



THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis
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12 Issues Annually
June 2023

Family-Owned Morrison's Jewelers Celebrates Centennial Anniversary

By NATASHA KAYE
Staff Writer

If you've ever walked along Moraga Way downtown and noticed a wet nose and set of piercing blue eyes gazing at you amongst a sea of sparkling gems and stones, then you've stumbled upon longtime, family-owned and operated Morrison's Jewelers and of course, their beloved Husky mascot, Harley Jane.

This year, Morrison's celebrates its 100-year anniversary with husband-and-wife duo, Christine and David Berryhill, at the helm.

"Love you can see since 1923" states their website and with dedicated customer service, attention to detail and passion for fine jewelry, every trip to Morrison's upholds this promise.

Berryhill inherited the business from his [SEE MORRISON'S page 5]



JEFF HEYMAN

The owners of Morrison's, **Christine** and **David Berryhill**, are a husband and wife duo now running the 100-year-old family business.

The Future of the Orinda Theatre



JEFF HEYMAN

Preserving the iconic **Orinda Theatre** marquee is a priority for a group of community members who met last month to discuss ways to support the Theatre. See story on page 18.

OUSD Honors Teachers of the Year

By ANDREA MADISON
Staff Writer

Alicia Doyle, Gretchen Loughran, Erin Miller, Diana Owens and Michelle Pinney were recognized for their contributions.

The Orinda Union School District (OUSD) named five Teachers of the Year recipients during a board of trustees meeting in April. The honorees, nominated by staff from their respective schools, are in consideration for the 2022/23 District Teacher of the Year.

Alicia Doyle

For 21 years, Doyle has been part of the "great team" at Wagner Ranch.

"I've been very fortunate to really hone my craft in second grade," said Doyle. She

[SEE TEACHERS page 15]



CHRIS LOUIE

Orinda Union School District's outstanding Teachers of the Year were recognized during a May 10 event sponsored by the Rotary Club of Orinda. The five honorees represent each of the district's schools and each received a plaque and a stipend award. (L-R) **Rodney Lal**, president of Rotary Club of Orinda, **Michelle Pinney**, Orinda Intermediate School, **Gretchen Loughran**, Del Rey Elementary School, **Alicia Doyle**, Wagner Ranch Elementary School, **Diana Owens**, Sleepy Hollow Elementary School and **Erin Miller**, Glorietta Elementary School, also recognized as OUSD District-Wide Teacher of the Year.

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MARRIED 50+ YEARS / CARTOON

Series: Insights from Couples Married 50 Years or More!

By AMY MOELLERING
Staff Writer

Gloria and Dick Marchick met at a frat party at Washington University in St. Louis where he was a medical student, and she was working on a degree in education. Their conversation, she remembers, was engaging and he was so charming that, when she needed a date for a Halloween party, she tracked him down.

He didn't remember her. Trying to jog

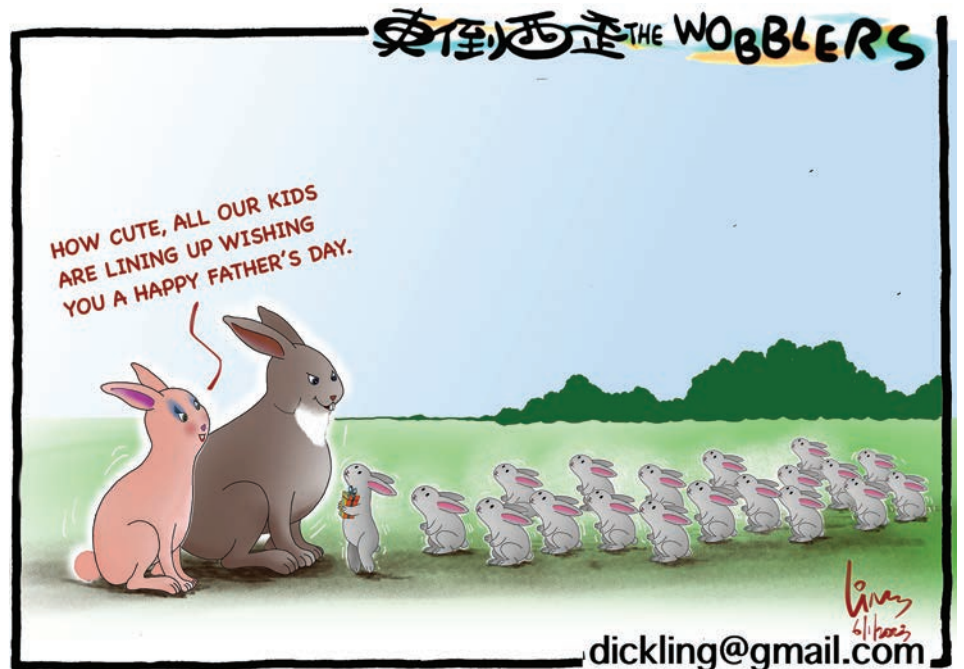
his memory didn't work, so she made him a deal: "Here's my number. Ask your friends about me. If you're interested, call by Wednesday because if I don't hear from you, I'm asking someone else."

That phone call was one of the best decisions Dick ever made. They married the following year and this December marks their 63rd anniversary. They have a new puppy, two Hawaiian trips planned, a granddaughter's wedding and several volunteer commitments to the community.



JEFF HEYMAN

Gloria and Dick Marchick celebrate 63 years of marriage this December. They attribute the success and longevity of their relationship to being able to "renegotiate the contract" as their lives and circumstances change.



So how does a country boy from Cheyenne, Wyoming, one of five children born to immigrant parents, meet a sophisticated girl from St. Louis, who swore she'd never leave, and end up together as California residents and world travelers? An optimistic, adventurous mindset and a shared commitment to family are traits which characterize this enduring partnership.

The first five years of married life were in St. Louis, close to Gloria's family and starting their own, when a career opportunity for Dick changed everything. The Berkeley obstetrics practice he joined was with a group of forerunners who laid the groundwork allowing dads in the delivery room and using the Lamaze method for labor. "It was a wonderful specialty," said Dick, "I loved sharing that time of life with new parents."

This, however, was the toughest time of their marriage. "I felt like Dorothy in the *Wizard of Oz*," said Gloria, referring to the drastic differences from the Midwest to California in the '60's during the Vietnam



COURTESY OF GLORIA MARCHICK

Gloria and Dick Marchick on their wedding day in December 1960.

War riots and the Civil Rights movement. She was a young mom with two small children and their son, sick with asthma, required shots every six hours. Dick was never home. "I had nobody. It was a very lonely, tough time for me," said Gloria.

