost their lives” reads the poster signed by the students of Orinda Intermediate School. The poster and flowers are joined by other sentiments of mourning from family members, Orinda residents, and friends. We remember these lives gone too soon: Oshiana Tompkins, 19, Omar Taylor, 24, Tiyon Farley, 22, Raymon Hill Jr., 23, and Javlin County, 29. For those who would like to commemorate those taken too soon from their families and friends, please come by the fountain at Brookwood Road and Camino Pablo.

When a tragedy such as this occurs, we are often left with pain, sorrow, grief, questions and a desire to prevent another tragedy. The CEO of Airbnb, Brian Chesky, pledged to pay for the shooting victims’ funeral costs, as well as counseling for family members. Airbnb also announced changes to rid abuses in non-hosted rentals, ban “party houses,” enhance guest policies and increase screenings for “high risk” rentals. This increased scrutiny is welcome. And our city also has acted as well.

The city will be enforcing stricter regulations through an Urgency Ordinance on short term rentals (STR). The ordinance would be effective for 45 days, with a 2-year extension option. The property at Lucille Way, where the shootings occurred, was a non-hosted STR; and the ordinance would ban that type of STR.

The holiday season in Orinda will be a time to grieve and to remember those who have passed. It will also be a time to be thankful for our residents who care about others less fortunate.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dancing with the Cars co-chair **Ken Jew** and Orinda Rotary President **Dan Gannett** present a \$7000 check to OA President **Carlos Baltodano** and OA Board member **Diane Lutz** for The Orinda Association’s support of the annual fundraiser.

We would like to thank all of you who contributed so generously in response to our annual fundraising letter and request in last month’s *The Orinda News*. Your contributions and donations will continue to support vital local non-profit programs that serve the community. Without your kind support and contributions, these programs would not be possible.

We would especially like to thank the Orinda Rotary for its \$7,000 donation. This contribution was part of the funds raised at the Rotary’s “Dancing with the Cars” extravaganza on Sept. 6. These funds will continue to support programs such as The Orinda Association’s Seniors Around Town Program (SAT) which provides free transportation to seniors for medical and personal appointments. On behalf of the OA, thank you Orinda Rotary for your generous contribution and to all those who work tirelessly to support one another in Orinda.

◆ DAFFODILS from page 2

ment the existing yellow trumpet daffodils. Irises, evergreen grasses and dwarf shrubs, including *Philadelphus lewisii*, a native Northwest shrub with white flowers, will add seasonal interest. “I hope the results will delight everyone with a show of spring flowers and companion plantings,” says club member Sue Andersen-Berger.

“Beautification is a vital part of our mission,” adds Orinda Garden Club President Jane Wiser.

“We provide funds for these projects, and hands-on work with spades and shovels to get the job done,” she says. “We enjoyed the friendly waves and thumbs-up of drivers as we worked. This is a labor of love for the community by our members.”

The Orinda Association

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

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

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

The Orinda Association
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Letters to the Editor

Getting the Facts on Roads

In response to Andrew Flagg's letter in *The Orinda News* (November 2019) stating that the "city" (in other words the residents and taxpayers of Orinda) should not pay for the maintenance of roads which are currently privately maintained because those roads restrict access to the public with "No Trespassing" signs or gates and such funding would be simply to maintain their privacy. Flagg's opinion is based on misinformation.

1. For a road to be publicly funded, it must allow free public access: no signs or gates.

2. Very few private streets have gates or signs. New developments (Wilder and Orinda Grove) are required to provide public access while being denied public funding for street maintenance.

I believe that Mr. Flagg derives his opinion from the fact that his street feeds two private streets which are examples of streets that do have "No Trespassing" signs and may ultimately reject public funding to enhance privacy. But they are in the great minority. Most private streets have no such restrictions.

I would also like to point out that Mr. Flagg's street is one of the many public streets that was in terrible condition and has been rebuilt with the tax dollars by Orinda taxpayers, including the 22 percent who live on private roads. These taxes will add up to \$76 million by the time the roads bonds are paid off. This averages \$18,000 for each of the 4,200 families who live on the public residential streets which were repaired.

I suggest that Mr. Flagg look at www.OrindaRoadFacts.info to better understand the issues and facts involved.

– Steve Cohn

How Private-Road Residents Are Being Treated Unfairly by the City

Andrew Flagg's letter "Private Roads Have Benefits" (November 2019) generates an untrue picture when it implies that private road residents want "... the city to pay for their privacy."

In fact, virtually all of the "private" roads requesting equal treatment are fully open to the public and do not have "No Trespassing" signs. Instead, these roads, on which 20 percent of Orindans live, are classified by the city as private for reasons that are arbitrary and unrelated to their size or benefit to the public — a benefit that is identical to that provided by similar roads the city classifies as public and therefore provides repairs, maintenance and disaster coverage for.

And the travesty is that the city supports its public cul-de-sacs with tax money that it collects from these private cul-de-sac residents while it is at the very same time denying them these same basic services.

Residents of private roads enjoy no cachet, they paid similar prices for their houses and are assessed the same taxes and garbage vehicle impact fees. Their roads provide similar traffic and pedestrian circulation and drainage benefits to those for equivalent public roads.

To further top this unfairness, private-road residents are forced to pay to replace expensive drainage culverts under their roads that directly and indirectly drain large amounts of water from public roads

Private Canyon View Drive, which is larger and has more homes than many public cul-de-sacs, directly receives millions of gallons of water from public Diablo View Drive above, and in 2004 Canyon View residents personally paid more than \$12,000 to replace a culvert carrying this water — an expense that public road residents would never have had to worry about, and that taxpayers never had to pay, because it was subsidized on the backs of private residents on our street.

The city, by depriving the private 20 percent of its residents basic services, and exposing them to disaster liabilities that the remaining 80 percent public-street residents are covered for (in part with monies paid by private residents), is enabling the public to enjoy lower taxes.

It is unfortunate that, as evidenced by the misinformation in Mr. Flagg's letter, many public road residents clearly do not recognize this. And it is time for this inequity to stop.

– Joel Libove

Why Were These Roads Made Private in the First Place?

None of the complaints by the residents of private roads published by *The Orinda News* have addressed the reason these roads were created as private roads in the first place. I presume either the developers, and therefore the purchasers of the homes on these roads, saved money by building them to a lesser standard than required by Orinda and Contra Costa County. I believe the cost of bringing these roads up to public road standards should be borne by the property owners on those roads and not by the rest of Orinda tax payers.

– Gary Johnson

◆ KIDNAPPING from page 1

due at a rural Castro Valley horse barn for a morning riding lesson when the phone rang. Two weeks prior, Eavan's horse came down with colic, a potentially deadly equine condition, and she called her mom, crying uncontrollably. Byrne didn't question the anonymous call as cell service is sporadic and riders often borrow phones to make calls. Her initial concern was about Eavan's beloved horse.



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But what was taking place was a virtual kidnapping – a scam designed to make victims think their loved one has been kidnapped and making threats to obtain a ransom when in reality there has been no abduction.

Virtual kidnapping is an extortion scheme which has been around for more than two decades. The level of sophistication has improved and now cell phone calls can be *spoofed* so the call appears to be from a loved one. Threats of harm are constant; often by screaming and shouting. The "loved one" never comes to the phone.

Rapid-fire instructions are given. There is emphasis on immediacy. Demands for money are made, usually for an anonymous wire transfer of no more than \$2,000 to

Mexico. There is little time to think about anything other than the safe return of who is "kidnapped."

