



THE ORINDA NEWS

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Three Former Miramonte High School Students File Lawsuit Claiming Negligence and Sexual Abuse



JEFF HEYMAN

Jane Doe 2 is one of three plaintiffs in the lawsuit recently filed against Miramonte High School and the Acalanes Union High School District, alleging sexual abuse by a teacher and negligence by the school and district to take action after the abuse was reported to staff.

By KATHY CORDOVA
Executive Editor

Three former Miramonte High School students filed a lawsuit against the school and Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) in December 2022, alleging negligence in failing to investigate and take action on reports of sexual abuse by a former teacher.

The suit details multiple, specific actions of grooming behaviors, abuse and assault, which occurred from 2007-2009 and involved at least three female students. The students are identified by pseudonyms in the lawsuit.

The teacher, Mark Litton, pled no contest

to two charges of statutory rape, two counts of sexual penetration of a person under the age of 18 and one count of oral copulation of a person under the age of 18. He was sentenced in 2010 to two years in prison. The suit alleges that although Jane Doe 2 reported the inappropriate behavior of Litton to both a teacher and a school counselor in 2008, the school failed to do anything about it. The sexual assault of Jane Doe 3, which led to Litton's prison sentence, occurred in 2009.

The California Child Victims Act, a state law that went into effect in 2020, temporarily gave victims the opportunity to bring forth claims of childhood sexual

[SEE LAWSUIT page 13]

Orinda Union School District's Newest Board Members: Looking Ahead

By ANDREA MADISON
Staff Writer

The Orinda Union School District (OUSD) has three new board members elected last November. Edda Collins Coleman, Eve Phillips and Katie Shogan are set to help the district navigate the next four school years, each bringing unique value and perspectives to the Board of Trustees. They will be working alongside returning

board president Hillary Weiner and vice president Cara Hoxie.

"When the students succeed, everyone in the district succeeds," Coleman said, highlighting support for all students, all the time as a long-term goal. Promotion of positive culture and curriculum that prepares students to become leaders are also goals she emphasized.

Ensuring the mental wellness of students

[SEE OUSD page 6]

Storm Waters Create Lake Cascade Waterfall



JEFF HEYMAN

Due to recent storms, Lake Cascade at Orinda Country Club (OCC) reached full capacity where, ultimately, club members released water, creating a 35-foot waterfall, which flows under OCC's swimming pool.



JEFF HEYMAN

The newest members of the Orinda Union School District's Board of Trustees, (L-R) **Katie Shogan**, **Edda Collins Coleman** and **Eve Phillips**, review the agenda of the first board meeting of the year on Jan. 9. Board meetings are generally held the second Monday of the month at 6 p.m. in the Board Room of the Orinda Union School District Office, located at 8 Altarinda Road.

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COMMUNITY

Meet *The Orinda News*' New Executive Editor Kathy Cordova



JEFF HEYMAN

Kathy Cordova took the reins as executive editor of *The Orinda News* Jan. 1. She and her husband Jeff moved to Orinda a little over five years ago.

By SALLY HOGARTY
Staff Writer

Why did you choose journalism as a career?

I'm naturally curious and love asking questions. Journalism gives me an excuse to be nosy!

As a freelance writer, I have 20-plus years' experience with mostly local and regional papers. One of the things I love about this type of journalism is highlighting the lives and accomplishments of people in the community.

What was one of your most memorable experiences?

I was assigned to write a story about a

very elderly man based upon some interesting historical thing he had done. I can't even remember what it was now. When I got there to interview him, it turned out he hadn't done the thing at all!

I had to really dig and get creative to make a story, but I did. When the story ran, he sent me flowers and a thank you note. It made me so happy to think what a positive impact the story had for him.

How long have you lived in Orinda?

My husband Jeff and I have been here a little over five years. When we moved, our daughter Savannah was in the process of relocating to London and our son Carson was starting college at the University of Colorado Boulder, so we were empty nesters.

We purchased a home in Wilder and as I became acquainted with our new town, I fell in love with it. I volunteered as a driver for The Orinda Association's Seniors Around Town program. It's so enjoyable getting to know Orinda's seniors when driving them to various appointments. There are so many interesting people living here.

I also found the group of people at the OA so nice and welcoming. They always make me feel good when I walk into the office.

How did you end up becoming the new executive editor of *The Orinda News*?

It was a perfect confluence of events! When we moved here, I took a break from working to get the new house together and to travel with Jeff. I thought it would be a brief hiatus, but then COVID hit, and it turned out to be a much longer break than I anticipated. I took on a few freelance assignments and kept my skills up by writing and publishing the Wilder newsletter.

As we started to come out of COVID, I

thought about what type of job I wanted. I knew being more than a freelance writer was in my future, plus I have marketing and sales experience to implement and use the business side of my brain. And, most importantly, I enjoy working with a team.

I wasn't sure how to achieve my goals, so I started by pitching some story ideas to *The Orinda News*' long-time Executive Editor Sally Hogarty. We knew each other from the OA and she was familiar with

[SEE CORDOVA page 9]

Orinda Woman's Club Raises \$40,000 to Help Others

By SALLY HOGARTY
Staff Writer

The Orinda Woman's Club (OWC) filled the San Ramon Marriott Hotel with holiday colors and scents as its 26th Annual Festival of Trees took place Nov. 17.

Approximately 300 OWC members and guests browsed several rooms of holiday-themed silent auction items, culminating in raffle drawings for prized tabletop trees, baskets, wreaths and destination trips.

Gift baskets ran the gambit from donor Pam Hall's Unisex Baby Essentials to a Day at the Claremont Spa courtesy of Kay Norman and Ann Reidy, to Lafayette Carwash, Orinda Motors, Kay Norman and Margaret Bentson's "Pride in Your Ride" designed by donor Alan Hall. Local restaurants Anya's Kitchen, Casa Orinda, La Piazza, Montecatini Ristorante and Shelby's joined forces to create one basket entitled "Cucina d'Italia."

Coveted tabletop trees featured such themes as "Santa is Coming," "Holiday Sugar," "California Dreamin'" and the "Red and Gold Money Tree."

[SEE OWC page 16]



SALLY HOGARTY

Former Mayor of Orinda **Victoria Smith**, was among the models at the fashion show, which featured clothing from Chico's of Danville, J. Jill of Walnut Creek and J. McLaughlin of Lafayette.

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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the Board
Celebrating the Past;
Looking to the Future

CINDY POWELL



The beginning of a new year is always a great time to look back and see what you've accomplished, as well as looking forward with anticipation for all the exciting things yet to be done!

2022 Highlights

The Orinda Association celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Volunteer Center. Check out the online version.

Our Seniors Around Town volunteer drivers provided 1,196 rides, 973 volunteer hours and 14,830 miles driven for Orinda seniors.

The OA Fourth of July Parade was almost back to full swing with faithful parade entrants marching to the music in perfect weather. Kids and families, whether on floats or cheering along the route, enjoyed the parade, which concluded with a concert in the park.

The 18th Annual Orinda Classic Car Show felt like a festival. Street banners and colorful art, in addition to fabulous cars, trucks and motorcycles, resulted in a very memorable day.

The Orinda News covers local news, events and stories. The paper is delivered monthly to every postal service customer in 94563. The paper is viewed online around the world at www.theorindanews.com.

The OA thanks those who dropped off eyeglasses for the Lions Club and donated

vehicles to the Cars2ndChance program.

The Orinda Association presented "Meet the Candidate" Forums for City Council, MOFD (Moraga Orinda Fire District) and OUSD (Orinda Union School District) prior to the November 2022 elections, providing our citizens answers and options.

Orinda Wildfire Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Presentation video continues to stream on the MOFD YouTube channel, CATV and Comcast Channel 26.

Coming in 2023

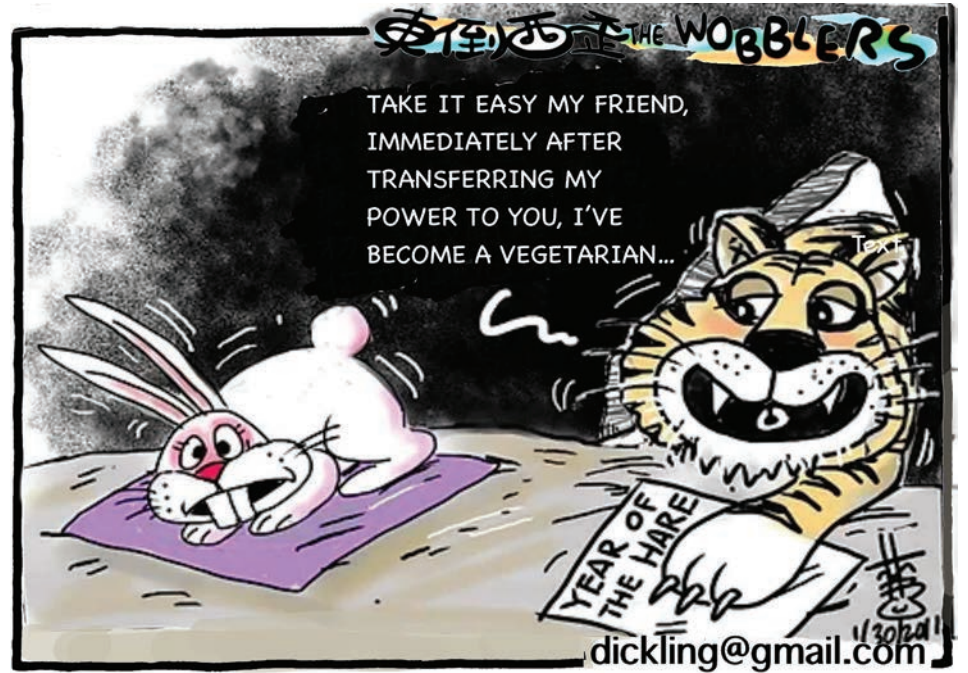
Celebrate Orinda's 40th Fourth of July Parade and decorate the streets with more banners and American flags than ever before! We need your help! Join the team of volunteers by completing the form at www.orindaassociation.org/volunteer.

New T-shirt design contests for Fourth of July and Car Show.

19th Annual Orinda Classic Car Show is Sept. 4 with more cars and stories.

We are currently accepting nominations for the William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award. Our event with Friends of Orinda Nature Area is during April's Earth Day festivities. Toris Jaeger was the first recipient 30 years ago in 1993.

Cindy Powell can be reached at cindy@orindaassociation.org.



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.