[SEE MARRIAGE page 6]

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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA Board
Summertime Fun in Orinda



CINDY POWELL

Lots going on in Orinda this month, and we encourage you to take advantage of the many fun opportunities. Here is just a sprinkling of what's on offer.

Murder in Orinda? Find out at Orinda Starlight Village Players' *The Secret of Chimneys*, running June 2 – July 1. The Agatha Christie thriller performs in the Orinda Community Park Amphitheater.

Join The Orinda Association at Wilder Art and Garden Center June 4, at 1 p.m. as we present three recipients with William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Awards.

Barbara Leitner, Eagle and Gold Scouts and the Nature Area deserve recognition for their efforts to educate and preserve our beautiful town. Fittingly, June 5 is World Environment Day and, this year, it focuses on finding solutions to plastic pollution.

Orinda Summer Camp begins June 5 with Orinda Parks and Rec offering everything from robotics and comics to veterinary camps. Starting June 8, the Summer Concerts in Orinda Community Park kicks off with the *Three-Day Weekend* [SEE MESSAGE page 6]

Meet Alex Drexel: Newest Board Member to The Orinda Association

By SALLY HOGARTY
Staff Writer

The newest member of The Orinda Association's board of directors brings a strong sense of business acumen and technology with his undergraduate degree in economics from UC Berkeley and an MBA from the Haas School of Business.

Alex Drexel is an executive at a large software company leading a global team

of technology professionals. Despite his busy schedule, Drexel has a strong sense of civic duty and believes it's important to find time to be active in his local community.

When living in Oakland, Drexel contacted then Mayor Ron Dellums and found himself on the Civil Service Board, becoming part of a team who adjudicated disputes and disciplinary items between the city of Oakland and the Civil [SEE DREXEL page 14]



JEFF HEYMAN

The Orinda Association's newest board member, Alex Drexel, shown in his home office with an autographed photo of baseball slugger Pete Rose among his certificates and diplomas. When not leading a global team of technology professionals, Drexel enjoys coaching Orinda Youth Sports baseball and spending time with his wife and three sons.

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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The Orinda Association

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ORINDA RESIDENT

Ahead of His Time: Dr. Rosenthal, Learning Disability Expert Looks Back

By CELESTE ALTUS
Staff Writer

In the quiet hills of Orinda lives a retired pediatrician who may not be a household name, but who was ahead of his time in terms of treating and writing about learning disabilities when research was in its emerging stage. Joseph H. Rosenthal, MD, PhD, now 95-years-old, published his book *Hazy ...? Crazy ...? and/or Lazy? The Malign-*

ing of Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities in 1973.

“The book is what the science – the craft – was in 1973, when I put together whatever I could garner from clinical and research data of the time,” he said.

Rosenthal’s interest in learning disabilities began early in his career.

The New York native completed his medical degree, served as an officer in the U.S. Army Medical Corps and then worked

as a pediatrician in Oakland. There he observed a pattern of worried parents, struggling children and what the youths had in common: nervous energy, being distracted, reading and memory issues and interrupting others. They also had motor perceptual problems, language delays and dyslexia.

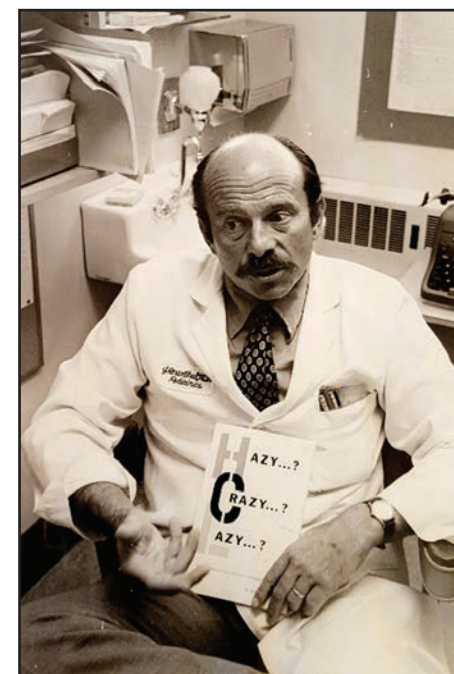
Rosenthal remembers a poignant meeting with a young mother who came in without her son, detailing his school troubles and her profound guilt. Sharing her experiences and Rosenthal’s knowledge, she began to cry.

These were not tears of sadness. “She told me, ‘I finally found somebody who understands what I am talking about,’” said Rosenthal.

Rosenthal spent years researching and compiling information about learning disabilities and gathering case studies of children he had worked with. The result was *Hazy ...? Crazy ...? and/or Lazy?*

Part biography and part history handbook, it outlines various types of learning disabilities such as dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia, offering advice and drawings of situations illustrating these differences.

In 1977, Rosenthal wrote his second book, *The Neuropsychopathology of Written Language*. He worked with colleagues to establish possible localizations of sub-groups of dyslexia in the central nervous



COURTESY OF DR. JOSEPH ROSENTHAL

It has been 50 years since Orinda resident **Joseph Rosenthal** published his book *Hazy...? Crazy...? and/or Lazy? The Maligning of Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities*.

system.

Some dyslexic patients approach adolescent and adult years with difficulty. This is when nicheology, i.e., the art and science of finding the innate talent shown in the

[SEE HAZY page 8]

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Orinda 4th of July Parade

JEFF HEYMAN

The Orinda 4th of July Parade is around the corner. The day starts with Lamorinda Rotary's Pancake breakfast and the Fun Run, followed by the parade at 10 a.m. Join us for a Classic Rock concert in the park featuring **Tin Man** playing classic hits from the late 60's into the 90's following the parade, accompanied with beer booths and food trucks. For more information, to enter the parade or volunteer, visit <https://orindaassociation.org/>.

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CITIZEN OF THE YEAR / CONTINUATIONS

◆ MORRISON'S from page 1

father and uncle, who moved their grandfather's original store from Berkeley 30 years ago. Orinda's calm pace and close-knit community embraced Morrison's with open arms. To show appreciation, the proprietors regularly find ways to give back to the community.

"We know our clientele, we know their kids, we know their grandkids and we're always doing fun, different things," said David.

Inspired by their love for Harley Jane, the Berryhills hold a sled dog adoption fair each month with NorSled, a Northern California-based rescue. NorSled brings

adoptable dogs to Morrison's to introduce them and to find their forever homes. Visit Norsled.org for more information about the organization.

Celebrating this diamond anniversary, Morrison's is holding a diamond earring giveaway raffle throughout 2023, with all proceeds benefiting NorSled.