"It didn't feel like a scam," said Byrne. "It felt like an assault. It was an attack that threw me into a panic and made it nearly impossible to think or reason."

The caller's initial threat "was the least violent, least explicit and least awful

[SEE KIDNAPPING page 6]

Correction

In the story "Chiropractor Comes to Aid of Refugees at Camps in Jordan, Colombia," the country of refugees treated by Jacalyn Buettner was incorrectly identified. Buettner treated refugees from Venezuela.

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 Printing.....Folger Graphics

The Orinda News

A Publication of
 The Orinda Association
 Mailing Address
 P.O. Box 97
 Orinda, California 94563
 Telephone: 925 254-0800

www.TheOrindaNews.com

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Letters to Editor for the January issue are due Dec. 8, 2019.

For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 (jill@aspenconsult.net) or Elana O'Loskey at 925-984-1751 (elanao@mac.com). The deadline for the January issue is December 8, 2019.

NEWS

Fire Officials Conduct Controlled Burn at Wagner Ranch Nature Area

By BILL HUDSON
Contributor

In an effort to reduce the threat of wildfires, local officials conducted Orinda's first controlled burn at the meadow of Wagner Ranch Nature Area.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) completed the burn Oct. 20. The department plans to use similar controlled burns to minimize wind-blown embers that can rapidly spread a wildfire and to maintain the clear ground created this summer in the 11.5-mile Shaded Fuel Break.

With little wind, and humidity within the desired range, burn conditions were optimal and the operation went according to plan.

After placing firefighters with hoses around the area, the crew used a special device to drop small amounts of burning fuel, exposing limited sections at a time. Patrolling firefighters maintained boundaries with moderate amounts of hand-sprayed water, protecting benches, nest boxes and water pipes. The gully adjoining the meadow was burned last and separately so the team could focus on the more active fire generated by its steeper slope.

Fire trucks arrived at 1 p.m. and the burn was completed at about 3:30 p.m.

With manpower diverted to the burn site, MOFD did not have enough staff for a scheduled Cub Scout station tour. Instead the troop was invited to witness the department in action at the Nature Area. The scouts were joined by roughly two dozen bats who were roused by the smoke to investigate the scene, and then returned to their homes after determining they were safe from the flames.

The burn was conducted in an area with short dry grass providing little food or

shelter for animals.

Offering hands-on education to Orinda school children, the Nature Area is comprised of four major wildlife habitats that illustrate stages of plant succession. The educational goal is to teach students about these different stages, including the plants and animals that occur in each habitat.

Prescribed burning, or some other disturbance, is required to keep the grassland and brush from turning into woodland, maintaining the distinct habitats and better representing what Orinda looked like when Native Americans regularly burned to maintain grassland with scattered valley oaks.

◆ SALES TAX from page 1

will assess whether residents want to extend the tax, as well as what the funds should be spent on. FM3's contract for the project is \$28,000. The firm is expected to contact about 400 residents either by phone or e-mail and will be looking for a cross section of randomly selected voters, according to City Manager Steve Salomon.

City Council member Amy Worth, who along with Gee heads up a subcommittee on the future of the tax, says city leaders have "no pre-conceived notions on how we should spend the money. We need to hear from the community as to their priorities. That continues to evolve."

However, both Worth and Gee say they would like to see the poll show support for extending the tax. "I am hoping a new extension at some level will pass because it is very critical to our overall infrastructure funding in Orinda," says Gee.

Citing the city's limited funds, Worth says "There's a very strong feeling that we

[SEE SALES TAX page 6]



JASON WOOD

MOFD firefighters drip fuel on a designated section of land as part of the controlled burn completed on Oct. 20, the first in Orinda history.

More on Fire Prevention

Orinda's Wildfire Emergency Preparedness & Evacuation presentation and video from the North Orinda Shaded Fuel Break Meeting are scheduled to air at various days and times on Contra Costa TV (CATV Comcast 26) throughout the month. To see the broadcast schedule, go to <http://bit.ly/2NikQ77>.



Steve Stahle 

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

◆ SALES TAX from page 5

need the resources.”

Evidence of Orinda’s funding problem is historical and is highlighted in a staff report on the poll prepared in June. It details how Orinda receives 7.39 cents of every dollar paid in property taxes. By contrast, Richmond receives 28.1 cents of every dollar of its property taxes, the highest in Contra Costa County. The lowest is Moraga at 5.32 cents per dollar, according to the report.

The reason for this is that Orinda was incorporated after the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 and never levied its own property tax. Instead, the city had to negotiate with the county for its share of the property tax pie and ended up on the short end of the stick, according to the report.

Another problem Orinda faces is that it doesn’t have any major retailers such as car dealers. As the staff report points out, if an Orindan buys a car in Walnut Creek, the local 1 percent sales tax revenue generated on the sale of the car goes to Walnut Creek, not Orinda.

Other issues the poll will address include whether the tax should sunset or be permanent, if any of the funds should be used toward other projects or to “pay for some or all of the reconstruction and conversion of private streets to public,” says the report.

If the City Council votes to put the tax on the ballot next November it would need a 50 percent plus one vote margin to pass.

Reach Paul Kilduff at editor@theorindanews.com

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POLICE BLOTTER

September 29 through November 2

Calls for Service

- 911 Hangup: 10 incidents.
- Abandoned Vehicle: 1 incident.
- Accident Injury: 1 incident.
- Accident Property: 7 incidents.
- Alarm, False: 47 incidents.
- Assault with Deadly Weapon: 1 incident.
- Burglary, Auto: 7 incidents: Camino Sobrante (x5), Moraga Ct., Orinda Way
- Burglary, Commercial: 4 incidents: Camino Pablo, Los Amigo, Orinda Sports Field, Orinda Way.
- Burglary, Residential: 4 incidents: Greenwood Ct. (x2), Crane Terr., Washington Ln.
- Civil Disturbance: 3 incidents.
- CVC Moving Violation: 35 incidents.
- CVC Non-Moving Violation: 32 incidents.
- Disturbing the Peace: 1 incident.
- Found Property: 1 incident.
- Fraud: 2 incidents.
- Grand Theft: 4 incidents: Camino Pablo, Moraga Way (x2), El Toyonal.
- Identity Theft: 2 incidents.
- Loud Music: 2 incidents.
- Loud Noise: 2 incidents.
- Loud Party: 1 incident.
- Missing Adult: 1 incident.
- Ordinance Violation: 4 incidents.
- Outside Assist: 7 incidents.

- Parking Detail: 18 incidents.
- Patrol Request: 45 incidents.
- Petty Theft: 6 incidents.
- Reckless Driving: 2 incidents.
- Service to Citizen: 58 incidents.
- Suspicious Circumstances: 5 incidents.
- Suspicious Person Stop: 4 incidents.
- Suspicious Subject: 8 incidents.
- Suspicious Vehicle Stop: 16 incidents.
- Traffic Collision/Property Damage: incidents.
- Trespassing: 1 incident.
- Vacation House Check: 15 incidents.
- Vandalism: 1 incident.
- Vehicle Theft: 1 incident: Camino Pablo.
- Welfare Check: 5 incidents.

Arrest

- Drug Possession: 1 arrest.
- Probation Violation: 1 arrest.
- Warrant Arrest: 2 arrest.

BART Statistics

No incidents reported.

– Compiled by David Dierks
Assistant Editor

For more incidents details, visit www.crimereports.com.

◆ KIDNAPPING from page 4

thing he said to me for the next half hour. The threats and abuse he shouted left me speechless, which was deliberate,” Byrne said.