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President - Sally Hogarty
Vice President - Kelly Sopak
Secretary - Eloise Sotelo
Treasurer - Cindy Powell
City Council Liaison - Latika Malkani

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Barb Brawner
Jacalyn Buettner
Chris Laszcz-Davis
Diane Lautz
Marianne Moser
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Bill Waterman
Lauren White
Kate Wiley



The Orinda Association
26 Orinda Way (Library Plaza)
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Orinda, CA 94563
Phone: 925.254.0800
www.OrindaAssociation.org

All officers and board members volunteer their time.

Orinda Rotary Annual Crab Feed Fundraiser

The Rotary Club of Orinda hosts its 20th annual Crab and Pasta Feed on Mar. 6, partnering with Casa Orinda to serve takeout dinners to support local businesses and community services.

Each meal includes freshly cleaned and cooked cracked crab, hot pasta with a light cream sauce, fresh vegetables, sourdough bread, garlic butter and a dessert.

The first 50 customers ordering at least two dinners per order will receive complimentary free craft beer – must be legal age to pick-up. Price is \$70 (\$51 for food, \$19 donation).

Place orders online at www.orindarotaryfundraiser.com by



March 3.

Donations support the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, Meals on Wheels and other Bay Area services. No refunds. For more information, call 925.360.1761 or email orindarotaryfundraiser@gmail.com.



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EDITORIAL / NEWS BRIEFS

Editorial

Orinda Is A Special Place. Everyone says so.

Last year, as I was voting for city council and diligently reading the candidate statements, I realized every single one expressed some version of this sentiment.

I get it.

My husband Jeff and I moved here a little over five years ago from Palo Alto. With our adult daughter about to move to London and our son heading off to college, the plan was to continue working in the Bay Area until we paid off that last tuition bill, then pursue our dreams of retiring in the Sonoma wine country.

An old saying goes, "If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans." Something happened on the way to fulfilling that dream. I found I really liked it in Orinda.

I loved Orinda's Goldilocks not-too-hot-not-too-cold weather, the friendly neighbors I met while walking my dog and the independent film offerings and charm of the Orinda Theatre. I volunteered as a driver for Seniors Around Town and developed a genuine affection for the seniors, as well as the sunny Orinda Association staff who always made me smile when I walked into the office.

I quickly found my "tribe" of smart,

funny, generous friends as we bonded over our shared passions for family, books, wine, dogs, politics, great food and more. I didn't want to leave.

Fast forward to now.

Although my husband has since retired and we still love a weekend getaway to the wine country, Orinda has become our home.

After writing for local papers for over two decades, I've always thought editing one would be an ideal job. I love writing about people and journalism suits my curious personality. I've always known that small town papers can have big impacts, covering important city issues and events, promoting non-profits and highlighting local achievements.

With all of this in mind, I believe it was divine intervention when Sally Hogarty recruited me to take over for her as executive editor upon her retirement.

Throughout her 29 years at *The Orinda News*, Sally ushered in great changes, leading the paper into the Internet age, implementing new technologies and taking a big risk in shifting the paper from a quarterly to a monthly publication.

[SEE EDITORIAL page 10]

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Orinda News Briefs: Around Town

Rescue 1 Foundation Has A Board of Directors Opening

The Rescue 1 Foundation's mission is to receive and administer donations which will enhance public safety by providing advanced medical and safety equipment, supplies and educational services for the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD).

As a non-profit, it is governed by an 11-member board of directors. There is an opening on the board starting April 1. Interested community members residing in the MOFD service area may apply by submitting a letter of interest to the Nominating Committee before Feb. 10.

Letters may be either mailed to Maridel Moulton, Nominating Committee Chair, Rescue 1 Foundation, c/o Moraga-Orinda Fire District, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga, CA 94556 or emailed to mmmorgdev1@aol.com. For more information, call 925.963.0987 or visit www.r1f.org.

Create a Quilt Section for Freedom

Iranian Women in Network (IWIN) kicks off its first-ever International Women, Life, Freedom, Quilt project by inviting interested community members to support the calls for freedom for the Iranian people.

Create your artwork on a 12" x 12" canvas, using paint, photography, calligraphy, stitchwork, collage, stencil, applique or digital art. Mail to P.O. Box 20223, San Jose, CA, 95160, by Feb. 3.

"Send your artwork and we will create the quilt and share it with the world," said Dina Asna, founder and CEO of IWIN. "We hope you will support the

rallying cry of millions of people worldwide who protest the oppression of the Iranian Islamic government against all its citizens."

The Women, Life, Freedom, Quilt will be publicly showcased on March 8, in honor of International Women's Day. Exhibition location, to be determined.

Iranian American Women in Network is a San Francisco grass-root community organization with members throughout the Bay Area, including Orinda. Their mission is to empower women through art.

"We were inspired by the powerful Aids Memorial Quilt, as one of the largest public art exhibits and we are very grateful for their full support in our project," said Asna. "We believe the Quilt project will be a powerful tool to engage interested participants from all communities to contribute and support 'Woman-Life-Freedom' and the cause of freedom for women and girls."

For more information, visit www.iwin-iwin.org/wlffquilt.

Nominations Open for Annual Youth Hall of Fame Awards

The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors is now accepting nominations for the 2023 Contra Costa County Youth Hall of Fame Awards. These awards are presented annually to outstanding Contra Costa residents between the ages

of 12 and 18. Nominees should demonstrate exemplary behavior in one of five categories:

Good Samaritan: Goes out of their way to do for others without seeking recognition.

Volunteerism: Lends a helping hand for the good of the community: Gives their time and energy to a worthy cause or organization.

Teamwork: Works unselfishly for the good of a team.

Leadership and Civic Engagement: A natural leader who inspires others and works to make a difference in their school and community.

Perseverance: Has worked hard to overcome obstacles to achieve success.

Complete the nomination form and submit it with a letter of recommendation by email to Lia Bristol at YouthNomination@dcd.cccounty.us or upload to this site <https://bit.ly/3CIFJbo>.

The recommendation letter should include the following: brief self-introduction, how you know the nominee, why this person is deserving of recognition and the category listed above that best describes the nominee.

Recipients will be recognized at the April 4, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors' Cesar E. Chavez Celebration at 11 a.m. in the Board Chambers at 1025 Escobar Street in Martinez.

The nominee must be a resident of [SEE BRIEFS page 8]



YALDA SAMANDAR

Every 18 artworks will make a quilt banner in the IWIN quilt project. "Avidah Yaghmaie, above quilting, is leading our production team with great love and creativity," said Founder and CEO, Dina Asna, of Iranian Women In Network (IWIN).

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

For advertising rates, contact Carson Cordova at 650.646.1357 (carsoncordova2@gmail.com), Kathy Enzerink at 252.626.2109 (kathy@theorindanews.com) or Jill Gelster at 925.528.9225 (jill@aspenconsult.net). The deadline for the March issue is February 8.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR / POLICE

Letters to the Editor

“Safety Element” Key Issue Is Not Addressed

In reviewing the proposed City of Orinda “Safety Element,” approximately 81 pages, the Overview section and the Public Safety Issues section say nothing whatsoever about crime, crime prevention, crime mitigation or the like. The subject is totally ignored.

Obviously, the increase of crime in the Bay Area and Orinda is everyone’s problem and it needs to be addressed. Perhaps the subject is of far greater concern than many of the issues listed in the 81-page document.

As a practical matter, the issue of expanding and increasing crime as part of Public Safety in Orinda cannot be ignored any longer. It should receive the highest priority and needs to be addressed by any responsible City Council.

– Chris Kniel

MOFD Should Not Spend Money on More Firefighters

Last month *The Orinda News* reported on MOFD’s plan to hire another response unit in Orinda.

In the past year, Moraga Orinda Fire District’s (MOFD) six response units responded to 3,455 incidents, 2,285 of which were emergencies. That equates to one emergency per day, per response unit.

And yet, MOFD is considering adding yet another response unit at a cost of between \$1 million and \$1.5 million per year.

Three years ago, Orinda residents told the city wildfire prevention was their number one concern, because MOFD was doing nothing about it. They then voted to tax themselves over \$3 million a year to provide this service MOFD was not providing.

Now what is MOFD proposing? To spend a million dollars a year on superfluous service we do not need, while spending virtually nothing on service we do need.

MOFD has two new directors. Maybe it has also gained some common sense. I encourage everyone to write Orinda’s three representatives (see emails below) and tell them we don’t need more personnel (we already have more firefighters per capita than anyone else). We need money spent on removing the fuel that feeds a wildfire, which could destroy Orinda.

Email them at: Steven Danziger (stedformofd@gmail.com), Mike Roemer (mroemer@mofd.org), Craig Jorgens (craig.jorgens@gmail.com).

Please write them about what you think of them spending one million of our tax dollars on superfluous service, as opposed to what we really need – vegetation mitigation for wildfire prevention.

– Steve Cohn

School District Parcel Tax

I don’t oppose the proposed Orinda Union School District parcel tax, (*The Orinda News* Jan. 2023 issue). Everyone agrees on the need to attract and retain “high quality instructional staff.” But I am troubled by the district’s resistance to a no-cost way to help attract and retain teachers and staff.

I have urged, to no avail, the district to pass a simple resolution urging Orinda City Council to adopt an Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance.

Such an ordinance would require any new housing development include a percentage (set by the council) of affordable housing units (per state law, a four-person household qualifies for



POLICE BLOTTER

December 15 through January 17

Calls for Service

- Burglary, Auto: 1 incident: Orinda Way
- Burglary, Commercial: 1 incident: Altarinda Dr.
- Burglary, Residential: 4 incidents: Camino Sobrante, Altarinda Dr., Hartford Rd., Tahos Rd.
- Civil Disturbance: 1 incident
- Death Investigation: 1 incident
- Fraud/Forgery: 1 incident
- Grand Theft: 2 incidents: Fox Run, Theatre Square
- Grand Theft Vehicle Parts: 2 incidents: Coral Dr., Chelton Ct.
- Identity Theft: 1 incident
- Outside Assist: 1 incident
- Petty Theft: 2 incidents: Orinda Way, Moraga Way

- Petty Theft from Vehicle: 2 incidents: Brookwood Rd., Undisclosed
- Property Found: 2 incidents
- Property Lost: 1 incident
- Robbery, Strongarm: 1 incident: Moraga Way
- Terrorist Threats: 1 incident
- Vandalism: 1 incident

Arrests

- DUI Misdemeanor: 1 arrest
- Receiving Stolen Goods: 1 arrest
- Unlicensed Driver: 1 arrest
- Warrant Arrest: 5 arrests

– Compiled by David Dierks Assistant Editor

a moderate-income affordable housing unit with a household income of up to \$171,000).

Such ordinances are ubiquitous; Lafayette has one. Such an ordinance would not cost the city, the district or the taxpayers anything. It would increase the supply of affordable housing in Orinda and thus help attract and retain teachers, although admittedly, would not be limited to teachers. It would also increase Orinda’s diversity.