"You're getting in a raffle for some amazing diamond earrings and you're helping a dog rescue organization," said Christine. "So it's kind of a win-win, you know?"

The centennial celebrations don't end there.

The "Third Thursday Events," held every third Thursday through Saturday, feature a selected designer, offering a 33% discount off all their items.

"There's something for nearly everyone at Morrison's," said Christine.

Occasionally a high schooler will stop by to scope out a \$75 necklace or an established client will walk away with a quarter of a million-dollar pearl necklace. Morrison's features a wide selection of rare, quality gemstones from across the globe including rubies, sapphires and tourmaline.

Morrison's Jewelers specializes in custom works with many creations made on-site. They repair, redesign and customize pieces to clients' tastes and with their ingrained family values, take pride in dedication to heirloom, quality pieces.

"We sell the kind of jewelry you can pass down to your daughter and your granddaughter," said Christine. "It's going to be around far longer than probably even you are."

Although the Berryhills don't have a fifth generation slated to take over the business, the operations are a full-family effort with their son Jack Jorgensen, handling web design and the business' Search Engine Optimization (SEO). His work can be found at www.tenayawp.com.

In addition to family legacy and dedication to their craft, the chance for Morrison's to play a small role in the special events in people's lives is the driving force behind their business.

"We're there for the wedding, for the engagement rings. We're there for the anniversaries and the presents when ba-

bies start coming," said Christine. "You just don't get to see that all the time. So for us, it's really the personal connection and of course, a massive love of jewelry."

Natasha Kaye can be reached at natashakaye@berkeley.edu.

Nominations Open for Orinda Citizen of the Year

Do you have a person in mind to nominate for outstanding community service in 2023 and/or over many years of lifetime service?

- Must be a current Orinda resident
- Must be someone who has given of their time, talents and energy as a community volunteer helping make Orinda better
- Must be someone who models excellence and good citizenship in everything they do
- Must be someone who brings our community together making us proud and promoting community spirit

Deadline for nominations is Sept. 30.

Email nominations to orindafoundation@gmail.com or mail to Orinda Community Foundation, P.O. Box 21, Orinda, CA 94563. Include your name and contact, along with the name and contact of the nominee.



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SCAN ME




LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the Editor

OUSD Measure Z Recap

The Orinda Union School District’s parcel tax measure (Z), on a special March 7 ballot, passed the 2/3 majority hurdle easily with 5,018 yes-votes (77%) where only 1,545 dissented.

Orindans support public education, especially public education in Orinda, but do they support deceptive practices to enhance that support?

This special election, the only issue on the ballot, cost the school district \$217,000. This is over \$200,000 more than it would have cost if the ballot had been placed on the November general election ballot.

The 5,018 yes-votes, while being a winning margin, represent 33% of Orinda’s registered voters. This is because the special election only elicited a 44% turnout, which is exceptionally low for Orinda, especially considering every voter received a mail-in ballot.

What if the election had been held in November when the turnout was 72%? Would the measure have gained the required 7,200 votes for a 2/3 majority? Probably. But the district was not willing to “risk it.” Great lesson for the kids – play the odds even if it costs a little more.

The basis for the “ask” was the district only receives \$8,500 per student in state funding. Looking at the district’s audited financial statements, it turns out it really receives \$10,000 from the state, \$400 from the federal government, \$3,800 in local taxes and \$2,000 in donations. That’s \$16,200 per student, almost twice the amount publicized.

For more details on what I consider to be a deceptive ad for a good cause, visit www.saferorinda.info/measure-z-accounting.

- Steve Cohn

Seeking Public Open Forum

I became a resident of Orinda in 1952. I am a medical doctor, have a full-time practice in internal medicine in Walnut Creek and I am the founding president of www.PeopleUnited.net.

We have all lived through the challenges of the past three years and most of us have become aware of what is happening to our Constitutional Republic. Our health, economy, civil rights and Republic are now in danger of collapsing.

We have lost our constitutional privilege of running our great country, as it is now largely controlled by oligarchs, lobbyists and corporations. Many patriotic Americans are beginning to realize the importance of forming a grassroots movement to take back our government. “We the People” are awakening to the dangers that are jeopardizing our personal sovereignty and freedom.

People United is requesting a Town Hall meeting for Orinda residents and an open forum to discuss the state of affairs of our country.

- Len Saputo

There is no “blight” in Orinda

I was dismayed to read that one of our own councilmembers, Latika Malkani, said “There’s a blight in Orinda,” May article, *The Orinda News*, “State Approves Orinda’s 6th Cycle Housing Element.”

I disagree.

Blight is usually characterized by deteriorating and abandoned homes and buildings, as well as vacant lots with trash, high weeds and abandoned and vandalized cars. We don’t have that in Orinda. Yes, we have old buildings, and like many cities, we have some vacancies. Phairs would be a pre-school if pro-developer forces hadn’t blocked it in 2013. But there isn’t “blight.”

like to be in charge,” laughed Gloria. Their three children (Patty, David, and Sarah), their spouses and six grandchildren have benefited from their adventures. Each grandchild takes a trip with them when they celebrate their Bar or Bat Mitzvahs.

“I believe it’s a better world now, than when we were starting our marriage. Today there is more integration and more opportunities for women,” said Dick. “In my day, there were only two women in my medical school class and now women outnumber the men. Our granddaughters have more choices.”

“We ache a bit more now but feel lucky to have each other at this point in our journey,” said Gloria.

“She’s the best thing that ever happened to me,” said Dick. Good thing he made that phone call.

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

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Quite the contrary.

We have many thriving businesses serving our community, as is appropriate for the small town that is Orinda. Most of these businesses are of the proverbial “mom and pop” variety and have literally served our community for decades. They struggled through the pandemic, but remained and remain open.

Our casual restaurants offer a variety of different cuisines and have a loyal following with good food. We have service businesses where we can get our clothes

cleaned, prescriptions filled, do banking and shop. Parking is free.

Our desires which cannot be fulfilled within Orinda are easily filled in neighboring communities just a few minutes away, where we pay for parking.

The City plans call for the demolition of the existing buildings and destruction of the local businesses. A better plan would be a facade improvement program, such as Danville has adopted. Grants are available from the National Main Street Center.

- Nick Waranoff

◆ MARRIAGE from page 2

She made friends and returned to teaching, specializing in ESL, English as a Second Language. first at Acalanes Union High School District, then at Berkeley, training student teachers, and finally at DVC.