She asked several times to speak to Eavan but received only more threats and demands. The caller informed Byrne her daughter “saw something she shouldn’t have and started shooting off her mouth and now we have her.” He threatened explicit bodily harm if his demands were not carried out.

First and foremost, Byrne was told not to contact the police as the caller said he “had a scanner and was watching for any activity.” She was instructed to drive to her

bank to withdraw money.

“How much cash can you get your hands on in an hour?”

“How much is in your bank account?”

“How old are you?”

“What are you driving?”

“I can see you, so don’t lie to me.”

“There are people at the bank watching for you.”

According to Dennis Curran, detective sergeant with the Orinda Police Department, this kind of incident “does not happen often here. It is not at all typical. This is a common crime in Mexico, similar to our car burglaries,” he said. “Targeted victims here are usually from the Hispanic populous, especially families who are not fluent in

[SEE KIDNAPPING page 12]

Nominations for the 2019 Citizen of the Year or William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award are now being accepted.

Individuals or local groups are eligible.
Winners will be feted at a gala dinner at
the Orinda Country Club in March.

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AROUND TOWN

Batch & Brine Bartender Takes Top Prize at Art of Mixology

The Sixth Annual Art of Mixology cocktail competition took place Oct. 12 in Orinda's Theatre Square, hosted by and benefitting the Lamorinda Arts Council (LAC). The sold-out event invited East Bay mixologists to compete for prizes awarded by industry professionals in six categories. Ticket buyers could sample a taste of each entry and vote to determine the winner in the Audience Favorite category.

This year's winners are: Mixologist of the Year - Casey Carr (Batch & Brine), Second Place - Phillip McElvain (Grand

Lake Kitchen), Third Place - Vincenzo Piccione (Benvenuti Ristorante), Home Crafted Cocktail Award - Lily Gonzalez, Audience Favorite - Vincenzo Piccione, and Art of Table Staging Award - Phillip McElvain.

Lamorinda Arts Council is a nonprofit organization whose mission is "to ignite and sustain artistic expression and appreciation for all ages throughout Lamorinda." Art of Mixology is LAC's largest fundraiser, providing support for programs such as Lamorinda Idol and Lamorinda ShortDocs; see lamorindaarts.org.

On the Calendar in December

- 2 **Youth Ink.** Submission forms will be accepted via email through Feb. 28, available through Orinda Intermediate School, several local private middle schools, the Orinda Public Library, and online at www.orinda-juniors.org. See article p. 2.
- 4 **Evening with Mike Ross** who will introduce his newest collection of literary memorabilia. 6 p.m. Orinda Books*.
- 5 **Story Time with Cathy G.** Join Cathy for an hour of books and fun for all ages. 10 - 11 a.m. Orinda Books*. Also, Dec. 12 and 19. **Pat's Book Group** will read and discuss *The Fish Can Sing* by Halldor Laxness. 10 a.m. Orinda Books*.
Alex Counts will introduce his new book, *Changing the World without Losing Your Mind: Leadership Lessons from Three Decades of Social Entrepreneurship*. 5:30 p.m. Orinda Books*.
An Evening of Local Wines, Food, and Dancing to the Sounds of Diamond Dave, with the Lamorinda Wine Growers Association. 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. The Serbian Cultural Center, 1700 School St., Moraga. lamorindawinegrowers.com.
- 6 **2019 Hacienda Holiday Faire.** Find handcrafted holiday gifts and support local artisans at the Moraga Parks & Rec annual holiday faire. Noon - 8 p.m. Also, Dec. 7 and 8, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Hacienda de las Flores, 2100 Donald Drive, Moraga. For more information: HaciendaHolidayFaire@gmail.com; www.facebook.com/Hacienda-HolidayFaire.
- 7 **Sleepy Hollow Holiday Walk.** A festive

- stroll around the neighborhood in celebration of the season, 9 a.m. 76 Tarry Lane. See article p. 2.
Artist Reception with Linda Huffman. 2:30 p.m. Wilder Art and Garden Center, 20 Orinda Fields Lane, Orinda. See article p. 10.
- 8 **New Orleans Holiday.** City of Orinda Senior World Discovery Trips featuring 4 nights/5 days in the French Quarter. orindaparksrec@cityoforinda.org call 925-253-4216.
Artist Reception with painters Judy Feins and Kath Balamuth and photographer Farzeen Taban. 2:30 p.m. Art Gallery at the Orinda Library. See article p. 10.
Live at Orinda Performance by Emily Skinner. One of Broadway's most engaging and versatile performers. 5 p.m. Orinda Theatre, \$55 to \$70. Info. and tickets at www.lamorindatheatres.com or 925-254-9065.
- 11 **The Second Wednesday Book Group** will read and discuss *Shadow Divers* by Robert Kurson. 3 p.m. Orinda Books*.
- 12 **Children's Health Guild, "Believe"** fundraiser benefiting UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland and George Mark Children's House. 9:30 a.m., Ritz-Carlton San Francisco. Go to www.childrenshealthguild.org.
Classic Film Showcase (Free Movie Night) presents *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* (1989) with Chevy Chase and Beverly D'Angelo, 7 p.m. Orinda Theatre, lamorindatheatres.com.

[SEE CALENDAR page 12]



ELANA O'LOSKEY

A flash mob led and choreographed by Art of Mixology event chair Justin Cole (center) of Joy in Motion dance studio momentarily took center stage in Theatre Square.

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◆ STR from page 1

regulating STRs. To that end, they plan to have additional meetings for public input.

Councilmembers asked staff to draft the urgency ordinance at a Nov. 5 council meeting where 50 residents spoke, and an additional 39 people sent emails regarding short-term rentals. The Nov. 19 meeting also brought a good-size turnout with 18 people expressing a variety of views.

“This was a ghastly tragedy,” said Phil Leitner. “I see many ways to accommodate the problems, but I don’t think that the ordinance proposed addresses the issues. It feels like a knee-jerk reaction.”

Gee said she thought long and hard about what to do and felt it important “to adopt something now to help keep Orindans safe. We can work on details for a permanent ordinance while the urgency ordinance is in effect. Lots of good suggestions heard here tonight.”

The Halloween night party took place at a

non-hosted short-term rental at 114 Lucille Way. According to police, more than 100 young people attended the party, which was advertised on social media. At about 10:50 p.m. shots rang out leaving three dead at the scene, police said. Two more young people died at the hospital, and at least five more suffered serious injuries while fleeing.

A spontaneous memorial sprang up at the corner of Brookwood Way and Camino Pablo offering condolences to the family and friends of the victims: Javlin County, 29; Tiyon Farley, 22; Raymon Hill Jr., 23; Omar Taylor, 24; and Oshiana Tompkins, 19. A candlelight vigil, organized by Orinda resident Leslie Darwin, was held Nov. 10 at the Library Plaza.

Mayor Inga Miller, said, “I am very pleased and proud of how police responded

The shootings left Orinda residents concerned for their safety, especially those who live on Lucille Way and nearby streets. Elise Torres gave an emotional plea at the Nov. 5 City Council meeting saying, “My family doesn’t feel safe now. They could have shot into my house and killed my babies. We’re all scared and having trouble sleeping, but what can we do? We can’t sell the house. No one will want to buy a house on Lucille Way now.”

Several residents also questioned why it took the Orinda Police more than an hour to respond to noise complaints by neighbors regarding the party. Dispatch logs show the first complaint came in at 9:35 p.m., but police didn’t respond until almost 11 p.m.