I even drafted and submitted a proposed board resolution to Ms. Glimme and to the school board. It is vanilla and does not ask the council to adopt any specific percentages or requirements. The response has been less than enthusiastic and has consisted of an obsession with process.

I urge the district to adopt my proposed resolution, urging the council to adopt an Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance without delay.

– Nick Waranoff

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ORINDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

◆ OUSD from page 1

and bolstering mental health initiatives are priorities, said Coleman, as is academic excellence.

She also looks forward to working with the board to keep efforts centered on fiscal responsibility within OUSD, emphasizing “the financial stability of the district is important, is key.”

Edda Collins Coleman currently serves as a managing director at Cogent Strategies, a bipartisan team of government relations, communications, digital advocacy and re-

search strategists. She advises the company as they communicate with Congress and the Executive Branch of government and navigate the regulatory landscape.

She’s also on the Board of Directors for global non-profit Facing History and Ourselves, and a former three-time gubernatorial appointee to the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth.

Coleman has spent two years as a board member for Orinda Intermediate School’s Parents’ Club and is a co-founder of the All In Together Campaign (AIT), whose mission is to encourage, equip, educate and empower women of voting age to participate fully in the country’s civics and politics.

She wants to continue to build consensus and partnership, and engage with all the stakeholders—parents, families and teachers.

“I’m really grateful and blessed to have the support of the community,” Coleman said.

One of Phillips’ key goals is student safety, “which includes both physical and emotional safety, such that students are well situated to learn,” she said. “Ensuring we have the right physical spaces, supports and team are all critical here.”

Another goal, Phillips said, is the maintenance of the tradition of academic excellence in Orinda “by continuing our community’s culture of engagement and support,” as well as the responsible focus of OUSD’s budget, especially when it comes to teachers.

Given the district’s limited funding, the investigation of new revenue sources is a solution Phillips believes could be used to address needed repairs for campus facilities.

Supporting the professional growth of teachers, ensuring evidence-based curriculum and the use of metrics to track progress where appropriate “are each important elements,” according to Phillips.

Mental health is another topic Phillips highlighted and one that she sees as interconnected with student excellence and finances.


A Lamorinda native, Phillips has prior first-hand knowledge of Orinda policy, having served as mayor in 2017 and as a member of the city council from 2014 to 2018. Professionally, Phillips is a Google health director of product management. She previously co-founded and served as CEO for Empower Interactive, Inc., a digital behavioral health platform. She is the parent of an OUSD student.

Shogan said, “The former board did an amazing job.” A former California public school teacher, she also has experience as a school administrator. Along with her background in education, her role as a parent with children in the district, service on a public district school board in Pennsylvania and time on the board of a private international school, all contribute to Shogan’s expertise.

She highlighted the immediate importance of ensuring school buildings and facilities remain a conducive learning environment for students, as well as addressing the teacher shortage. Academics and whole child wellness are also priorities, as is the district budget.

[SEE OUSD page 13]

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October 1962: History Repeats Itself



COURTESY OF ORINDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

“Taken by former Oakland Tribune photojournalist, **Les Sipes**, this black and white photograph documents one brave motorist taking refuge on the hood of his car as he waits out the historic Columbus Day storm of October 1962, near the Highway 24 eastbound on-ramp,” said **Alison Burns**, president of the Orinda Historical Society (OHS). “Registering wind gusts of 86 mph, the ‘Big Blow,’ as it was known, remains the strongest extratropical cyclone in 20th Century America.” Established in 1970, the OHS and its museum are located at 26 Orinda Way, opposite Café Teatro. The museum showcases vintage artifacts and photos, Native American mortar and pestles, Orinda Theatre paraphernalia, posters, toys, dolls, WWII helmets and more. Hours are posted on the window. OHS is actively seeking volunteers. For more information, visit www.orindahistory.org or email info@orindahistory.org.



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ORINDA MAYOR

Inga Miller's Outlook on Being Mayor: "We are Here to Listen"

By TRISTAN SHAUGHNESSY
Staff Writer

Inga Miller, a third-generation Orindan who has served on its city council for more than six years, was sworn in as mayor Dec. 13, 2022. During her year-long term, she will work alongside vice mayor Darlene Gee and councilmembers Brandyn Iverson, Latika Malkani and Janet Riley — Orinda's first all-female city council.

As mayor, Miller said her responsibilities include leading council meetings and advocating for Orinda at the state and county levels. But at its core, she sees her role as being a listener.

"We have 20,000 residents with great ideas," she said. "We are here to listen to those ideas and figure out where most residents want to prioritize the city's resources."

Based on these conversations with constituents, Miller's current priorities are to maximize the benefits of Measure R funds — a 1% sales tax used for wildfire prevention, emergency preparedness and other essential city services — and renovating Orinda's downtown. She hopes the allure of new businesses, walkable common spaces and additional housing units in the downtown area will bring more foot traffic and dollars into the local economy.

Miller was first elected to the city council in 2016, serving as mayor from 2019 to 2020. At the end of her first mayorship, she was elected for another four-year term on the council. Over the years she has built strong relationships with community members.

Toris Jaeger, teacher and naturalist of the Wagner Ranch Nature Area in Orinda, knows Miller is ready to work.

"She rolls up her sleeves," said Jaeger, who has helped preserve the Wagner Ranch Nature Area and has taught thousands of students about the environment for more than four decades.

Ethan Elkind, a resident who participated on the steering committee for OrindaVision — a community group in support of redesigning Orinda's downtown — said Miller has a pulse on the needs of her community.

"Inga really puts herself out there in an impressive way to keep in touch with people and be responsive to what the folks here want and what they care about," said Elkind.



KERSTI PETER

Sworn in Dec. 13, 2022, experienced City Council member **Inga Miller**, who served as Orinda's 35th mayor from 2018 to 2019, is serving as its 39th until this December.

Before councilmember status, Miller worked as a journalist and later earned a law degree. She partly attributes her success on the council to these experiences, along with her desire to give back to the city where she grew up.

After graduating from Miramonte High School, she studied at University of California, Santa Cruz, where she wrote for the college's newspaper. Miller then reported for different publications, such as the Alameda News Group and the *Modesto Bee* from 1999 to 2008, learning the ins and outs of local politics.

Pivoting to law school because of the Great Recession, she received her Juris Doctor degree from Southwestern in 2010 and started practicing soon after, developing expertise in real estate transactions and land use. In addition to volunteering on Orinda's city council, she runs her own law firm, Miller Property Law.

In 2011, she was appointed to the city's Parks and Recreation Commission, a responsibility she said she was eager to take on. Growing up, Miller's grandfather would tell her stories about his career at

Annual State of the City Luncheon for Mayor Inga Miller

The Orinda Rotary's annual "State of the City" luncheon is Wednesday, March 1 from 12:15 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. Orinda Mayor, Inga Miller, will give an update on projects and initiatives facing the community. Tickets are \$25 per person, which covers lunch. Doors open at noon at the Orinda Community Center, Founders Auditorium, 28 Orinda Way. This event is open to all. For more information, contact Rotary President Rodney Lal at 925.366.8077 or rodneylal@yahoo.com.

the Department of the Interior, imbuing her with a life-long interest in nature and public green spaces. Being on the parks commission also gave her the chance to attend city council meetings. When vacant council seats in 2016 became available, her friends encouraged her to run.

In 2018, Amy Worth, Dennis Fay and Nick Kosla won the three open positions with Worth and Fay garnering the most votes. In turn, they served as Mayor of Orinda. In 2020, Miller and Gee were the top two contenders, with Gee in line to serve after Miller in December of this year. If history repeats itself, Malkani then

Iverson will lead the City next.

Miller described campaigning as a special, "heart-warming" experience, where she knocked on doors, reconnected with old friends and met new people. She said she tapped into the city's collaborative, congenial spirit, which would lead her to run again in 2020 and, once again, serve as mayor.

"Orindans are such community members, such neighbors. Everybody just wants to come and work together," she said. "The constant is that community togetherness."

Tristan Shaughnessy can be reached at tristan.c.shaughnessy@gmail.com.

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PERFORMING ARTS



COURTESY OF MICHAEL WILLIAMS

Jimmie Herrod, *America's Got Talent* finalist and vocalist for the long-running, multi-genre band, Pink Martini, performs at the Orinda Theatre on Feb. 19 at 5 p.m.

America's Got Talent Finalist, Jimmie Herrod, Comes to Orinda

By TRISTAN SHAUGHNESSY
Staff Writer

Jimmie Herrod, veteran singer and *America's Got Talent* phenom, dubbed the show's "best male vocalist" by judge Howie Mandel, performs at the Orinda Theatre on Feb. 19 at 5 p.m. as part of the Live At the Orinda! concert series' 2022-23 lineup.

Audience members can expect an "eclectic evening that still brings emotional punches," said Herrod. He plans to showcase around 75 minutes of material, ranging from classic jazz tunes to original songs, accompanied by pianist George Colligan, a long-time collaborator.

Although Herrod is best known for his spirited song covers on the long-running talent show, he said curating a full-length setlist gives him room to share different aspects of his artistic personality. It gives him the chance to not only hit those high notes, but to create more intimate moments with his listeners; something he is sure to achieve in the close-up, cabaret-style Theatre.

"There is nothing more powerful than someone having choice over what they say and what emotion they want to express, and how they want to express it," he said.

Herrod, 32, was born in Germany and raised in Tacoma, Wash. and has always loved music. While in high school, he sang at retirement homes and rehabilitation centers, and before that, he played the clarinet. Following his passion, he studied music as an undergraduate at Seattle's Cornish

College of the Arts and earned a Master's Degree in jazz studies from Portland State University.

Over the years he has been in multiple bands, tapping into different music styles. From being a vocalist for the cross-genre, 20-plus-year-old ensemble Pink Martini, to being on the small, disco-fusion group Richie Aldente, Herrod has been an avid explorer. Change can also be seen through his solo discography.

In his 2018 album, *Falling in Love and Learning to Love Myself*, jazz piano and endearing vocals take the fore. But in his most recent project, *Elated*, upbeat and mysterious chords blend with Herrod's seductive lyrics to make for a totally different experience. Yet across his stylistic evolution, the thrill of performance has always been a constant for the experienced musician.

"Music has always been a big part of my life and performing is always another chance to say 'hello' to people through music," Herrod said. "That is definitely what keeps me drawn to it."

Michael Williams, one of the co-creators of the Orinda Theatre's Live At the Orinda! concert series, remembers hearing Herrod's voice for the first time at a Pink Martini show in San Francisco.

"The sound of his voice just triggered my soul," he said; knowing then Herrod was someone Orindans had to see.