The secret to a good marriage is being willing to “renegotiate the contract” when the needs of one aren’t being met. “We are both strong personalities and our union could have been a power struggle, but we learned to recognize that and fix it,” explained Gloria. When Dick turned 60, he announced he wanted to retire, sell the big house and travel. She was skeptical, but agreed. When Gloria won a Fulbright scholarship to teach in Slovakia, off they went. Five years later, she won another to Morocco.

“When we travel, we sometimes have to decide who will be dictator for the day and then share the duty, because we both

◆ MESSAGE from page 3

band. Bring a picnic or enjoy the Thursday night food trucks.

Look for American flags decorating our town starting Flag Day, June 14, when Orinda Public Works hangs flags, donated by VFW Post #8063, along the 4th of July parade route. Also June 14 is the Orinda Chamber mixer and June 15 is the Thursday free movie night featuring *Auntie Mame* at the Orinda Theatre.

Visit the Orinda Farmers’ Market every Saturday and, especially, June 17 to buy some picnic goodies, because International Picnic Day and Father’s Day coincide Sunday, June 18. This could be the perfect combo! Plan a picnic for the father figure in your life and enjoy it in the park or your backyard.

Summer Solstice, Wednesday, June 21, is

the longest day of the year and is followed by the Thursday night free concert, *Opera in the Park* at Orinda Community Park.

Look for The Orinda Association’s 4th of July banners this month as our city readies for the parade. We could not continue this tradition without our great sponsors and volunteers. Thank You!

Be sure to check out the 2023 T-shirts designed by Wagner Ranch 5th grader Aavya Khanna which are available at The Orinda Association office in the Library Plaza.

To be part of the 4th of July celebration as a volunteer or to enter your group in the parade, visit www.orindaassociation.org and sign-up.

The Orinda Association wishes you a fun-filled summer!

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

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Letters to the Editor for the July issue are due June 8.

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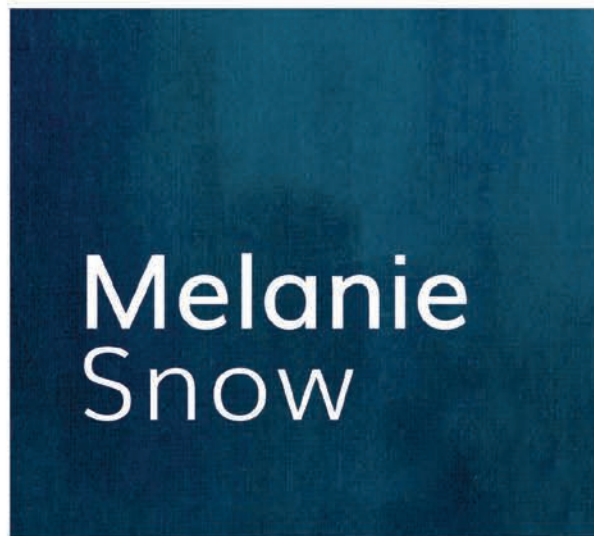
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PERFORMING ARTS

Peter Pan Foundation Embraces Performing Arts and Philanthropy

By JANIE HOLLERBACH
Contributing Writer

It was January 2006 when Leslie Noel, a singing teacher and student of opera, first crossed paths with Steffen Ryge, a senior at Acalanes High School. Noel was performing in an alumni concert for the high school; Ryge, more of a thespian himself, was nonetheless so moved by her singing that he approached her after the show.

The two got to talking, with Ryge expressing that he'd love to participate in one of Noel's future productions. Noel, inspired by their conversation – and Ryge's boyish resemblance to Peter Pan – soon began work on a new original musical.

Noel and Ryge's mutual love of the performing arts and helping others gave way to a creative masterpiece: a new musical *Wish Upon A Star*. With Noel running the show, Ryge starring as Peter Pan, and many of his high school peers joining the project, the show was a roaring success.

The first run of *Wish Upon A Star* raised thousands of dollars for UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital in Oakland – and Noel and Ryge's creative partnership was just

getting started. From there, they broadened their horizons by visiting patients and putting on more performances. Both gained a deeper appreciation for the power of music to connect people and cultivate gratitude. They knew they had more work to do.

But their work was cut short in August 2006, when Ryge lost his life in a tragic auto accident. He was only 18 years old, mere weeks away from starting college. His family and friends were devastated – as was Noel.

Yet she knew Ryge wouldn't want their work to end there. To honor his memory and preserve the spirit of their collaboration, Noel founded the Peter Pan Foundation (PPF): a non-profit organization dedicated to serving children through music, creativity, and kindness.

Today, over 16 years later, PPF continues to be a home for love, diversity, empathy and connection. Through youth outreach, charity visits and musical fundraisers, PPF serves countless children and families in the Lamorinda area and beyond.

Noel is particularly emphatic about prioritizing inclusivity and diversity in everything they do.



JEFF HEYMAN

Performers with the Peter Pan Foundation participated in Orinda's 2022 4th of July parade.

"The Peter Pan Foundation is a place of inclusion which supports and celebrates the beauty of uniqueness and diversity," said Noel. "We provide equal casting and participation opportunities [for all demographics]."

Steffen Ryge's mother, Charlotta Ryge, is similarly proud of the ethos at PPF, where she serves as the non-profit's secretary. "To me, the most inspiring thing about the PPF is a strong thread of loving kindness which runs through everything we do," she said.

PPF collaborates with numerous non-profit organizations around the country to help address various issues. These include Make-A-Wish, Born This Way Foundation, Easter Seals Bay Area, UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland and more.

"Through PPF, thousands have been recipients of philanthropic endeavors," said Noel. "These donations foster support for the health, mental health and general well-being of those who need us most – including those who participate in our productions."

With unwavering dedication to serving the Lamorinda community, the Peter Pan Foundation undoubtedly has a lasting impact on the lives of children and families in need.

Moreover, PPF ensures that Steffen Ryge's legacy will never be forgotten – every Memorial Day weekend, they continue to perform *Wish Upon A Star* in honor of him.

"Through the performing arts, we spread

love and light, while also raising funds to donate to important and worthy causes," said Charlotta. "Being a part of the PPF family is fun, inspiring, and most of all, life-changing."

For more information, visit www.peterpanfoundation.org.

Janie Hollerbach can be reached at janiehollerbach@gmail.com.

◆ HAZY from page 4

earlier years, comes into play. Symbols and graphics can be substituted for phonics as learning tools, or by supporting language and linear reasoning skills, for instance. An example is the young lady who illustrated his book.


Rosenthal and his wife have lived in Orinda since 1956 and raised their three sons here.

In retirement, he enjoys collecting antique maps and continues to be an advocate for children with learning disabilities.

Now on the 50th anniversary since *Hazy ...? Crazy ...? and/or Lazy?* was first published, Rosenthal hopes to republish it, perhaps as a historical entity.