According to Chief Cook, two officers were on duty but were called to respond

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ELANA O'LOSKEY

Community members gathered at Orinda’s Library Plaza at dusk on Nov. 10 to remember Javlin County, Raymon Hill Jr., Tiyon Farley, Omar Taylor and Oshiana Tompkins, who lost their lives on Halloween night.

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as well as the reactions of the Orinda community. It’s nice to see how our community came together over this tragedy.”

The Contra Costa Sheriff’s office, FBI, San Francisco police, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and police in San Mateo, Marin City, Vallejo, Antioch and Orinda continue to work on the investigation. On Nov. 14, police arrested five men in connection with the shootings. Four of the five were subsequently released pending further investigations. “It’s a very complex situation,” said Orinda Police Chief David Cook at the Nov. 19 meeting. “The investigation showed that two gangs were involved: the Haight Street gang from San Francisco and the Marin City Jungle gang. We are all still very involved pursuing a number of leads and interviewing witnesses.”

to a home invasion robbery in Lafayette involving at least one firearm and the assault of the home’s occupants. Sheriff logs show that the Orinda officers were sent to Oakland to recover a car stolen during the violent robbery.

“While not insignificant, there were no indications of violence associated with the noise complaints, so the Lafayette call took priority,” Cook said. “The officers had finished and were heading to 114 Lucille Way when they received reports of shots fired. Officers from other locations were also dispatched to Lucille Way, including seven forensics experts who spent 16 hours combing the scene for evidence.”

Cook noted that if a high-priority call had been received in Orinda while the officers were engaged elsewhere, police units from

[SEE STR page 9]



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MIMI BOMMARITO



December. The month of jingle bells and joy. Ho Ho Ho vs. No No No. Sure, I could write about Secret Santa debacles or the pressure of attending a cookie exchange amidst everyone's life threatening allergies and dietary restrictions. But my heart keeps returning to the victims of the Halloween night shootings and imagining how painful the holidays will be for their families this year.

Our city is getting some major side eye for appearing more focused on regulating Airbnb rental parameters. While I do not believe this is accurate, I can also see where actions can easily be misconstrued in the wake of an unexpected and heartbreaking tragedy.

Sometimes wisdom emerges where you least expect it. "I think the City Council is just trying to do something—anything—to feel like they are helping," my daughter observed. "If they just did nothing, it would look even worse."

Be still my heart. I spy with my little eye some frontal lobe development.

She's right, we must do something. Every actionable item is positive. Addressing rental parameters is a good start, but it is only the beginning. Even if we don't know

what to do, it's better than doing nothing, while fervently hoping someone else has an idea.

Are we stymied because we are all afraid of being laughed at, criticized, or ridiculed for a proposed solution? I'm reminded of *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, when Charlie Brown and Linus take a snowy walk to the tree lot to purchase a small Christmas tree, as if somehow *that* will miraculously solve the problem of Charlie Brown's inability to corral his pageant actors and relieve his crippling sense of ineptitude. Charlie Brown and Linus get deep. They look to the stars. They talk about miracles. They make, what initially seems like an absurd mistake, buying the iconic, pitiful little tree. Yet somehow, as a result of their actions, there is a happy ending.

I get it now. Sometimes there is no logical way to solve a problem, but it does not mean the problem is unsolvable. Sometimes we stumble on a solution, but we must first be willing to try.

The day after the shooting, I read a school-wide email from Miramonte Principal Julie Parks, who reassured parents that teachers and counselors had been informed

[SEE EVERYDAY page 15]

◆ STR from page 8

nearby jurisdictions would have responded as part of a mutual-aid agreement. Cook also said it was very unusual to have two major violent events at the same time in Lamorinda. "Two officers is our usual number on duty, and we've never had a problem like this before."

Michael Young Wang and Wenlin Luo, owners of 114 Lucille Way, registered their property as an STR with the city in November 2018. On Feb. 11 police received complaints about noise, parking and trash from a large party at the property. The owner received two violation notices for exceeding maximum occupancy and violating STR parking requirements. In July, the city received complaints on overfilled garbage cans. According to police records, the next complaint was the one about noise on Oct. 31.

Orinda passed its Short-Term Rental Ordinance on Sept. 5, 2017, effective Oct. 5, 2017. All short-term rentals must be registered with the city and pay a Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT). The TOT, which from 2017 to September 2018 amounted


to \$74,817.68, goes into the city's general fund. Orinda has 51 properties registered as STRs but only 32 of those are currently actively available for rental. Of these, 21 are hosted and 11 are non-hosted. Staff time to process the registration of STRs is covered by the registration fee paid by the property owner.

The city contracts with Host Compliance, LLC to help monitor STRs within city limits. Data collected by Host Compliance helps city staff determine whether a listing is active and is hosted or non-hosted.

When complaints are received, the city sends a courtesy letter to the property owner followed by a Notice of Violation, if one is determined to exist. If the property owner fails to resolve the code violation, a citation can be issued with fines starting at \$250 for the first violation, \$500 for the second and \$1,000 for the third and subsequent violations.

Beginning Dec. 15, Airbnb said it is expanding manual screening of high-risk reservations.


Reach Sally Hogarty at sally@theorindanews.com.



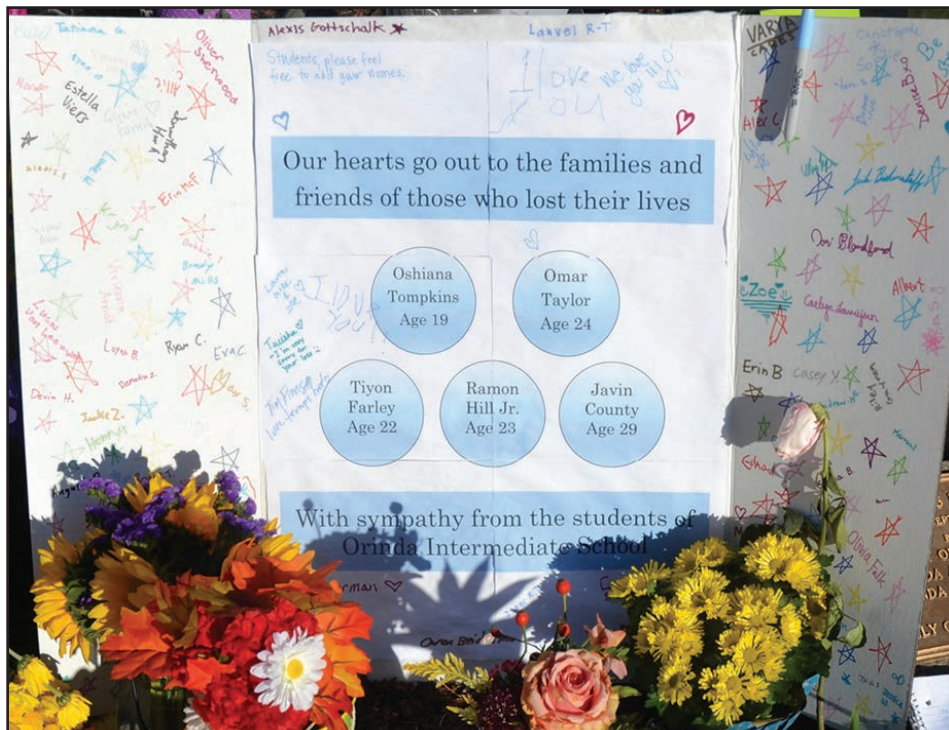
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SALLY HOGARTY

Orinda Intermediate students conveyed their condolences to the families who lost loved ones in the Oct. 31 shooting. Their "card" is part of the memorial at Brookwood Road and Camino Pablo.