Williams worked with Theatre owner Derek Zemrak to create Live At the Orinda! [SEE HERROD page 16]

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◆ BRIEFS from page 4

Contra Costa County. Nominations must be received or postmarked by Feb. 17. For more information, call 925.655.2350 or email Lia Bristol at YouthNomination@dcd.cccounty.us.

STEM Conference 2023 for Middle School Girls is March 25

The annual American Association of University Women, Orinda, Moraga, Lafayette (AAUW-OML) branch's 2023 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Conference at Saint Mary's College is March 25, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. It is hosted by the Lamorinda Sunrise, Lafayette and Rossmoor Rotary Clubs collectively.

"In supporting the AAUW-OML, we've had an opportunity to raise the bar on

educational excellence and expand opportunities to over 800 middle school girls," said Lamorinda Presents Facilitator, Chris Laszcz-Davis. "The Conference testimonials are always energizing and very positive."

This year's STEM Conference keynote speaker is author, Shari Simon, followed by a panel discussion with local high school and college students. Attendees will have access to popular hands-on workshops, explore STEM-related careers, meet STEM mentors and role models and enjoy news friends, lunch, T-shirts and more.

Register today at <https://oml-ca.aauw.net/stem-conference/>. Cost is \$50 per student (scholarships available), and space is limited to 200 girls.

Compiled by Charleen Earley, who can be reached at editor@theorindanews.com.

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FIRST FRIDAY FORUM

Dr. Margaret Liu to Speak at the First Friday Forum

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

Dr. Margaret Liu will talk at the Feb. 3 First Friday Forum about COVID-19, RSV, MPox, Influenza and Polio, with the latest information about the COVID-19 epidemic. Liu is a board member and President Emerita of the International Society for Vaccines and an Adjunct Professor of Microbiology and Immunology at UCSF.

Her lecture is 10 a.m. at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC), located at 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette, and will

also be on live stream. Visit www.lopc.org and click on First Friday Forum.

Liu explained, "The talk will present where we are at the beginning of 2023 for the epidemiology of these diseases and describe the vaccine and public health strategies. The current variants of concern (the dominant circulating strains) of SARS-CoV-2 and efficacy of the booster vaccines will be described."

She will also talk about the characteristics of different vaccines in use and their benefits and limitations, along with recommendations for other relevant mitigation

approaches to minimize chances for infection and illness.

"The recent successful development of RSV vaccines and their strategies (immunizing pregnant women and older people) will be discussed," said Liu. "These five diseases will be covered in the context of how vaccine development and usage of vaccines and other protective measures affect individuals, land and public health going forward."

Liu is renowned in vaccines, gene delivery and cancer immunotherapy. She earned an MD from Harvard Medical School and was on the faculty there and a Visiting Scientist at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She pioneered DNA vaccines as well as bispecific antibodies for cancer.

Named one of "The 50 Most Important Women Scientists" by *Discover Magazine*, Liu is known as "The mother of DNA vaccines," a technology that laid the foundation for mRNA vaccines.

She was formerly Senior Advisor in Vaccinology at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Chairman of the Board of the International Vaccine Institute and member of the groups that drafted the World Health Organization guidelines for both DNV and mRNA vaccines and a member of Dr.



COURTESY OF MARGARET LIU

Dr. Margaret Liu speaks Feb. 3 at the First Friday Forum about COVID-19, RSV, MPox, Influenza and Polio. She will also give the latest information about the COVID-19 epidemic.

Tony Fauci's US NIH NIAID Advisory Council.

"This is a rare opportunity to learn firsthand about the latest developments in vaccine research," said Darlene James, member of the First Friday Forum team. "Be sure to come to LOPC or log onto the livestream."

Bobbie Dodson can be reached at bobbiedodson109@gmail.com.

◆ CORDOVA from page 2

my writing.

We met for coffee and Sally listened to my ideas. Then she pitched one of her own, and I was floored. She told me she'd be retiring at the end of the year and asked if I would be interested in applying for her position.

Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine such a proposal, but the more I thought about it, I realized it was a perfect fit.

Interviewing with a nine-person panel, which included OA board members, current *Orinda News* writers and a former *Orinda News* editor, was a bit intimidating. I must have done okay since they offered me the job the next day.

What are some of the things you'd like to do in your new position?

Sally stressed how she felt the paper needed someone with new energy and ideas and I hope I have lots of both.

I have those first story ideas I pitched and I hope to involve more interns with the newspaper. It's a great way to turn young people on to journalism. I also have several ideas for our ad team that I think will benefit the community and the newspaper.

I'm very much looking forward to diving in and seeing where 2023 takes us.

How has your transition to executive editor been?

Luckily, I was able to accept the position several months before the job began. Sally has been doing the job for almost 30 years, and she knows the newspaper and the community inside and out. I needed those months to "shadow" her.

I felt a little overwhelmed at first, but

then Sally put together a casual party so I could meet the writers. Everyone was so much fun and dedicated to the community and the newspaper. They are all driven by passion and pride in their work, and they get amazing results on a very small budget.

Editor-in-Chief Charleen "Charlie" Earley and I are working closely together on stories, but I am responsible for finances and our ad team. I get to use both my creative and business skills, which was my dream when first starting this journey.

Sally Hogarty can be reached at sallyhogarty@gmail.com.

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SPORTS

◆ EDITORIAL from page 4

Year after year, she oversaw the production of a remarkable paper on a shoe-string budget, leading and inspiring a team of passionate, dedicated staff and writers.

While Sally leaves big shoes to fill, I hope to make my own mark at *The Orinda News*.

As always, we'll continue to bring news about local government and community events like the annual Car Show and the 4th of July parade. We plan to do some

deep dives, explaining complex issues that greatly affect Orindans, like the School Funding, the Housing Element and the Downtown Precise Plan.


We will publish more stories about the fascinating people who live in Orinda and the many amazing things they are doing. This issue introduces two new features: "A Conversation With..." Q&As with a different extraordinary Orindan each month and "Keys to a Lasting Marriage: Insights from Couples Who've Been Together for a Half a Century," which will appear a few times a year.

Finally, I'd love to hear from you, our readers. I want to know what you like about the paper, what you want to see more of, what you think we can do better and any story ideas you'd like to share. Please email me at cordova@theorindanews.com.

Also, follow us on our new Instagram page @theorindanews.

Here's to a marvelous 2023 and beyond!
- Kathy Cordova, Executive Editor

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Orinda Youth Hoopsters Win Girls' Basketball Championship



MAUREEN MATTHEWS

The Orinda Bulldogs, after 12 years, win the East Bay Middle School Girls basketball championship, played Dec. 12-14, 2022, at Martinez Junior High. (L-R) **Ally Rogin, Lorelei Keenan, Talia Kardon, Annelise Lindberg, Myra Gakhar, Kimia Jowharchi, Sophia Biore, Samantha Murphy, Freida Vierra** and **Coach Jason Curry**. Kneeling (L-R) **Sydney Gray, Claire Kennedy** and **Ava Noga**.

By CHARLEEN EARLEY
Editor-in-Chief

Maureen Matthews was thrilled to see her daughter, Annelise Lindberg, and teammates from Orinda Intermediate School (OIS) win the East Bay Middle School Girls basketball championship, played Dec. 12-14, 2022, at Martinez Jr. High. The team featured seventh and eighth graders.

"Orinda girl power!" said Matthews. "It had been 12 long years since OIS girls won the coveted basketball championship."

"Victorious over a tough and talented Martinez team, OIS trailed late in the first half but ultimately prevailed 34-28. The Orinda Bulldogs relied on relentless defense and a pass-first offensive scheme."

Player Lorelei Keenan was named to the all-tournament team and Lindberg was awarded the title of the tournament's most-valuable-player, or MVP.

Coach Jason Curry explained the difference. "The all-tournament team are the players who really stood out in the tourney," he said. "After each game, coaches from both teams pick players on the other team they feel made major contributions to the game."

Curry, who is also OIS' head coach of cross country, track and girls' and boys' basketball, spoke about what contributed to this win. "The girls took third overall last year, so we set a goal as a team to win the

championship this year," said Curry.

Lindberg was surprised to win MVP.

"I didn't know the MVP award existed," she said. "I was so exhilarated we won and happy about how our team played that I didn't even have a second to think about the award. Claire, Lorelei, Ava, Sydney and Kimia were outstanding!"


She doesn't take full credit though, for winning. "Two people deserve credit for helping me and that would be my older brother Niklas and Coach Curry," said Lindberg. "My whole life, Niklas and I would spend many hours working on my shot, my defense and my one-on-one skills."

"Coach Curry deserves credit for building a team that played so well together in such a short season. Keeping his cool in pressured situations and showing us why team basketball prevails -is what Coach Curry is all about."

Lindberg talked about why she loves basketball so much.

"Wherever the coach wanted me, I would play. I love playing basketball, because it's a fast-moving game; the quick back-and-forth between offense and defense," she said. "But most importantly, I enjoy that it's a team sport. Playing a team sport makes it fun, because I get to connect with many people who share the same interest as me and then watch everyone get better."

Charleen Earley can be reached at editor@theorindanews.com.



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ORINDA ART SCENE

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MELANIE LIGHT

Art Gallery at the Orinda Library

The Lamorinda Arts Council presents a group exhibition of art by elementary and junior high school students from Lamorinda and curated by their educators. Titled “16th Annual Art Ambassadors Exhibition,” it runs Feb. 4 – 25. Visit www.ccclib.org for hours.

More than 180 students’ artwork from the local elementary and intermediate schools are participating. The show is not juried, so there is no competition and everyone has the opportunity to show their work.

This program brings the creative juices of our young people to the public’s attention, who then get to see and enjoy the direct impact of the arts in schools.

Over the years, the Art Ambassadors program has evolved, but always counts on support and collaboration from local organizations such as the Orinda Network for Education (ONE), Lafayette partners in Education and Moraga Education Foundation.

The critical partnership in Orinda is between the ONE and the Lamorinda Arts Council. Executive Director of ONE, Emily Allen, said the partnerships are vital.

“Without the support of our school families, local businesses and community members, the arts programming in our schools would look vastly different,” said

Allen. “We are so thankful for the community’s support. The arts programming in our schools is so important to our students and has such a long-lasting impact on them. Both of my daughters were involved with the Arts Ambassador Program and still to this day, my daughter will come home and create art to relax, shake off a bad day or to celebrate a win.”

In past years, the opening reception brought many smiles to the faces of the young artists and again to those who attended the reception award ceremony. At press time, no reception has been announced for this year.

Mocktails and Cocktails with Friends of the Lamorinda Arts Council

Art lovers will gather to share their creative journeys and discuss every kind of creative expression from literature, fine art to music on Feb. 26 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., with a no-host bar at The Cooperage, located at 32 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette.