"Is this then really the way to the stars?" he mused, looking back on his life and wondering if this is his way of reaching immortality.

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BEFORE AFTER

PERFORMING ARTS / COMMUNITY

Secret is Out: Orinda Starlight Village Players are Back on Stage

By DAVID DIERKS
Assistant Editor

The Orinda Starlight Village Players (OrSVP) begin its 40th season at the Orinda Community Center Park Amphitheater with Agatha Christie's *The Secret of Chimneys*. Directed by Laura Martin-Chapin, performances run from June 2 through July 1.

Penned in 1931, its planned performance was mysteriously canceled.

"Written as a reworking of her novel of the same name, it was lost and not produced until this century," said Martin-Chapin. "Although many of her plays have become almost classic and iconic, *Chimneys* is still relatively unknown. As such, it is not overdone and provides an unusual opportunity for the director and ensemble to shape the play from the inside out, by establishing their own character-quality and interactions."

The action takes place at *Chimneys*, the Brent family estate. A young drifter, Anthony Cade, is tasked to perform a simple errand on behalf of a friend. Little does he suspect, this job will land him in the center of a conspiracy being investigated by Scotland Yard and the French Surete.

"Filled with quirky characters, *The Secret of Chimneys* is not just a murder-mystery, it involves a jewel heist, exiled royalty, international conspiracy, a love story and of course, an historic country

manor – all with a definite sheen of fun," said Martin-Chapin. "Christie's writings are characterized by light-hearted 'what-ifs' and puzzling murder and *Chimneys* is no exception."

Martin-Chapin has graced the OrSVP stage many times, as well as performing with other local theater companies.

"Having performed in several of Christie's plays at OrSVP over the years, it is a pleasure to be in a position to be the one to build the ensemble and guide the scene and character development," she said.

"I am enjoying working with this fine cast and crew as we dig into the nuances of the play, to develop the storyline occurring at a time before social media and television news," added Martin-Chapin. "Every day there are additional aspects about the period and location I want to research and new angles to consider for how best to present an absorbing performance to the audience."

Performances are Friday and Saturday nights at 8:30 p.m., Sunday, June 25 at 4 p.m. and Thursday June 29 at 8 p.m.

OrSVP is a volunteer organization and no one at the theater receives compensation. Interested in any aspect of theater and would like to help? Contact info@orsvp.org or 925.528.9225.

For more information, visit www.orsvp.org.

David Dierks can be reached at david@theorindanews.com.



DAVID DIERKS

The dedicated volunteers of the Orinda Starlight Village Players rehearse Agatha Christie's *The Secret of Chimneys* on the Orinda Community Center Park Amphitheater stage evenings during the week and help with set construction on the weekends. Seen here on their partially completed set, are (L-R) William Spongberg, Bill Chessman, Miriam Michels and in front Director Laura Martin-Chapin. *The Secret of Chimneys* opens June 2 and runs through July 1. For more information, visit www.orsvp.org.



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A Taste of Italy for Second Graders



JEFF HEYMAN

On May 22, **Rosario Frayle**, a server at Casa Orinda, showed 60 second grade students from Del Rey Elementary School in Orinda how to cut, butter and bake biscuits. Their two and a half hour field trip was about learning how a restaurant works. Given chef hats and hands-on activities, the kids were chaperoned by parents, teachers and General Manager **Claudia Tata**.



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2023

STUDENTS

Student Launches Non-Profit to Help Protect Columbian Ecosystems

By ANIA KEENAN
Staff Writer

For the Raphaels, environmental service was a natural endeavor after years of traveling. Earlier this year, the Orinda family worked together to launch *The Mangrove Project*, a non-profit or-

ganization aimed at reducing the impact of travel-related carbon emissions in Columbia.

The Mangrove Project (<https://www.tmpcolombia.org/>) allows participants to calculate the climate impact of their travel and to replace those emissions by planting Mangrove trees in La Boquilla, Columbia.



Abby Raphael with dad Steve Raphael on a beach in Costa Rica. The two worked together to launch *The Mangrove Project*.

Miramonte Matadors Express Band



JEFF HEYMAN

The Matador Express band rocked Miramonte's High School quad, while students enjoyed lunch on May 10. (L-R) **Thomas Boifort** on bass, **Alexander Kim** on drums and **Jack Hughes** on guitar. This student-staff rock band was created by Miramonte teachers **Thomas Dwyer** (jazz ensemble, orchestra, symphonic band) and **Steve Poling** (English 1, English 4 Deconstructing Race). The Matador Express has performed three times this year, where the students chose the tunes and set the agenda.

Abby Raphael, a junior at Campolindo High School, who worked with her father and brother on the project, said they chose this tree because of its high carbon intake levels. Recent studies show Mangroves have the capacity to absorb a high amount of carbon dioxide when compared to other species. Represent-

ing a small share of current forests, experts say Mangroves have the potential to make an impact on future emission levels.

"The process of creating *The Mangrove Project* has been really cool," said Abby. "Working with my dad Steve and brother Zach has been fun and knowing the difference we're making is the best part."

So far, local Boquilla residents have planted 220 trees, which calculates to 64 tons of carbon dioxide absorbed.

Emissions are calculated using the Flight Free USA calculator. Users input their starting and destination locations and transportation methods to estimate the atmospheric impact of their travels.

Partnering with the project and Rafaels is Alternative Travel Cartagena, a non-profit organization which promotes sustainable travel.

"My son Zach and I were in Colombia over winter break, which is how and when we met our partners in Cartagena," said Steve.

Travel has been important to their family since Abby and her older brother were young, said Steve. He is excited to see his daughter's interest in

[SEE MANGROVE page 13]

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FIRST FRIDAY FORUM

Whitehouse Takes Listeners on a National Geographic Expedition

By **BOBBIE DODSON**
Staff Writer

One doesn't need to travel far to visit the Northwest Passage. This month's First Friday Forum features Dr. Joe Whitehouse, who takes listeners there with his presentation, "A National Geographic Expedition – The Northwest Passage." The Forum, held in the Fellowship Hall at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC), is June 2 from 10 – 11:30 a.m.

Whitehouse said, "For centuries the famous Northwest Passage has had an almost mystical reputation as one of the harshest naval endeavors to find a way from Europe to Asia. Between the end of the 15th to 20th Century, colonial powers from Europe dispatched explorers in an attempt to discover a commercial sea route north and west around North America to Asia."



COURTESY OF DR. JOE WHITEHOUSE

The last First Friday Forum of the year, **Dr. Joe Whitehouse**, will speak on "A National Geographic Expedition – The Northwest Passage." The talk is June 2 and held in the Fellowship Hall at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC).