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INTERNATIONAL REALTY

December Galleries: Nature, National Parks, Wine Bottles and More

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

The Lamorinda Arts Council this month presents the oil paintings of Judy Feins, 2D and 3D work from the Oakland Art Association, nature-rich photographs by Farzeen Taban and painted wine bottles by Kath Balamuth.

Judy Feins of Orinda has worked in oils for two decades. She says, "Watching the play of light in the sky and over the earth adds another dimension and layer of enjoyment to life; it's like the way music enhances a movie." "Radiance" is her theme, meaning she works to capture light in the landscape on canvas. Examples are: the dazzle on a Sierra lake in the afternoon; a tree lit up to glow brilliant yellow with backlight; or the sun glimmering as it first hits a reservoir through a winter morning's fog. She says she loves how Monet and local artist Bill Cone paint rocks seen beneath clear water, and that it took her a while to

figure out how to do that.

Artists who inspire her include John Singer Sargent, Sorolla, Matisse, Monet and Van Gogh. Local artists she likes include Tim Horn, Tom Hughes and Brian Blood among others. Feins is a member of the Lamorinda Arts Alliance and other arts organizations. Look for her *Autumn, Big Bear Lake*, an 18" x 24" oil painting on board. For more about her art go to www.judithfeins.com.

The Oakland Art Association's (OAA) juried show of 2D and 3D artwork encompasses many genres including ceramics, portraits, figurative and abstract paintings. President Rick Nelson's *Greek Vase*, an 8.5" x 5.5" segmented walnut turning, is like a tactile puzzle – you want to pick it up. The OAA is a nonprofit group of artists, photographers and art supporters from Alameda and Contra Costa counties. They encourage artistic endeavor in the community, support public school art education and arrange show venues for their



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sunlight dances on water in **Judy Feins'** *Autumn, Big Bear Lake*, an 18" x 24" oil painting.



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members' artwork. Learn more at www.oaklandart579.org.

Farzeen Taban of Benicia comes from a family of art lovers – music, paintings, drawings, sculpture and every form of art was revered. He says this nurturing family circle taught him by example how to hold the ephemeral beauty in the natural world close to heart. Taban considers photography the ideal method for capturing such beauty. Self-taught, he pours over books and other media, ever enlarging his knowledge base. He shares Feins' fascination with light and says, "The study of light alone could happily occupy the rest of my days."

His 30" x 40" photographic print on canvas, *Half Dome in Winter*, exemplifies his theme, "National Parks." It rivets your attention to both the straw colored grasses bowed and huddled by cold as well as the whitecap beckoning from the Dome. Taban often juxtaposes viewpoints only nature offers in the ever-changing mantle of disguises we know as seasons. Look at more of his work at www.farzeen.com.

Kath Balamuth of Orinda says she enjoyed drawing and painting as a child and young adult and received a BA in Design from UC Berkeley but never considered herself "good enough" to pursue a fine art career. Those days are over; now in her eighth decade she says, "I consider myself an 'emerging artist' and plan to continue learning and creating art for the rest of my life — or as long as I am able."

For this exhibit she focuses on painted wine bottles, which was inspired by her

visit to SFMOMA to experience *Rene Magritte: The Fifth Season* last year. She learned that during WWII Magritte was unable to procure canvas so he painted on what was at hand — discarded wine bottles. Balamuth, intrigued, began experimenting and came up with her eponymous "Bala Bottles" series. Several titles are riffs on famous artworks such as *Wheatfield with Crows (Inspired by Van Gogh)*. Balamuth is also a member of the Lamorinda Arts Alliance. See what she's up to at www.kathbalamuth.com.

Join the artists at their reception 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Dec. 8 .

To learn more about the Lamorinda Arts Council go to www.lamorindaarts.org. Visit the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way, during normal library hours – Mon. through Thurs., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Fri. and Sat., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sun., 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Dec. 24-25 and at 5 p.m. on Dec. 31. Call 925-254-2184 for more information or visit <http://ccclib.org/>.

Art Gallery at Wilder: It's Kind of Eclectic

The Lamorinda Arts Council presents a solo exhibit of Linda Huffman. Her theme, "It's Kind of Eclectic," arises from her peripatetic painting habits. Now retired after a 38 year career in secondary education she says she delights in painting what appeals to her and letting the themes and techniques evolve. "My choices must be challenging, and I stumble upon subjects

[SEE GALLERIES page 11]

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ARTS

A Sweet Dream Comes to Life in Orinda Ballet's *Nutcracker*

Orinda Ballet Academy (OBA) presents *A Sweet Dream Nutcracker*, bringing Clara and her magical adventure through the Enchanted Winter Forest and the Land of Sweets back to the stage of the Library Auditorium. In its 11th year, the production is helmed by Artistic Director Patricia Tomlinson and features student dancers Vivienne Leach and Bailey Brothers alternating in the role of Clara, joined by guest professional artists Jackie McConnell, Maurice Monge, John Orr and Alysia Chang, as well as fellow OBA students.

The opening night performance on Friday, Dec. 13 begins at 6:30 p.m., with additional performances on Saturday, Dec. 14 at 11:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. and on Sunday, Dec. 15 at 11:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Performances are 1 hour and 15 minutes, with one intermission. Tickets are \$22 for children and \$25 for adults and can be purchased at BrownPaperTickets.com. For more information about OBA's *A Sweet Dream Nutcracker*, go to www.OrindaBalletAcademy.com.



PATRICIA TOMLINSON

Far left, front row (L-R): **Emily Charo** and **Ella Pierce**. Far left, back row (L-R): **Samantha Chiou**, **Bay Friedman** and **Jocelyn Lau**. Center, kneeling: **Bailey Brothers** as "Clara." Center, standing (L-R): **Kavina Habarakada**, **Elsa Cooke** and **Vivienne Leach**. Far right, front row (L-R): **Sadie Elkind**, **Maya Elkind** and **Aveline Schoon**. Far right, back row (L-R): **Ruby Killian**, **Olivia Silverstein** and **Caitlyn Petek**.

◆ GALLERIES from page 10

as they appear to be intriguing enough to invest the months which I will need to complete them," she says.

Growing up was filled with art projects for things like posters for elections, cheer-leading, stage sets, programs for drama, dance and the yearbook. Her dad employed her part time at his printing company and taught her typesetting, cropping photos, designing labels, menus, Christmas cards, paste-up and other commercial art skills which she has used for extra income.

She has taken many classes and workshops through the years at various places: California College of Arts and Crafts, University of Hawaii, Walnut Creek Civic Community Arts, Oakland, Cal Extension, and from professional artists in watercolor, pastel, printmaking, airbrush, colored pen-

cil, calligraphy, basketry, paper making, oils, sculpture, jewelry and ceramics. Her work is in private collections and has been shown and won awards in Walnut Creek, Concord, Berkeley, Martinez, Pleasanton, Livermore, Pittsburg and Palm Desert.

Huffman paints with a serene yet startling realistic brushstroke, materializing scenes that often go unnoticed by the average person. She sees the shadows and crevices of trees, flowers, even bicyclists, and gives them emotion and voice. Her 26" x 22" oil on canvas *Sedona Sentinels* pulls you right into the world of desert trees, close up and personal.

Learn more at her artist reception 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Dec. 7.

The Art Gallery at Wilder, 20 Orinda Fields Lane, is open for scheduled events such as artist receptions on the first Saturday of every month from 2:30 – 4:30 p.m., on Tues. and Thur. from 6 – 8 p.m. and by appointment. Contact Lamorinda Arts Council Curator Denise Nomura, at wildergallery@lamorindaarts.org or <https://lamorindaarts.org> for more information.