The event location will be marked by the knock-off poster of Picasso’s portrait of his model and muse, Dora Maar. No reservations are necessary – just show up.

About the Lamorinda Arts Council

The mission of the Council is to ignite and sustain artistic expression and appreciation for all ages throughout Lamorinda. People who are interested in visual, performing or literary arts, are invited to join.

The group has donors and volunteers who develop and produce events, partner with professional organizations and artists. They give financial support and awards and advocate for a vibrant local culture of the expressive arts.

The scope and breadth of the programming is remarkable. A few of their projects are to raise money to beautify utility boxes in Orinda with Artify Orinda, hold the annual Lamorinda Idol contests for K-12 students in Contra Costa and host art tables for young folks at the Lafayette Art & Wine Festival.

To learn about exhibiting work, apply online at the “How to Request an Exhibit at Our Galleries” page at www.lamorindaarts.org/how_to_exhibit. Art is on view for one month and there is a reception on the first Saturday of the month.



COURTESY OF JILL HUDSON

Teacher at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, **Jill Hudson**, holds up her student **Zijin Yu**’s watercolor painting – one of her many students’ artworks on display at the Orinda Library.

Art Gallery at Wilder

This gallery is on hiatus until further notice.

The Wilder Art and Garden Center is located at 20 Orinda Fields Lane. For more information, call the Lam-

orinda Arts Council at 925.359.9940 or contact Curator Ani Breslin at anistonbreslin@berkeley.edu.

Melanie Light can be reached at melanie@melanielight.com.



JEFF HEYMAN

Artist **Zijin Yu**, an eighth-grade student at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, will have his watercolor painting on display at the Orinda Library during the 16th Annual Art Ambassadors Exhibition along with work by 179 other local students through Feb. 25.

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MARRIED 50+ YEARS

New Series: Insights from Couples Married More Than 50 Years

By AMY MOELLERING
Contributing Writer

To talk with Marilyn and Art Goldberg about their almost 57 years of marriage is to embark on tales of serendipity, creativity and adventure. They’ve learned the world is smaller than one would think, and a successful union is built on common interests, prioritizing family and focusing on what’s important. They’ve traveled the world, meeting people with whom they have hometown connections and their creative talents have instigated invitations of all sorts.

One story of serendipity takes place in Italy, when they were in the courtyard of a

small Tuscan vineyard. The lively manager, Gino, sidled up to Marilyn and told her he knew all about American women because he married one from Princeton, New Jersey.

Intrigued, Art and Marilyn expressed interest in meeting her. Gino crossed the courtyard to her window and serenaded, “I’m in the mood for love.” Katherine stuck out her gold mane, Rapunzel style and agreed to meet the Goldbergs. Before long, they learned Katherine’s father had been Marilyn’s OBGYN in Princeton and one of Art’s relatives had been Katherine’s favorite teacher in high school.

The Goldbergs have many such stories, but they all began at Brooklyn College, NY when Art’s brother, who was also Marilyn’s math professor, introduced them in 1963.

They became better acquainted at the Brooklyn College County Fair where Marilyn was employing her decorating skills on backdrops and Art was managing the event. They started dating and Marilyn was immediately drawn to Art’s large family.

“His father had eight siblings and it was delightful to spend time with all those aunts and uncles,” she said. Trips upstate for picnics accelerated the romance and the two were married June 26, 1966.

After marriage, Art launched a career with IBM and Marilyn began a teaching career. Art’s extensive knowledge of math and physics helped him become an expert on computers in higher education, taking the Goldbergs to Princeton University.

The family grew with the arrival of three daughters, Jennifer, Julie and Jillian. “I didn’t look up until I was 40,” said Marilyn of that busy time.

When Art had an opportunity to move into finance, the family moved to Buffalo, NY and eventually to Connecticut.

In Connecticut, Marilyn shifted careers to interior design, prompted when their



JEFF HEYMAN

Art and Marilyn Goldberg attribute their almost 57 years of happy marriage to common interests, prioritizing family and focusing on what’s important. They built their dream house in Orinda, where they live with their beloved dog, Brooklyn.

daughters were reaching Bat Mitzvah-age. There wasn’t a temple, so the Goldbergs built one.

“It took two years, but there was that moment when we finally had the Bat Mitzvah and we were surrounded by our friends and we stopped and admired the beautiful facility,” said Marilyn.

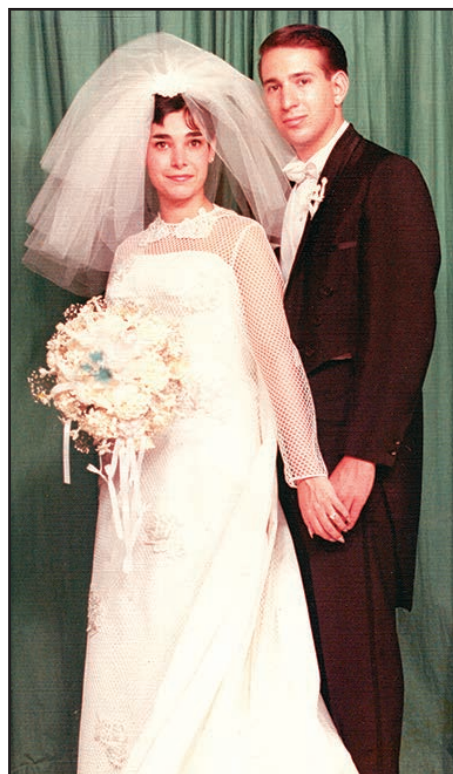
As Marilyn’s career in interior design was taking off, Art seized an opportunity with a start-up in Silicon Valley, which led to two years of flying back and forth between coasts. This was one of the most difficult periods of their marriage.

“Living on opposite coasts and commuting across the country was challenging, but we made it work,” said Art. “Making the effort to be together as often as possible and talking everyday helped to minimize the difficulty.

“I think the most difficult times for any married couple is when financial stress is loaded on top of everything else that is going on. Having three daughters in college

and supporting two households –when we were living separately – provided that level of stress for us. Somehow, we made it through those difficulties and were able

[SEE COUPLE page 14]



COURTESY OF ART GOLDBERG

Art and Marilyn Goldberg on their wedding day, June 26, 1966.

Advice for Young Couples

First, don’t sweat the small stuff. Focus on the important things in your life and don’t let the small day-to-day issues – and there will be many – drag you down.

Second, live your life together, building shared experiences and a trove of happy memories. The more shared history you build together, the stronger the base you will have to support you as a couple. If each focuses on the things that make your mate happy, it will inevitably lead to your own happiness and success as a couple.

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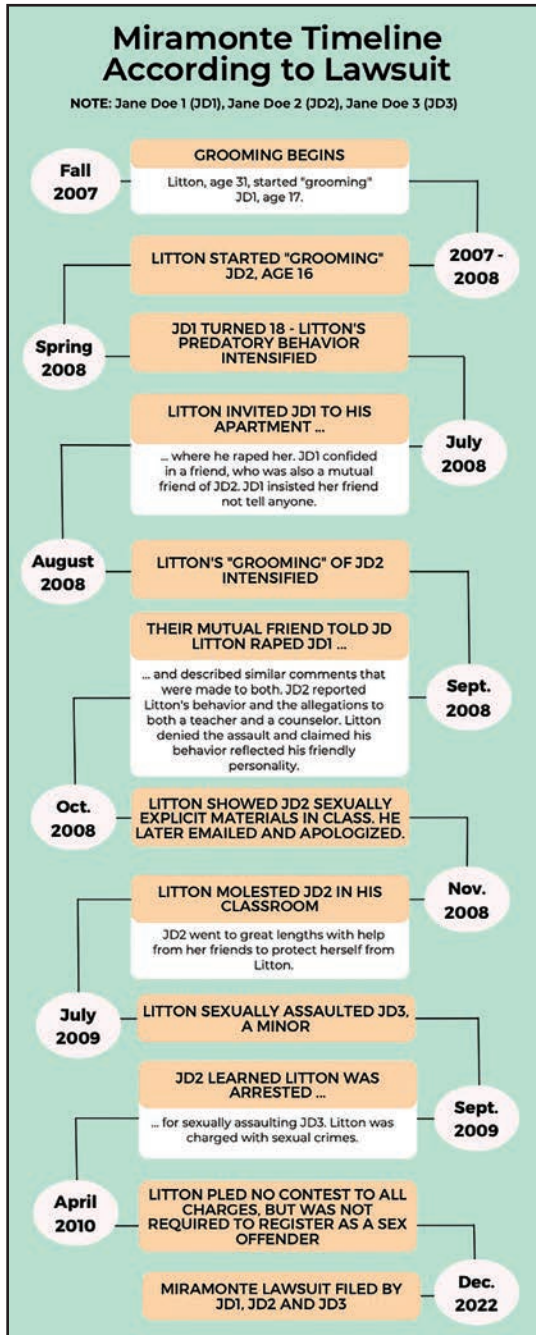
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CONTINUATIONS



KATHY CORDOVA AND CHARLEEN EARLEY Curated and condensed timeline according to the 27-page Acalanes Union High School District/Miramonte High School lawsuit filed by plaintiff's Jane Doe #1, Jane Doe #2 and Jane Doe #3 on Dec. 6, 2022, with the Superior Court of California, Contra Costa County.

◆ LAWSUIT from page 1

abuse which would have previously been impossible because of statutes of limitations. The three-year window for filing these types of suits expired at the end of 2022.

The 27-page complaint describes in detail how Litton preyed upon the students by "selecting vulnerable girls who were passionate about writing, reading or poetry; complimenting them and showering them with attention aimed at making them feel unique, smart and seen."

According to Jessica Dayton, the plaintiffs' attorney, "There was a clear pattern of grooming behavior." This comprised giving the students gifts, including the book, *Lolita*, passing notes to them in class, leaving notes on their cars, keeping them after class to talk to them alone and showing up at one student's home multiple times.

When Jane Doe 1 flinched at his touch, Litton told her to "calm down" and then accused her of being "really high strung," per the complaint. After she turned 18, he invited her to his apartment where he raped her.

"I noticed inappropriate behavior with this teacher and then I found out that he sexually assaulted a classmate prior to me," said Jane Doe 2. "I spent the whole year trying to protect myself physically and mentally.

"After I graduated, I found out that he had assaulted another classmate. It's been a roller coaster, reliving the trauma. I took on more blame than I needed to. There were plenty of adults who should have acted differently," said Jane Doe 2.

"Frankly if someone had listened to Jane Doe 2, the assault against Jane Doe 3 would not have happened. Action would have been taken against

Litton if the school had proper policies and procedures in place and followed them," said Dayton.