Whitehouse and his wife Arnette, have traveled worldwide including 157 countries with 23 ship expeditions.

"Among these expeditions are one to Antarctica and two in the Arctic, including the Northwest Passage," said Whitehouse. "The photography I bring is of a quality that helps make this story come alive."

Join Whitehouse on the National Geographic ship Endurance from Nome, Alaska to Greenland, visiting Inuit villages and watching polar bears while crossing the Northwest Passage and learning about the failed voyages spanning hundreds of years.

This voyage exemplifies the outcome of brave men – many of whom lost their lives – to allow for commercial ship traffic to move successfully through the Arctic, as it melts due to climate change.

LOPC is located at 49 Knox Dr, Lafayette. For Zoom attendance, register at lopc.org/forum. Registration is not required to attend in person.

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

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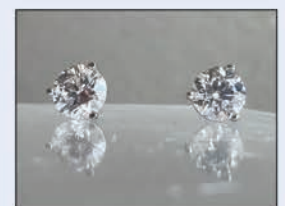
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STUDENTS



LISA BERLINI

Connor Dong, an eighth grader at Orinda Intermediate and **Aavya Khanna**, a fifth-grade student at Wagner Ranch Elementary with their 2023 T-Shirt Contest winning designs for the Orinda Classic Car Show and July 4 Parade respectively.

And, the Winners Are...

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

“I wasn’t expecting this,” he said, giving a thumbs up. “It was kind of shocking,” she said. Connor Dong, an eighth grader at Orinda Intermediate and Aavya Khanna, a fifth grade student at Wagner Ranch Elementary are the 2023 T-Shirt Contest winners for the Orinda Classic Car Show and July 4 Parade, respectively.

Open to all Orinda kindergarten through seventh grade students, the July 4 design had to be hand-drawn whereas middle and high schoolers created original digital art.

At the urging of her mother, Khanna who only drew in art class, worked at the kitchen counter. It was a “one and done,” as she submitted her first design.

She included *Liberty, Freedom and Justice* as “they are what the Fourth of July

represents to me.”

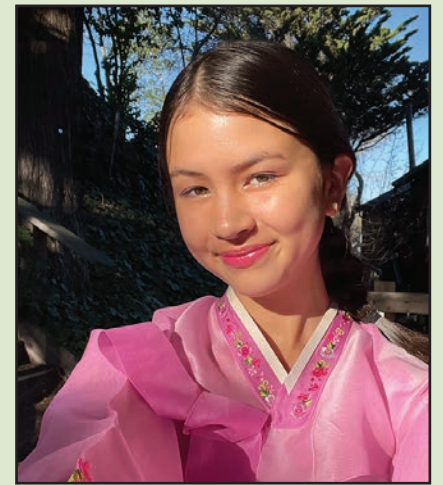
Having seen his mom’s t-shirt from a previous year, Dong was inspired to enter the first-ever, student-designed Classic Car Show T-Shirt Contest. An artist, Dong spent five hours during a family trip drawing the winning entry on his iPad.

The Orinda Association, which sponsors both free and public events, invited students back to the designing process for July, which had a hiatus since 2008 and added the car show. “We are proud of the support from the community, art teachers, office staff, the library, parents’ associations from all campuses and ONE Orinda,” said President Sally Hogarty.

Visit www.orindaorganization.org to view all t-shirt entries.

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

Poul Anderson Writing Contest



COURTESY OF FRIENDS OF THE ORINDA LIBRARY

Out of 29 entries, four high school winners were chosen and won \$500 each in the annual Poul Anderson Writing Contest on May 15.

Top (L-R) **Nina Segall** won with her essay *Intertwined Fingers*, Miramonte 9th grade; **Emma Wong** for her poem *Breaking Up with Beautiful*, Miramonte 10th grade and also a previous winner; bottom (L-R) **Tatiana Gupta** won with her science fiction story *Box*, Miramonte 10th grade and **Olivia Falk** won for her poem entitled *The Memory Box*, 10th grade at College Preparatory School. Honorable mentions went to **Liesel Yun, Antong Cao, Matthew Bakonyvari, Kaia Bonham** and **Josslyn Grover**.

The Poul Anderson Creative Writing Contest is held each spring, sponsored by the Friends of the Orinda Library and is open to students who reside or attend high school in Orinda. The contest is named in honor of the late **Poul Anderson**, a popular science-fiction writer and Orinda resident, who was a friend to the community for 40 years.

For more information, visit <https://friendsoftheorindalibrary.org/writingcontest/>.

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OH, THE PLACES YOU'LL GO / PET OF THE MONTH

◆ MANGROVE from page 10

environmental advocacy through the project.

"It has been great to see Abby really excited about the project and that she actually feels like she is making a positive impact," said Steve. "It's also been great to show both kids that if you can put your mind to anything, you can make it happen. If you have a dream or an idea you are excited about, don't ever let anyone tell you it's impossible."

Abby said since working on *The Mangrove Project* and taking an environ-

mental studies class, she has become interested in pursuing a career in the field.

"This school year I've been taking my high school's AP Environmental Science class and over the past few months, I've gotten really into learning all about sustainability and the way our planet works," she said. "After my dad and brother went to Columbia, we realized we could make an impact there."

Ania Keenan can be reached at akeenan@nyunews.com.

Pet of the Month



SARA JAYNE BALDWIN

Winnie Fluff Baldwin, a one-year-old Maltipoo, is seen here with her family (L-R) **Kit, Lulu, Caroline** (holding Winnie) and **Poppy**. "Winnie is the cuddliest fluffball ever, with a little mischievous side to boot. She loves to play fetch and get belly rubs. She is the perfect addition to our family of 6 - now 7," said **Sara Jayne Baldwin**.

Oh, The Places You'll Go



CHARLEEN EARLEY

Editor-in-Chief **Charleen Earley** took a recent trip to Texas to visit her three grandkids. So did *The Orinda News* ... which found its way to Whataburger, an American regional fast food restaurant chain, headquartered and based in San Antonio, which specializes in hamburgers.

The Orinda News
Oh, The Places You'll Go



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SEASONED SHOPPER

◆ DREXEL from page 3

Service.

“It was very interesting and I met people I never would have met in my business career,” said Drexel.

Ten years ago, Drexel and his wife Colette, a CPA, moved to Orinda and he once again reached out. This time, he ended up on the Orinda Parks and Recreation Commission.