Moving forward, more regular hours will



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Artist **Linda Huffman** captures the stark beauty of desert trees in *Sedona Sentinels*, a 26" x 22" oil on canvas included in her Wilder exhibit.

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be scheduled. The Orinda Parks and Recreation Dept. is seeking bookings of classes and meetings. Contact them at OrindaPark-sandRec@cityoforinda.org, visit them at 28

Orinda Way or call 925-254-2445.

Reach **Elana O'Loskey** at business@theorindanews.com.

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Information at OrindaBalletAcademy.com



www.OrindaBalletAcademy.com

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Photo's courtesy of Almagro Gomez



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AROUND TOWN

CAR TIME

Winter Driving and Maintenance



By JOHN VANEK

When thinking about winter, do we consider the car, truck or SUV we drive on a daily basis? Probably not.

We tend to think about how cold and dark it is. However the vehicles we drive also need consideration. Just because we do not live on the East Coast where it snows and freezes doesn't mean that our drivers are not affected by the weather here. If you do take a trip to the snow it is even more crucial that your vehicle is ready.

During dry months we are not as concerned about important items like tires and suspension. When your tires are 50 percent you would think that you have 50 percent life left. You don't want to wait until they are bald.

The reality is that the best life of your tires is gone. When the tires are 50 percent worn they no longer have the ability to channel water through the treads and are more likely to lose traction and skid out of control.

When the shocks and struts become worn out they lose their dampening and no longer offer the same control in emergency maneuvers, which is amplified in wet or slippery conditions.

Many components on your vehicle are

affected by cold and moisture, including the battery. Batteries generally last about three years these days. If your car or your battery has that time frame on it, but is still operating, you should have it tested before winter hits. A marginal battery will seem fine until it hits a cold or hot surge.

Windshield wiper and washer systems are crucial to vision in bad weather. Wiper blades get dried out by the sun and will streak by the time winter hits. You do not know if you have washer fluid in your system until the first time you try to use it. All these items should be checked regularly.

In case you take a road trip to the snow there are special preparations to take. Everything mentioned above is crucial in freezing weather. There is a special washer fluid that won't freeze and should be added before you head toward colder weather.

Tire chains also are a good idea. You should bring an emergency kit that includes items like jumper cables, road flairs and a flash light. You should also bring personal items like blankets and snacks in case you get stuck. Make sure your emergency road service is up to date. And be sure to let friends or family know that you are headed

[SEE CAR TIME page 15]



SALLY HOGARTY

Orinda's elementary school choirs joined together to perform at last year's tree lighting event.

Annual Tree Lighting Kicks Off Holiday Season in Orinda Village

Get in the spirit of the holiday season at the 33rd annual Hospice Tree of Lights ceremony on Saturday, Dec. 7, co-sponsored by Hospice East Bay and the Orinda Rotary. The ceremony begins at 4:30 p.m. in front of Bank of America in the Orinda Village, with performances by Orinda's elementary and middle school choirs, followed by the lighting of the majestic oak tree that presides over the parking lot. In keeping with tradition,

Santa Claus will make a special visit, with a fire truck serving as his sleigh for the evening.

Visitors can honor loved ones that have passed away by purchasing memorial lights on the tree, with proceeds going to Hospice East Bay in support of their mission to provide compassionate end-of-life care. For more information on purchasing a light or to donate to Hospice East Bay, go to www.hospiceeastbay.org.

The Orinda Library in December

The Orinda Library will be closed Dec. 24 and 25 and will close at 5 p.m. on Dec. 31.

- 2 **Maker Monday.** Whether it's Legos, a craft, or building, there's always something happening on Monday. Geared for ages 6-9. 2:30-3:30. Also Dec. 9, 16, and 23.
- 3 **Baby Storytime.** Songs, stories and rhymes for infants through 18-months old (pre-walkers) and their caregivers only. Families with older children are welcome at Toddler Storytime. 11:30 a.m. in the Gallery Room. Also Dec. 4, 10, 11, 17, and 18
- 4 **Toddler Storytime.** Early literacy story-times for children 1-3 years old and their caregivers. 10:30 a.m. in Room 6 in the Community Center. Also Dec. 11 and 18.
- 5 **Computer Help.** Receive computing help from a knowledgeable volunteer. Registration required. Focus is on beginning users. Appointments at 1 and 2 p.m. Register online, or call 925-254-2184. Also Dec. 12 and 19.
- ESL Conversation Group.** Volunteer teachers lead group discussions for those learning English as a second language (ESL). Free drop-in, open to all. 1 - 2:30 p.m. in Study Room A. Also Dec. 12 and 19.
- Dealer Days Book Sale** Sponsored by the Friends of the Orinda Library. 10 a.m. to noon. Library Sorting Room.
- 6 **Homemade Holidays.** Adults and teens

are invited to join Valerie Adinolfi to make handmade holiday crafts including gift tags and decorations. All materials provided. 1:30 - 2:30 pm. Register at <http://ccclib.org/locations/orinda.html>. Sponsored by the Friends of the Orinda Library.

- 10 **Orinda Writers' Group.** Meet with a group of beginning writers in a supportive environment. Share two pages of your writing (any genre) and get feedback. 6:30 - 8 p.m. in Study Room A.
- 17 **Mystery Book Club.** Uncover and discuss *The Gate Keeper* by Charles Todd. 3 - 4:30 p.m. in Study Room A.
- 30 **Yappy New Year.** A blend of Maker Monday and Paws to Read. Come read a favorite holiday story to our dogs (or tell them your upcoming resolution) and make a craft. No registration needed. 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. in the Garden Room. Sponsored by the Friends of the Orinda Library.
- 31 **Noon Year's Eve Program.** Unable to stay up to midnight? Come celebrate a little early with crafts, a countdown, and dancing. Geared for families with young children. 11 a.m. - noon in the Garden Room. Sponsored by the Friends of the Orinda Library.

Send calendar items to Jill Gelster at calendar@aspenconsult.net.

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Holiday Shopping: Special Finds Within Town

By MIMI BOMMARITO
Staff Writer

Yes, Santa Claus, there is a Virginia (and a Virgil) and it's time you stopped taking credit for all of their legwork.

When it comes to holiday gifts, there is a plethora of options within Orinda's city limits. No need to trek to the North Pole, otherwise known as San Francisco or Walnut Creek with their claustrophobic parking garages filled with harried, irritable consumers. This guide to shopping local bolsters our local tax base, spreads joy, and does not involve dieting, exercise, abstinence, yoga pants, ice buckets or anything potentially involving paramedics.

Forget the hours spent on your laptop ordering gifts online. You know the drill by now: Shipped to the wrong address, backordered till President's Day, or of dubious quality compared to their doctored-up website glamour shots.

Try entertaining the children or yourself with a shopping trip the way it was done "back in the olden days" of 1986. Wander into a real store. Hum along with your favorite holiday tunes. Model for your teenager how to verbally engage with a sales clerk. Pick up and examine various gift options.

Here are some suggestions for every member of the family.

Mom

Sanvitalia: So much more than succulents, although their custom arrangements are guaranteed to drop a jaw. Jewelry, gifts, baby, home décor too.

Morrison's Jewelers: She has earned it.

Hollyhock: So so so much more than cards and stationary. Darling Mud Pie serving pieces, candles, soaps, spa items, whimsical toys and puzzles for kids, cool expandable water bottles, artisan fold-up shopping bags.