AUHSD Superintendent John Nickerson provided this statement in response to a request for an interview:

"We received the complaint filed at the Contra Costa Superior Court by three graduates in early December 2022 and are deeply troubled by the alleged behaviors between 2007-2009 of Miramonte High School teacher, Mark Litton, who taught in the District for four years prior to his arrest and conviction in September 2009 for sex crimes against a 2009 Miramonte graduate. The District is extremely concerned to read the allegations related to how the District/school responded, or failed to respond, during this period to behaviors outlined in the complaint. The District has commenced a full investigation and remains committed to hold student well-being as our greatest priority.

◆ OUSD from page 6

Longer-term goals for OUSD, said Shogan, depend on finances and what revenue is coming in. "Budgets kind of determine what can be done in school districts," she said.

The mental health of students and the maintenance of innovative and creative programs are included in Shogan's vision for long-term goals. "The district has been able to hold onto their elective classes generally," said Shogan. "I'm proud of that for Orinda."

She sees the "continual improvement and tightening of programming and curriculum" as an area which could be worked on.

With the new board members' terms just getting underway, Shogan said she "plans to spend this first period of time listening and learning."

The Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees meets in the board room of the district office, located at 8 Altarinda

"In any case involving sexual abuse, there is concern that additional victims may exist who have not yet come forward. We encourage anyone with information about this teacher, or other cases in which students may have been abused, to contact the Contra Costa Sheriff's Department and/or our District Office."

"The District has no further comment at this time."

The suit requests monetary compensation for damages to the victims, but money isn't the only thing the plaintiffs are seeking.

"Accountability for the school district and the school is what it's about for each and every one of them," said Dayton.

Editor's Note: The Orinda News will continue to cover this story in future issues as the lawsuit progresses.

Kathy Cordova can be reached at cordova@theorindanews.com.

Road, generally on the second Monday of each month. Open session typically begins at 6 p.m. Meeting information and time confirmations can be found at: <https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/orinda/Board.nsf/Public>.

Andrea Madison can be reached at drea.madison.05@gmail.com.




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STUDENTS / ROTARY

Quilting Not Just for the Young at Heart

By CHARLEEN EARLEY
Editor-in-Chief

In an exhibit just outside the Orinda Library, hangs a 42" x 54" quilt created by seventh grader, Ava Marchiel, a sewing project which took 28 hours over a span of six months to complete.

Marchiel, who attends Orinda Intermediate School, titled her quilt, "Litmus Test." "I am fascinated by engineering and how things are made and so I had lots of fun designing and creating this quilt," said Marchiel, whose quilt is on display until March 1.

Her quilt instructor, Jennifer McCullough of Orinda, said she enjoyed working with

the 12-year-old. "Ava is wonderful to work with. She is very thoughtful in her fabric choices and precise in her stitching," she said.

McCullough has taught quilting in her home studio for the last 20 years, to students ages 8 to 80.

"Quilting has not been popular among younger people, simply because they have not been exposed to it – I hope to change that," said McCullough.

Marchiel's mom, Maryam Asgari, said her daughter is on to sewing a second quilt.

"She is currently working on a quilt that features a piece of fabric handcrafted by an indigenous artist in Panama, which features a sea turtle – to bring attention to climate change," said Asgari. "She is planning on submitting it to the River of Words competition, held by Saint Mary's College."

About the background of quilting, "It has essentially been around forever; some sources say as far back as 3400 BC," McCullough said. "Quilting started in a practical way as people would make quilts to stay warm. It has evolved into an artistic form and now we see amazing 2D and 3D pieces hanging in museums around the world."

McCullough charges \$10 an hour which includes the use of machines and required materials. If a student cannot afford the fee, McCullough said, "I have provided thousands of volunteer hours over the years, working alongside students making charity quilts."

After producing hundreds of quilts, donating many of them to people in need, McCullough said her love for quilting began as a pre-teen, in a home economics class.

"I enjoy getting lost in the creative process," she said. "All the problems in the



JEFF HEYMAN
Ava Marchiel, standing with her quilting teacher Jennifer McCullough of Orinda, with her 42" x 54" quilt behind them, is displayed at the Orinda Library until March 1. Her first quilt, made at age 12, Marchiel is currently working on her second one.

world melt away when I am surrounded by the beautiful colors and textures of my fabrics."

Over the years, dozens of new artists' quilts are showcased at the Orinda Library. For more information about learn-

ing how to quilt, contact McCullough at 925.348.6708 or email bjcc2jen@gmail.com.

Charleen Earley can be reached at editor@theorindanews.com.

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Rotary Club of Orinda Gives to Meals on Wheels



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Executive Director for Meals on Wheels Diablo Region, **Caitlin Sly**, accepts a donation from Rotary Club of Orinda President, **Rodney Lal** (middle) and Rotary member, **Lance Cowles**, to help support local seniors.

◆ **COUPLE** from page 12

to reemerge on the other side."

The Goldbergs were relieved when they were able to reunite and live in one place. They designed and built a home in Los Altos Hills, settling permanently in California. Four years ago, at the urging of their daughters, they discovered Orinda. "Once we saw this area we fell in love," said Marilyn.

They combined their skills once again to design their house, to include the stained

glass they made for the living room. This is a skill they've honed since Marilyn gave Art a stained-glass class as a gift when they were first married.

"Having common interests is essential to a friendship, but particularly to a friendship as intimate as a marriage," said Art. "You never stop working it; we are always reminding ourselves to focus on what's important."

Amy Moellering can be reached at ajmoellering@gmail.com.

Happy
New Year

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CALENDAR / CLUBS / CLASSIFIEDS

Club Meetings in February

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

American Association of University Women-Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch (AAUW-OML) AAUW provides fellowships and grants for post-graduate academic work and community projects. More information is available at aauw-ca.org/govtrek/.

Community Gentle Yoga, via Zoom, Mondays and Thursdays 9-10 a.m. Contact Gaby Mozee at gcmoozee@gmail.com.

Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe. Third Monday, 7:30 p.m. Contact Kent Long for Zoom link at kentlong@moragaadobe.org or www.moragaadobe.org.

Friends of the Orinda Creeks. Fourth Wednesday. 3 p.m., 925.408.1840.

www.orindacreeks.org.

Junior Garden Club Orinda. Third Thursday of the month. Contact jumpfor@gmail.com

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

Lamorinda Meditation Community. Mondays and Thursdays, 10:30 - 11:25 a.m. All levels and philosophies welcome. Contact Gaby Mozee at gcmoozee@gmail.com.

Lamorinda Republican Women Federated. Third Thursday. For more information, visit www.lamorindarepublicanwomenfederated.org.

Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary. Meets Fridays at 7 a.m. breakfast at Veterans Memorial Center, 3780 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. Guests welcome, no reservations needed. www.lamorindasunrise.org, lamorindasunrise@gmail.com.

Montelindo Garden Club Feb. 17 meeting features Lori Palmquist, professional irrigation specialist, speaking on "Water in the Garden - Taking Control." Membership is open to all and interested people are welcome to visit montelindogarden.com/meetings.html for meeting and club details. Location is the Lafayette Library Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. Hall opens at 9:30 a.m., with club meeting at 10 a.m. and speaker at 10:45 a.m. Free.

The Orinda Association. First Monday 7 p.m., Zoom meeting. 925.254.0800 or www.orindaassociation.org.

Orinda Chamber of Commerce. Third Wednesday 4 - 5 p.m.

Orinda Garden Club. P.O. Box 34, Orinda, www.orindagc.org, 925.257.0668.

Orinda Hiking Club. Every weekend and first Wednesday, contact Ian at 925.254.1465 or www.orindahiking.org.

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

Orinda Junior Women's Club. Second Tuesday,

7 p.m. Contact membership@orindajuniors.org for location of meeting.

Orinda Masonic Lodge #122 F&AM. 9 Altarinda Road, Orinda Masonic Center. 925.254.5211, for meeting information or to rent the facility go to www.orindalodge.org.

Orinda Rotary. Wednesdays, 12:15 p.m. at the Founders' Auditorium, 28 Orinda Way, Guests welcome. Feb 1 meeting in Rossmoor with Fab-5 Club members. Join members of the five area Rotary clubs. The luncheon is held at the Rossmoor Event Center, 1021 Stanley Dollar Dr., Walnut Creek. Feb. 8 - Jerry Britten, President of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society, speaking on "Winter Birds in our Area." Feb. 15 - Dave Winnacker, Chief of the Moraga-Orinda Fire Department, speaking on "Fire Safety at Home." Feb. 22 - Mike Korklan, former airline flight instructor, speaking on "Air Traffic Control - or what the Tower really does." Contact Rodney Lal, president, at RodneyLal@yahoo.com or call 925.366.8077.

[SEE CLUBS page 19]

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On the Calendar in February

Orinda Library. Storytimes are Wednesday at 10:30 a.m.. Open Mon. through Thu., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Fri. and Sat., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 26 Orinda Way, Call 925.254.2184 or visit <http://ccclib.org>.

High School Visual Arts Competition 2022 winners are listed online through Feb. Visit www.lamorindaarts.org/past-winners-archive-vac. Registration for the 2023 closer Friday, Feb. 17.

2 **Orinda Books Pat's Book Club** reads and discusses *The Paris Bookseller* by Kerri Maher, a story of how a humble bookseller fought against incredible odds to bring one of the most important books of the 20th century to the world. 11 a.m. Email info@orindabooks.com for reservations.

3 **First Friday Forum** presents COVID-19, RSV, MPox, Influenza and Polio, with Dr. Margaret Liu 10 a.m., via Zoom. Register at lopc.org/first-friday-forum. See article p. 9.

4 **Orinda Farmers' Market**, 9 a.m. Orinda Way in front of Rite Aid and the Community Park. www.ccfm.org or market hotline at 925.431.8361. Also Feb. 11, 18 and 25. See article p. 18.

Art Gallery at the Orinda Library 16th Annual Art Ambassadors Exhibition through Feb. 25. See article p. 11.

19 **Live At the Orinda!** presents singer Jimmie Herrod. Orinda Theatre 5 p.m. See article p. 8.

26 **Mocktails and Cocktails with Friends of the Lamorinda Arts Council**. 3 p.m. no-host bar at The Cooperage, located at 32 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette. See article p. 11.

Contra Costa Chamber Orchestra presents Discoveries and Revivals, 4 p.m. See ad pg.7.

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

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



Ann Newton Cane has devoted herself to community activities and other volunteer work, including service on the College Preparatory School's Board of Trustees; leadership positions in the National Charity League; Parents' Club President at the Orinda Intermediate School; Swimming Chair of the Meadow Swim and Tennis Club; President of the Homeowners' Association of the Grand Lodge in Deer Valley, Utah; and service on the Membership Development Committee at the Claremont Country Club in Oakland.