“I’ve been on the commission for five years and it’s been a great experience. My kids are fully immersed in Parks and Rec programs, so I’ve been able to give the commission personal feedback,” said Drexel. “The Parks and Rec staff is fantastic, very high functioning. We’re lucky to have them.”

Drexel credits COVID-19 for stopping his daily commute to San Francisco. He now works remotely three days a week with two days at his office, which relocated to San Ramon.

“I can’t imagine driving into the City every day again” he said. “I have more

time with my family and to volunteer in the community.”

Drexel and Colette have three sons, 9-year-old William and 7-year-old Thomas, both at Wagner Ranch, as well as 4-year-old John at St. Mark’s Preschool.

“Both older boys play baseball and I’m coaching Thomas’ OYS (Orinda Youth Sports) team,” said Drexel. “One of the biggest perks of coaching is getting to choose where we have pizza night.”

Alex ran for the Orinda City Council last November. While he didn’t win, he acknowledges it as a “fantastic” experience.

“It beat my expectations in terms of a growth opportunity. I grew closer to Orinda with that election,” Drexel said. “Talking to all the people across Orinda and understanding their concerns was like pouring Miracle-Gro on my roots here. I learned to appreciate Orinda in more ways than I could have imagined.”

When the opportunity to be on The OA board came, Drexel decided to “continue the journey and become even more connected to the community and meet more people.”

Drexel looks forward to helping with several OA programs including September’s Classic Car Show, which raises funds for the Seniors Around Town transportation program. He’ll be entering his 1978 Porsche 911 SC in the show, a car he bought from his dad’s college friend over 20 years ago.

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

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BARBARA KOBSAR

It’s your choice – grill, sauté, puree or slice it up fresh – summer squash is ready.

All varieties, of which there are many, sport the characteristics of thin skin, soft seeds and high moisture content. Mild in flavor and interchangeable in many recipes, summer squash marries well with cilantro, basil, garlic, onion, pepper and tomato.

The slender green zucchini is probably the most prolific and best-known of the summer squash family. I’m first in line when the deep-yellow Gourmet Gold zucchini arrives at market. The flavor is mildly sweet with a buttery soft flesh and the perfect addition to frittatas, salads and pizza. Round green or yellow zucchini are great for stuffing with couscous, rice, quinoa or ground beef.

Scalloped-edge squash like sunburst, pattypan and scallopini add interest to the barbecue when sliced crosswise and grilled with a little olive oil and oregano. Crookneck squash, easily recognized by a full blossom end that narrows at the neck, is delicious used in cold soups.

Choose fresh summer squash with shiny skin, free of any pitting. Small squash is the most tender, but they should be firm and heavy for their size. Over-mature squash is salvageable when hollowed out for stuffing and baked like winter squash, or added to soups and baked goods.

Opo squash looks like elongated, pale green pears. They are a type of gourd and

may be referred to as bottle or snake gourds. Use opo squash in curry dishes, as it holds its shape much better than other varieties and absorbs all the amazing flavors.

Bitter melons resemble bumpy-skinned, bright-green cucumbers. A type of squash, but as the name implies, they are bitter and become more so as the fruit ripens. To prepare for soups or stir fries, cut in half lengthwise, scrape out and discard the seedy pulp and blanch the shell for a few minutes. Then drain, sprinkle with a little salt and let stand on paper towels. This procedure helps to remove some of the excess moisture and bitterness.

One of my favorite summer dishes is Calabacitas, Spanish for “little squash.”

Calabacitas

Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Ingredients:

- 1 tb butter
- 4 cups half-inch cubed squash
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 1 seeded and diced jalapeno pepper
- 1 chopped garlic clove
- 2 cups fresh corn
- ½ cup Jack cheese
- salt and pepper to taste
- diced tomato or pimento (optional)

Melt butter in a medium-sized skillet. Add and sauté the squash (I like pattypan, [SEE SHOPPER page 17])

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SCHOOLS

OUSD Focus on District-Wide Comprehensive Safety Plan Update

By ANDREA MADISON
Staff Writer

The Orinda Union School District (OUSD) named four comprehensive goals as part of its 2023-2024 district-wide safety plan, which is reviewed and updated annually as per state requirements.

Areas of focus include emergency preparedness, physical safety, mental health and wellness and positive behavior support.

The emergency preparedness aspect of the plan has OUSD collaborating with the Orinda Police Department (OPD) to update all evacuation maps, upgrading and inventorying the PA systems and supplies and revising the emergency command center

protocols and maps.

Training for potential emergencies begins at the start of the year with safety drills taking place on campuses.

So far this year, there have been 18 school shootings resulting in injuries or deaths across the country, according to www.educationweek.com. A student-on-student stabbing at Northgate High School in Walnut Creek on April 25, as reported by NBC Bay Area, highlights the necessity of school response protocol.

All OPD officers are well-trained to respond to school safety concerns and the department has consulted with OUSD on the issue, said Police Chief Ryan Sullivan. Also covered is better familiarization with the schools, their layouts and individual

safety plans.

Knowledge of physical aspects of the campuses, such as which direction doors open, is important and there are plans to conduct training at each school site, Sullivan added.

Physical safety for students and staff entails improvements to current facilities and playgrounds and street safety for arriving and departing students. There are changes to drop-off and pick up procedures for the Before and After School Care programs (BASC). Campus fire safety through abatement is another goal.

"Can we hire crossing guards, looking at the budgets?" is a question, looking into the physical safety aspect of the plan, said Glimme. "What kind of education can we do for the students for their physical safety?"

Glimme said the mental health and wellness of OUSD students is a priority, as there are lingering effects from the pandemic and students being alone in the online learning environment.

Cyber safety and bullying, plus social and emotional safety are included as mental health priorities. Student, staff and parent awareness of mental health resources are outlined in the safety plan. In addition to professional development to ensure appropriate training on social emotional learning (SEL), there are strategies and coordinated social media presentations about its hazards.

OUSD Board of Trustees President Hill-

ary Weiner emphasized the importance of figuring out systematically how to both help students and help staff to help students, when it comes to mental health.

Weiner said there are wellness centers staffed with counselors at all four elementary schools, which was prioritized within the budget.

While Orinda Intermediate School (OIS) has staffed counselors, the addition of a dedicated wellness center on the campus is a goal, Weiner added. It is part of the building plan currently underway.

"Every age group is affected in a different way," said Weiner, regarding the mental health issues faced by students.

OUSD seeks to employ a positive behavior intervention system (PBIS), a dedicated group tasked with examining tools for positive behavior and consequences and will explore collaboration with community partners. Staff will be trained in accordance with the system and the district will communicate PBIS work with parents through education events.