Orinda Books: Cut your teeth on a great book and cut your veggies on an artisan cutting board. They carry original jewelry now too.

ReChic 101: Gorgeous boutique consignment. Features a "Holiday Rack" of special occasion, aka *partaaaay* clothing, a jeans

bar, hostess gifts, local honey, new jewelry wildly popular with teens.

Cheryl's Closet: Boutique consignment. Highly selective, fashionably curated, continually refreshed on a 60-day basis. Good for a mother and Mother Earth.

McCaulou's: Chic, collapsible all-weather hats for the stylish commuter, PJ Salvage Women's pajama sets, Cuddle Duds and downy bed jackets.

Dad

McCaulou's: An impressive selection of sophisticated cashmere men's scarves that will not break the bank. If Dad isn't the type to compliment his cold-weather ensemble with a stylish scarf, sit him down to watch a few episodes of "Queer Eye." Perhaps it will subtly embolden him to up his fashion game a bit. And if shaming and intimidation simply won't work, the store carries a wide array of Warriors, A's, Giants and 49ers gear, as well as an abundance of cozy, thick flannel shirts, quarter zips, vests and jackets, guaranteed to please the manly man.

Orinda Hardware: Carries the always popular Weber grills. Free local delivery and free assembly. Dad might be especially glad to own one in the event of more power outages.

Orinda Theatre: Gift cards for a movie are always a hit. Grandma and Grandpa would love a "free" night on the town.

The Kids

McCaulou's: Not to be missed: Western Chief rain boots. No wonder these boots fly off the shelves. They are adorable, with



MIMI BOMMARITO

There's a gift for every kid at **Sweet Dreams** toy store, with board games, stuffed animals, art supplies and more.

their sparkles, light-up heels, dinosaurs, camouflage, and firefighter replicas. Be prepared: your little one will want to wear them everywhere, even to bed. Perhaps this is the perfect gift for a grandson or a granddaughter, if only to ignite a parent-child battle of wills. Seniors know, revenge can taste especially sweet, cloaked innocently in holiday gifting.

Sweet Dreams: Our local toy store is chock-full of anything that delights. Hot items this year are Squishables, which are plush toys in the shape of foods. The avocado is exceptionally popular. Go figure! Perennial favorites are Legos, Thomas the Train sets, science-related kits, and board games.

You can do this, Orinda. Ready, set, shop!

Reach Mimi Bommarito at mimi.bommarito@theorindanews.com.

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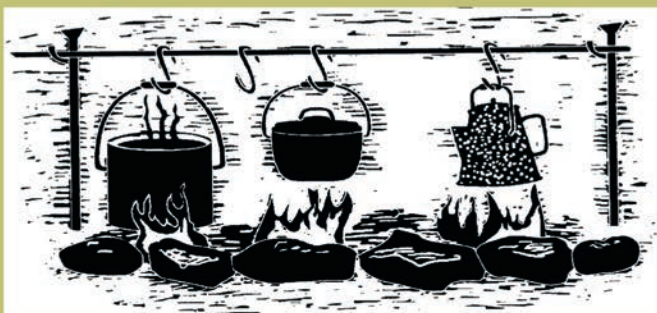
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◆ CLUBS from page 12

Orinda Job's Daughters. First and third Mondays, 7 p.m., 9 Altarinda Road, 925-283-7176.

Orinda Junior Women's Club. First Tuesday, Sept. through June, 7 p.m. Orinda residents invited to learn about the group and how to give back to the community. RSVP on Facebook at Orinda Junior Women's Club or at www.orindajuniors.org.

Orinda Masonic Lodge #122 F&AM. First Thursday, except holidays. Family dinner at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 8 p.m., 9 Altarinda Road, Orinda Masonic Center. 925-254-5211, www.orindalodge.org.

Orinda Rotary. Every Wednesday, noon, Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way, 925-254-2222, www.orindarotary.org.

Orinda Satellite Rotary Club. Second Wednesday. Call Sylvia at 510-224-8548.

Orinda/Tabor (Czech Republic) Sister City

Foundation. Fourth Thursday, 7 p.m., social, 7:30 p.m. meeting. For more information 925-254-8260.

Orinda Teen Advisory Council. Second Wednesday, 4 p.m., Community Center, 28 Orinda Way, email orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com.

Orinda Woman's Club. Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m.. Call Jean Barnhart at 925-254-3881 or go to www.orindawomansclub.org.

Sons in Retirement Lamorinda Branch 174. Second Wednesday, 11 a.m. lunch. Holy Trinity Culture Center 1700 School St., Moraga. A social organization of retired and semi-retired men who enjoy leisure time with friends and activities. For info., call Tyler at 925-963-5741, www.branch174.sirinc2.org.

Send calendar items to Jill Gelster at calendar@aspensconsult.net

What's
On
Deck
With
Parks &
Rec!

- Dec. 4-6 – Orinda Winter/Spring Activity Guide Delivered
- Dec. 6 – Orinda Winter/Spring Registration Opens
- Dec. 13-15 – Orinda Ballet Academy Presents "A Sweet Dream Nutcracker" www.OrindaBalletAcademy.com
- Dec. 13 – Kids Night Out, Ages 4-11Y, 6pm-9:30pm, \$30/\$34.50
- Dec. 16 – Orinda Youth Sports (OYS) Winter Basketball Registration Closes
- Dec. 24 – City Offices Closed 12-5 p.m. for Christmas Eve
- Dec. 25 – City Offices Closed for Christmas
- Dec. 23-27 – Carpentry Camp M/Tu/Th/F Ages 5-16Y 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.
- Dec. 26-27 – Basketball Camp Ages 7-13Y 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.



Orinda Parks and Recreation Department
925-254-2445

www.OrindaParksandRec.org

OrindaParksandRec@CityofOrinda.org

28 Orinda Way – Orinda Community Center

Administrative Office Hours – Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

CONTINUATIONS

◆ **EVERYDAY** from page 9

of the Halloween tragedy and were on alert to address issues students might have. She listed some “prompts” that staff could use to ensure classroom dialogue about the event. One that struck me was “What gives you hope during difficult times?” Sadly, I went to bed pondering that prompt, and the only answer I could come up with was, “Nothing.”

The next day, however, brought improvement. On my morning run with my dog, optimism resurfaced. I envisioned a headline above a long article in *The New York Times* that read “Why Did Gun Violence Subside After Orinda Mass Shooting?” Visualizing that imaginary headline somehow gave me hope. Could this event become a catalyst for change?

We are a smart, conscientious group, unfairly labeled as citizens who are “shocked by violence in their own community.” While I will not dispute the concept of the “Orinda Bubble,” we have all seen so much senseless violence in the past decade that we would be fools if we didn’t feel like it’s a nightmarish, cosmic game of Duck Duck Goose until any one of us is in the wrong place at the wrong time.

But what if this shooting inspired us to actually affect change because it hit so close to home that we cannot look away and become distracted. Maybe we get more involved in charity work – mentor an underprivileged child or someone who is the first in their family to attend college.

Maybe we vow to do more in underserved communities.

Maybe we make five ornaments for our tree, with the names of each of the five victims, so we are reminded to send healing love and light to their families throughout the holiday season. Maybe we skip a gift or two and instead donate to each of the victims’ *Go Fund Me* accounts, or start an education fund or a teddy bear drive for the children of the victims.

Oshiana Tompkins, 19, was her mother’s only child. Money raised from her *Go Fund Me* account will allow her mother to access grief counseling. Oshiana, who, as a friend said on the *Go Fund Me* page, “had a smile that could light up the room,” was also an organ donor. “Her final act was to help others,” said a family member.