Ann's close community involvement gives her special insight into what it takes to succeed in today's ever-changing housing market. In 2022 she surpassed \$80 million in sales and retained her status as the largest sales producer in the Golden Gate Sotheby's Lafayette office.

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FIREWISE

◆ OWC from page 2

Lucky drawing winners were also chosen for trips to Olympia, WA, a Sonoma Vineyard Farmhouse and a Vermont cabin.

Master of Ceremonies, Dan Ashley, welcomed guests into the main dining room for lunch, followed by a fashion show featuring outfits from Chico's, J. Jill and J. McLaughlin worn by OWC members and friends. Ashley, a news anchor for ABC Channel 7, has long been affiliated with the Festival of Trees. He is involved in many community projects with particular emphasis on helping young people.

In existence since 1953, OWC has a stated mission to support women, children and families in Contra Costa and Alameda counties. To that end, proceeds from

the Festival of Trees benefit Familias Unidas, which strives to improve the wellness and self-sufficiency in Latino and other communities throughout West Contra Costa County. Familias Unidas will use the funds raised from the Festival of Trees to help youth who have been victims of violence.

OWC Community Services Committee will also use funds raised to support young women aging out of the foster care system and entering college, as well as women recovering from abusive situations who need to enter the work world to support their families.

A grant will also be awarded to a Miramonte senior who has done significant community service. In addition, OWC will award smaller grants to local community organizations such as The Orinda Association's Seniors Around Town program, Friends of the Orinda Library, White Pony Express, Berkeley Hope Scholars, CASA and Monument Crisis Center.

"The Festival of Trees this year was fantastic," said OWC President Jean Barnhart, a member of the organization for 25 years. "The members work so hard to put together the beautiful 14 gift baskets, 29 decorated tabletop trees, wreaths, decor items, 62 fabulous silent auction items and three wonderful destination drawings. I am so proud to be part of this incredible organization. The Festival is a great kick-off to the holiday season. I hope more people will seek us out next November, and maybe even now think about becoming a member."

For more information on OWC, visit orindawomansclub.org or email orindawomansclubinfo@gmail.com.

Sally Hogarty can be reached at sallyhogarty@gmail.com.

FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITY NEWS

BIG CHANGES FOR ORINDA'S FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITY WITH PLENTY OF TOOLS TO USE

MELANIE LIGHT



The transformation of Orinda into a Fire Adapted Community is happening. The community, the City and Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) have worked together, creating fabulous tools for the rest of us.

A critical milestone transpired when Measure R funds underwrote the hiring of James Duff to be the community outreach and education coordinator. His background suggests he would be the perfect addition to pull together the disparate threads of fire prevention activity already in place to move Orinda's fire adaptation forward.

Duff comes to us via the Austin Texas Fire Department where, as the fire adapted communities program coordinator, he organized new Firewise communities and developed outreach content. Duff is also one of only 72 national fire prevention association certified wildfire mitigation specialists in the U.S.

He said the key is "showing people they are already doing the work. It's just a matter of being more intentional."

He collaborates with community groups, MOFD, the Orinda Firewise Council and agencies that intersect with wildfire mitigation efforts to develop and implement innovative solutions to mitigate the threat of wildfire.

Duff encourages communication from others.

"My door is open," he said. "I'm available and very happy to talk with anyone who's interested."

Ongoing mitigation efforts continue.

Firewise leaders are creating a "Starter Kit," including access to a mentor for folks who would like to put together a Firewise group in their neighborhoods. The process is not hard, but much more enjoyable to go through when you have others to help.

Another Firewise group is experimenting with a newsletter to go out to the community at large, whether neighborhoods are Firewise or not.

MOFD has a basket of tools developed for a one-stop shop service.

First, get a free assessment of your property's vulnerability to a wildfire from the Fire Adapted Community Ambassador Program (mofd.org/community/outreach-programs/fire-adapted-community-ambassador-program).

With this assessment, residents will know what to do to be compliant with the fire code (mofd.org/our-district/fuels-mitigation-fire-prevention/hazardous-wildfire-fuels-reduction-program).

You can get the work done with a contractor from the MOFD list (mofd.org/our-district/fuels-mitigation-fire-prevention/hazardous-wildfire-fuels-reduction-program/weed-abatement-contractor-list) and use their free chipper service (reserve.chipperday.com/Orinda).

Best of all, MOFD has a Home Hardening Grant (mofd.org/our-district/fuels-mitigation-fire-prevention/home-hardening-grant-program) to offer reimbursements of \$600 or more for the purchase of ember-resistant vents. If one chooses not to purchase vents, MOFD has steel mesh which can be installed over current vents for free. Just stop by a station where personnel will cut the mesh.

This same recipe can be used to take advantage of the City of Orinda's new Fire Fuels Reduction Incentive Program (www.cognitofirms.com/CityOfOrinda1/MeasureRFireFuelsReductionIncentivePilot-ProgramApplication), which is a matching grant of up to \$599. To qualify, residents must be on an evacuation route.

The application shows which streets are evacuation routes. Even if one doesn't qualify for this incentive, residents should still go through the process to make homes more wildfire resistant.

With so many pieces in place, and with the resident participation, 2023 can be the year Orindans proudly say Orinda is a Fire Adapted Community.

Melanie Light can be reached at melanie@melanielight.com.

◆ HERROD from page 8

Orinda! in 2018. Shutting down during the pandemic, this season is a return to its pre-pandemic operations, Williams noted, with six remaining shows and drinks ready to be served throughout the 170-seat venue. For tickets and more information, visit www.orindamovies.com.

For Williams, it is a welcomed return to normalcy. Orinda's concert series gives people a chance to meet for a couple hours, enjoy a drink and watch talented people do what they do best, he added.

"It's about the community. It is about creating a community of music lovers; it is about experiencing these artists and live shows," Williams said. "You just don't get it anywhere except [when] experiencing it together."

Tristan Shaughnessy can be reached at tristan.c.shaughnessy@gmail.com.

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EVERYDAY ORINDA / PETS OF THE MONTH

Everyday  rinda

“POOP-ETRATORS” FOR PEACE

MIMI BOMMARITO



Dog Poop has become a steaming hot topic. And not just in Orinda.

Dog poop was never even on my radar until a few years ago – and I’ve had dogs all my life. When did dogs start pooping so much? Or is it just mine? Likely from all the plums and apples that fall from our trees. My two English Shepherds gobble the endless supply of tangy laxatives relentlessly, a habit my family calls “tending their crops.” It must appear nothing short of miraculous: dessert falling from the sky. I presumed all canines were carnivores.

I barely remember my dog ever pooping when I was a kid.

We crumbled weird little patties of what looked like Play-Doh, commonly known as “Gaines Burgers” into her bowl

and mixed it with dry kibble – invented during World War II, because metal for canning dog food was scarce. Who knows how long it took for that “food” to digest. Plus, I never took her for regular walks. But even if I had, I guarantee, little bone-shaped cannisters containing a roll of colorful plastic poop baggies attached to a leash were not in existence in the late 20th Century.

I already know what you’re thinking.

And the answer is, yes. I carry nagging guilt over the crummy way I treated my dog back then. California quickly taught me pets should never be an afterthought. And canines love fruit. Across the ol’ Rainbow Bridge, my previous pets are high fiving at every poo I’m lovingly forced to pick-up. Paybacks.

Today’s dogs seem to actually enjoy pooping more than the canines of yesteryear. We have a rustic backyard with ideal space my dogs should love to deface, but instead, they seem to store it up for our daily rounds so they can deposit it far and wide with the fervor of Johnny Appleseed. Sometimes I handle this like Mary Poppins, especially if strangers are nearby, but other times, like on the third anchor-drop, I begin to lose my composure. I say to the dogs, “Sheesh! Even my children were never this much work!” Which is not really true, merely memory loss.

But at least we didn’t have to tote the
[SEE EVERYDAY page 18]



MIMI BOMMARITO
Jasper and Calvin Bommarito, both English Shepherds, enjoy long hikes, especially at Wilder.

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Pets of the Month



ELLEN ZAPALAC

Jasper (L) and Mitch are 10-years-old and love and fight with each other just like brothers. “We adopted them from Community Concern for Cats (CC4C) as kittens,” said Ellen Zapalac. “We almost lost Mitch two years ago after a coyote attack and with a lot of love and care (from us and Jasper) he is still with us and living his best life.”

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SEASONED SHOPPER

◆ EVERYDAY from page 17

soiled diaper around with us for what feels like an eternity, searching for an acceptable place to dispose of it. One might have the world's best running song blasting through their ear pods but carrying around a jangling sack of poop sure kills any Chariots of Fire endorphin rush.

The poop disposal problem is real. The controversy is fierce. Even if you are not a dog owner, you typically do own a trash can. As communities began to enjoy the convenience of automated garbage pick-up, we didn't yet have the Internet, our own personal sounding board for pet peeves (pardon the pun). After this marriage, the trouble began.

Do we, or do we not, deposit our bagged dog poop in a neighbor's trash can?

Dog Poop etiquette has not been officially decreed. Three camps currently exist: the "Absolutely Not, That's Disgusting" camp; the "Only If There Is Existing Trash in My Can, Awaiting a Timely Pick-up" camp and

lastly, the "My Trash Can Punch Days Are Long Gone, So Whatever" camp.

I fall into the last category, as do my compatriots – dog owners who sense the need to pay it forward, whose karma could generally always use a few bonus points.

No judgement here, we are all entitled to an opinion.

I'm just tired of the stress associated with all the guessing. Depositing poop in a random trash can produces the same nervous anxiety as a clandestine round of Ding Dong Ditch, but devoid of any childhood thrill.

Perhaps I will propose an idea to Republic Services, Orinda's waste management contractor: mail us our choice of three large, color-coded stickers. We select one to place on our can, a code that instantly tells "poop-etrators" if your receptacle is poop-friendly. Red for "absolutely not," yellow for "only if a full can" and green for "bombs away."

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



Seasoned Shopper

Bring on the Broccoli



BARBARA KOBSAR

Some vegetables, like broccoli, can be found year-round at farmers' markets. Cooler weather brings out the best bunches with crispy stalks, green florets and a bright, earthy flavor. As a member of the cabbage family, it can give off strong odors when past its prime, so be particular and choose heavy heads with small buds tightly packed together. Yellowing is another sign of deteriorating broccoli.

California produces more than 90% of the broccoli crop for the United States and was introduced here in the 1920s by the D'Arrigo brothers, who farmed in the San Jose area.

Nutritionally rich, broccoli is usually green, but some varieties have purple or white buds – all tasting pretty much the same. Showiest of them all, with its large chartreuse-colored florets growing in a spiraling conical head, is the delicately flavored Romanesco broccoli.

Broccoli rabe, known as rapini or rabe, is similar to broccoli in appearance but is actually the flower shoot of a type of turnip. It's a little bitter with thin stalks, small buds and plenty of leaves. Broccolini, with long, leggy stems, small florets and a few leaves, is tender and sweet – a cross between broccoli and Chinese broccoli.

If you come across a dark green leafy vegetable with small florets and thick

stems, it's probably Chinese broccoli, or Gai Lan. The large flat bluish green leaves and stems are perfect partners in stir fries, soups, stews and as a side dish.

Roasting brings out the natural sugars in vegetables, mellowing out strong flavors and producing golden, toasty morsels. Pre-cooking or steaming the vegetables before roasting is the best way to make them caramelized and tender. Preheat an oven to 375 degrees. Chop the vegetables in uniform-sized pieces. Spread in a single layer on a baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil then season with salt and pepper. Cover with foil and steam for half the cooking time. Remove foil and leave uncovered for the second half of cooking time to roast the vegetables until they caramelize,

When roasting broccoli, cut florets from the stalk and peel stalk, if necessary, before cutting into ¼ inch slices. To roast broccolini, trim an inch off the ends and cut thick stems in half lengthwise. For broccoli rabe and Chinese broccoli, trim any tough, fibrous parts of stems before roasting. Root vegetables like sweet potatoes, carrots and turnips take the longest to roast – 30 to 45 minutes. Broccoli and cauliflower take 15 to 20 minutes and tender items, like cherry tomatoes, zucchini and cooking greens, 8 to 10 minutes.

Roasted broccoli makes an especially flavorful soup. Roast 6 to 7 cups broccoli with ½ onion, cut into large pieces, 2 garlic cloves, peeled and cut in half, 3 tablespoons olive oil and salt and pepper. Cool slightly and reserve a few broccoli pieces for garnish. Place the remaining mixture in a blender with 2 cups vegetable or chicken broth. Pour into a pot to reheat. Of course, ½ cup of half and half and 1 cup of shredded cheddar cheese added to the pot only makes it tastier.

The Orinda Farmers' Market is open every Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Orinda Way in Orinda Village. For more information, visit www.cccfm.org, [facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket](https://www.facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket) and Instagram at [OrindaFarmersMarket](https://www.instagram.com/OrindaFarmersMarket) or call the market hotline at 925.322.6228.




BARBARA KOBSAR

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Barbara Kobsar can be reached at barbara@cotkitchen.com.

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NEW EATERY

Orinda Theatre Square Welcomes New Eatery Comelones Tacos

By ANDREA MADISON
Staff Writer

Authentic Mexican food has come to Orinda Theatre Square with the opening of Comelones Tacos. The restaurant, which opened Dec. 2, 2022, serves up a variety of protein options in their dishes and the owners look forward to serving the community food that balances quality with its affordable price point.

Comelones Tacos occupies the space which formerly housed Lava Pit Hawaiian Grill, at 2 Theatre Square, Suite 142. “Comelones” translates from Spanish to “eaters” in English.

“We thought that this would be a really great location,” said John Batesting, noting the support of neighboring businesses.

Batesting, along with restaurant partner Eric Galindo, had been trying to open the restaurant for some time, but the main issue was finding a location. The lease for Comelones was signed in Sept. 2020. At that time there were shortages of supplies, such as stainless steel, which delayed construction, according to Galindo. Batesting said the paperwork required to start the business also took a long time.

Comelones held a grand opening event on Dec. 10, offering two free tacos or a five-dollar burrito.

Galindo is no stranger to the food service industry, as his parents run El Trompudo Taco Shop in El Sobrante and other family members operate food trucks.

“Eric has been in the taco game for most of his life,” said Batesting. Comelones Tacos in Orinda is the first location, but the two would like to open more locations in the future.

For the duo, the balance of quality and price is the key to success. “We like making really great food [with] fair pricing,” said Batesting, noting “a lot of really great food in the Bay Area is really hard to discover.”

Galindo echoed his partner. “If [you’ve] got good food but it’s really expensive, people might only eat it once a week,” he said.

The menu features five main dishes with seven protein options. Batesting said the restaurant likes to “keep it very simple” when it comes to their offerings.

Nacho fries, tacos, quesadillas, burritos and tortas can all be ordered with a choice of meat: asada (steak); pollo (chicken); adobada (grilled pork and onions); carnitas (pulled pork) served with a fermented Salvadoran cabbage slaw; birria (stewed beef with chilis); chorizo (spicy pork sausage);

and soy chorizo.

Sides include fries, chips and salsa or rice and beans. Prices for dishes range from \$3 for a single taco to \$12 for larger items. Fresh toppings include pico de gallo, salsa, sour cream, cheese, cilantro and onions. The restaurant now offers in-house pickled jalapenos and carrots. Catering options are listed on its Facebook page.

“All of our customers leave full and happy,” said Batesting.

According to their Yelp page, the food at Comelones comes from original family recipes, including some from Galindo’s mother. The taco shop currently has a small menu, but the owners plan to add to its offerings slowly.

The duo would like to introduce more vegan options, such as jackfruit, in the future. The restaurant is also hoping to obtain a beer license by summer, said Galindo, who mentioned the idea of “Mexican mimosas” as a possibility.

“The community’s really pushing for us to be successful here,” said Galindo.

Comelones Tacos is open daily, from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Customers can place orders for delivery via DoorDash.

Andrea Madison can be reached at drea.madison.05@gmail.com.

◆ CLUBS from page 15

Orinda Satellite Rotary Club. Second Wednesday, 12:15 p.m. Call Sylvia at 510.224.8548.

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

Orinda Teen Advisory Council. Contact Recreation Coordinator Matt Delmartini at mdelmartini@cityoforinda.org.

Orinda Woman’s Club. Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m., Garden Room of Orinda Library. Email Jean Barnhart at jeanr.barnhart@gmail.com.

Road Runners. Meet 5:45 a.m. Tues., at Papi-ion, 67 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette, Wed., Gepe-tos, 87 Orinda Way, Thur., SiSI, 910 Country Club Drive, Moraga and Fri., Starbucks, 470 Moraga Road, Rheem. Contact John Fazel at runmnts@prodigy.net.

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

Send club listings to Jill Gelster at calendar@aspenconsult.net.



JEFF HEYMAN

Partners John Batesting and Eric Galindo of Orinda Theater’s Square’s newest eatery, Comelones Tacos, opened its eatery Dec. 2. Pictured is Héctor Edison Montes Lopez (L) and Mariane Paulina Montes Galindo (R), Galindo’s cousin and sister respectively.

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MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

A Conversation with Co-founder of Coffee Meets Bagel Dating App

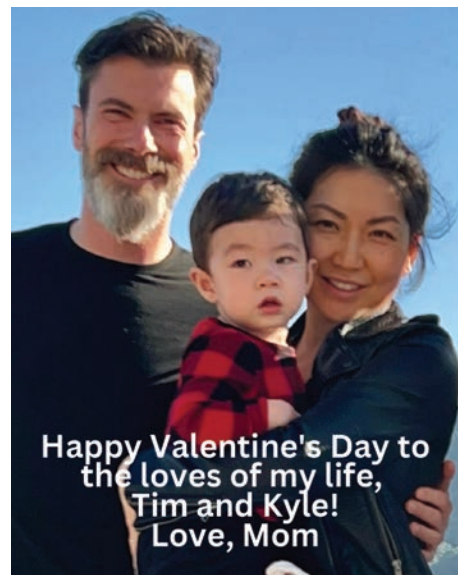
By KATHY CORDOVA
Executive Editor

In 2012, after getting her MBA from Harvard, Arum Kang and her two sisters (one of whom is Arum’s twin) founded the dating app, Coffee Meets Bagel (CMB). The sisters pitched their company on Shark Tank in 2015 and rejected Mark Cuban’s offer of \$30 million for the company – the highest offer ever in Shark Tank history at the time.

Tell us about your upbringing and how that led you to forming a company with your two sisters.

We were born and spent our childhoods in South Korea where our dad has been an entrepreneur all his life. He started a metal recycling business with our uncle and we grew up watching him grow the business. He encouraged us to be entrepreneurs – to create something for the world.

Our parents sent us to the United States



to go to high school and we became really independent and our relationships with each other became really tight. We talked regularly about starting something together.

How did you get the idea of Coffee Meets Bagel?

While in business school, I looked into dating apps as part of my education. It was a growing market, and while there were a lot of players, there was a need to cater to women. We saw an opening to create an app to speak to those needs.

And the name?

We studied a lot of brand imaging and discovered while guys want a feeling of exclusivity, women want comfort and safety. We thought coffee breaks are something people look forward to; they’re comfortable. And since we were in New York City at the time, and we loved the bagels there, we came up with Coffee Meets Bagel.

“In the 70s, 90% of people married someone who lived within 10 miles of their home. Your zip code dictated who you married. Now you have the whole world open to you.” – Arum Kang

What’s unique about CMB?

We’re not a high-volume swiping app. We curate the best matches every day at noon and send them to our users, who then have 24 hours to decide on the match. If the interest is mutual, simply connect and start chatting.

Our streamlined approach resonates with busy professionals. They are prioritizing



JEFF HEYMAN

Arum Kang founded the dating app Coffee Meets Bagel with her three sisters. She lives in Orinda with her husband and two sons.

what’s important. Our users want a long-term partner and to meet other people with the same intention. Our tagline is “We’re for serious daters.”

We felt fine about passing on Cuban’s offer since we already had funding and were not willing to give up control of the company.

How have dating apps changed over the years?

Dating apps have changed as we’ve moved heavily toward mobile from the web. People can have access via their phones which is different than even a few years ago. Also, the negative stereotype of dating apps is largely gone. The proliferation of mobile devices and the trend of online, allows access to a greater variety of people.

“In the 70s, 90% of people married someone who lived within 10 miles of their home. Your zip code dictated who you married. Now you have the whole world open to you.”

How did it feel to reject Mark Cuban’s \$30 million offer for the company?

You live in Orinda with your husband, Marc Piette, another entrepreneur (founder of Xwing) and your two sons, Loic, age six and Teo, age four. What do you like most about living here?

When I grew up in Korea, we knew all our neighbors and the kids all played together. We have that here. I was one of those people who said they would never move out of the city, but I love the community and having more space and a backyard. I’m so blown away by how beautiful it is here.

Visit CMB’s website at www.coffee-meets-bagel.com

Kathy Cordova can be reached at cordova@theorindanews.com.



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