Omar Taylor, 24, was hired as a deejay at the event. Friends said he was known as a hardworking father, supporting his 3-year-old daughter. Music and deejaying brought him happiness. “He wanted to be successful, he wanted to take care of his family,” his stepmother told KGO-TV.

Raymon Hill Jr., 23, was a musician who grew up in San Francisco and lived in Oakland. “I am ripped apart,” said his father, Raymon Hill Sr. “He was the greatest. He was genuine, loving and loyal. He loved his music,” Hill’s father told ABC News. This father has lost three sons to gun violence.

Javlin County, 29, had taken his two children out to trick or treat that evening, before the party. “Javlin’s sense of humor

and genuineness always shone brightly and touched many,” a cousin wrote on a *Go Fund Me* page.

Tiyon Farley, 22, looked forward to welcoming a newborn son in March. “Tiyon was a great brother, nephew, cousin and friend,” his older brother wrote on Tiyon’s *Go Fund Me* page. “Tiyon was a big family guy. He had a great sense of humor, a huge heart, and was selfless and ambitious.”

Reach Mimi Bammarito at mimi.bammarito@theorindanews.com.

◆ **CAR TIME** from page 13

out of town and when you expect to return.

As usual I implore you to be a good consumer of automotive repair and have your vehicle serviced regularly. Vehicles need attention year around. Drive safely and remember that the weather will affect the reliability of your vehicle and the safety of your family.

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School Events in December

- 2 **Glorietta Elementary**, GPC Executive Meeting, 10:30 a.m.
- Miramonte High School**, Boosters Meeting, 6 p.m.
- 3 **Glorietta Elementary**, Kidpower Safety Workshop, a program used to teach students tools for safety and interpersonal communication. 5:30 p.m. To enroll, contact Patty Rostampour at 925-258-6204.
- Miramonte High School**, MHS Football Banquet, 6 p.m.
- 5 **Orinda Intermediate School**, *Frozen JR*, Disney’s musical through Dec. 7, Bulldog Theater, 80 Ivy Drive. \$3-\$10. Go to www.showtix4u.com for show times and tickets. Tickets also available at the door.
- Miramonte High School**, Winter Instrumental Concert, 7 p.m.
- 6 **Glorietta Elementary**, Winter Wonderland Dance, 5:30 p.m.
- 7 **Glorietta Elementary**, The Shuckin’ Champagne Soiree, 4 p.m.
- 9 **OUSD**, 6 p.m. regular board meeting.
- 11 **Holden High School**, Parent Support

- Group. 6:30 p.m.
- AUHSD** 7 p.m. Governing Board meeting.
- 12 **Sleepy Hollow Elementary School**, School Board coffee meeting. 8:15 a.m. Peet’s Coffee, Orinda.
- Miramonte High School**, Winter Choral Concert, 7 p.m.
- 16 **Miramonte High School**, Parent Ed - Courageous Conversations about Race, 6:30 p.m.
- 18 **Miramonte High School**, Mats Holiday Party 2019, 1 p.m.
- 20 **Orinda Academy**, Winter Break through Jan. 3.
- Glorietta Elementary**, minimum day.
- Del Rey Elementary**, Winter Sing, 10 a.m. Also, minimum day.
- 21 **Glorietta Elementary**, Winter Break through Jan. 3.
- 23 **OUSD and AUHSD schools**, Winter Break through Jan 3.

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BUSINESS BUZZ

Business Buzz Putting a Personal Face on Local Business

Elana O'Loskey



Morrison's Jewelers

Morrison's Jewelers has been family owned since 1923 and located in Orinda for 27 years. President David Berryhill is fourth generation, Matthew Berryhill is a third generation owner and Chris Berryhill is the manager.

The store is collecting new, unused items for Toys for Tots, a program administered by the U.S. Marine Corps. In 2018 Morrison's collected eight barrels of toys that were delivered to children in need. Stop by for holiday gifts in all price ranges and enjoy some bubbles and Republic of Cake cupcakes.

The owners attribute their 96 continuous years in business to being the best jewelers around when it comes to price, quality work and customer service. They offer custom jewelry design; timepiece repair (Rolex, Omega, etc.); personal shopping; appraisals; all manner of jewelry repair; pearl stringing; engraving or silver refinishing. They credit their long-term success with the trust they have built up in the community.

Designers they carry include Anna Beck, Monica Rich Kosann, Anzie, Coast, Eichhorn, Italian Gold, Luvente, Manjusha, Victorinox and Toby Pomeroy (known for environmentally sustainable jewelry). Sometimes custom designs involve a re-

design of a family heirloom piece to reflect someone's personal style.

A partial list of their contributions to the community includes: Children's Health Guild, UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland, George Mark House, Educational Foundation of Orinda, Orinda Union School District, Acalanes Union High School District, Orinda Rotary, Dancing With the Cars, Friends of Ruwenzori, Orinda Garden Club, and Cal Shakes.

Chris Berryhill says that outside of work they love golf, yoga, motorcycles and spending time with their kids. Morrison's Jewelers is at 35 Moraga Way, Tues. - Fri., 10 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; closed Sunday and Monday. call 925-253-9227 or go to www.morrisonjewelers.com.

Beyond Aero Bike Shop

Andres Douzoglou, founder of Beyond Aero (BA), opened his first retail location in Berkeley in 2014 and moved to Orinda in September. The lease on his Berkeley space was up and as he lives in Orinda, it made sense to move into a smaller space better suited to his needs. While BA is a destination store with customers from all over the Bay Area and beyond, Douzoglou says it will be easier to arrange some weekly bike



(L-R) Amy Sandager-Lobas, Christine Berryhill, David Berryhill and Nick Tutino of Morrison's Jewelers. They are collecting unwrapped toys for the U.S. Marines' Toys for Tots program during December.

rides right from this new location.

He sells Pinarello, Open, Factor, BMC, 3T, Scott and Parlee bikes. Douzoglou says BA's Fit Studio excels at figuring out how to prevent injuries and ensures that the bike rider learns how to perform at his or her best before choosing the bike. Arm length, leg length, flexibility, previous history of injury are all factors that play into what the right bike is going to be. He says a few millimeters can make a big difference. Other factors are the bike size, frame geometry and riding style such as coffee shop rides, mixed terrain rides, gravel adventure race, triathlon, criterium, etc.

Using his Purely Custom fit bike he is able to dynamically modify a customer's position and try out a range of options. Your "stack and reach" is then identified and a variety of recommendations can be made. The process takes 1.5 to 2 hours. A static bike fit is for someone who wants to optimize their position on their current bike. Concerns about pain or discomfort are taken into account as well as options to improve aerodynamics. Your bike is set up on a stationary trainer and your position is adjusted until your objectives are met.

BA has a trade-in and upgrade program and offers financing.

In addition to riding his bike, Douzoglou is a big hockey fan; he plays at least a couple days a week. Spending time with his wife, Susan, and seven-month-old daughter is high on his list when not at work. He says he is interested in what groups like What's

Up Downtown Orinda are advocating for so will keep an eye out for related events and issues.

Visit Beyond Aero at 85 Orinda Way Mon. - Fri. 2 to 7 p.m., Sat. and Sun. by appointment; call 415-545-8445 or go online at www.beyondaero.com.

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

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Beyond Aero founder Andres Douzoglou opened his new retail store on Orinda Way in September, with a Fit Studio to match each customer with the right bike and to customize it to best fit their needs.

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