Safety can be an overwhelming topic, since it is so close to home, acknowledged OUSD parent Kelli English.

"I think we are always going to look at safety plans as living documents," she said. "Because there are always things that can be improved."

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

◆ TEACHERS from page 1

shared a mantra learned from a mentor: "Mistakes equal information. This plays into an open growth mindset that, if learned by students now, can equal success later in life."

New social and emotional needs arose after the pandemic, said Doyle, and educators are learning how to handle those issues along with the usual curriculum.

Her work never gets boring and is always challenging. Her goal is to "keep on keeping on with all of the things that are changing."

Gretchen Loughran

With 30 years in education, including overseas and as a principal, Orinda is a good fit for Loughran, an instructional support instructor at Del Rey.

Loughran calls special education more of a marathon than a sprint with new challenges keeping it exciting. Working with students from kindergarten to fifth grade requires her to pivot a lot.

"It's always a moving target; that's what I love about teaching," said Loughran.

Her job involves flexibility and meeting students where they are, said Loughran, who aims to "curate my teaching to what they need."

Learning and continued collaboration with general education teachers are among her goals.

Erin Miller

Miller teaches first grade at Glorietta. With 25 years of experience, her personal passion lies in literacy, which aligns with the literacy intervention specialist position she begins next year. She's also learning to teach phonics in sequential patterns.

"There really is a sense of finding your people when you're teaching," Miller said of her colleagues, highlighting the importance of finding those who are in the profession because it feels good. "It's very rewarding."

At Glorietta's Back-to-School Nights, Miller makes a point to tell parents their children are with a person who really does love their role.

"I do truly enjoy it," she said.

Diana Owens

Owens is a kindergarten and first-grade teacher at Sleepy Hollow, which she calls a friendly and warm place with wonderful colleagues. Teaching for 18 years, Owens said she loves little kids and considers the connections forged with families rewarding. Fun and engaging classroom activities are a goal, she said, with plenty of art, singing, music and games.

While the pandemic presented challenges, she noted there was a unique opportunity to peek into a student's home life. Getting to know the family pets was a favorite aspect of the online meetings with her youngsters.

"It's always been my dream job," said Owens. "I just love it."

Michelle Pinney


Teaching sixth-grade core at Orinda Intermediate since 2015, Pinney wants to instill excitement in students to learn about different cultures. She works with the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Club to foster those values with the group, staff advisors and students from all grade levels.

This year, Pinney enjoyed splitting her days, working half with a sixth-grade core class and half with another class, giving her the opportunity to become acquainted with more staff and students.

"I would love to give a shout out to all of my students, past and present, who have made teaching so much fun and enjoyable," said Pinney. "They are the reason I do what I do!"

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

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CALENDAR / CLASSIFIEDS / CAR TIME

On the Calendar in June

Art Gallery at Wilder: Photographer and writer, Jennifer Lothrigel's work in meditation through June. To schedule a viewing, contact Curator Ani Breslin at anistonbreslin@berkeley.edu. See article p. 17.

1 **Orinda Books Pat's Book Club** reads and discusses *The Boys* by Katie Hafner. 11 a.m. Email info@orindabooks.com for reservations.

Orinda Books presents Barbara Graham and Katie Hafner who discuss *What Jonah Knew* and *The Boys*. Noon.

Orinda Library presents Contra Costa County Library's Summer Reading Program. The theme is "Find Your Voice." For all ages. Visit <https://ccclib.org>.

Orinda Library Paws to Read grades K through 5th can read to dogs certified for their social natures. Registration required. Also, June 8, 15, 22 and 29. Visit <https://ccclib.bibliocommons.com/v2/>

events?locations=19.

Taste of the World food trucks Orinda Community Center parking lot, 5 - 8 p.m. Also June 18, 15, 22 and 29.

2 **First Friday Forum** presents "A National Geographic Expedition - The Northwest Passage" with Dr. Joe Whitehouse, 10 a.m., Register for Zoom at <http://lopc.org/forum>. See article p. 11.

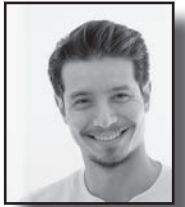
Orinda Starlight Village Players present Agatha Christie's *The Secret of Chimneys* through July 1. Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 p.m., Sunday, June 25 at 4 p.m. and Thursday, June 29 at 8 p.m. Orinda Community Center Park Amphitheater. See article p. 9.

3 **Orinda Farmers' Market**, 9 a.m. Orinda Way in front of Rite Aid and the Community Center Park. Visit www.cccfm.org or 925.431.8361. Also June 10, 17 and 24. See article p. 14.

[SEE CALENDAR page 18]

CAR TIME

General Motors Will Lose Customers



XAVIER ESTRADA

General Motors (GM) is ditching Apple CarPlay and Android Auto from their electric vehicles (EV), beginning with the 2024 Chevrolet Blazer EV. For years, the duo navigation systems have been the standard for big manufacturers due to user satisfaction. People wanted a seamless infotainment interface and integrating the smartphone software was the solution.

Google is involved in developing the new built-in system, which GM stated will offer more than CarPlay and Android Auto and will allow smartphones to be connected via Bluetooth only. This means juggling two devices, GM's native system and the user's smartphone. When GM broke the news in March, the reaction was negative, leaving a bad taste for many

who do not want to rely solely on Google maps for navigation or use the in-vehicle apps.

Since becoming the norm, many buyers say their next vehicle needs to have CarPlay in order for it to be a contender. Due to its popularity, aftermarket brands offer head units and plug-ins which support CarPlay and Android Auto for older vehicles.

The adoption of the new system gives GM the ability to collect more consumer data, since it is the only interface in the vehicle.

According to GM, the drastic decision has to do with controlling all the vehicle applications, as opposed to supporting third parties and to maintain harmony with its automated navigation driving features. Plus, GM does not want to isolate anyone who doesn't have a smartphone.

Chief Executive Mary Barbra projected about \$25 billion for GM in annual subscription revenue by 2030.

BMW was the last manufacturer to make headlines for subscription services. They were charging other countries a subscription fee for heated seats. In the past, features like these were paid in full when a new vehicle was purchased, because it was an added physical feature. Lexus similarly charges an annual fee to use the remote engine start feature, unlike some brands which physically add it and charge no fees to use it on the key fob.

GM is taking a huge risk and time will tell if it pays off, but it looks bleak. EV brands, such as Tesla and Rivian, do not support CarPlay or Android Auto, since they have their own systems. It is important to note Lucid Motors, another high-end luxury EV brand, did not initially support CarPlay and Android Auto, but in March made an OTA (Over the Air) update making the feature accessible and standard.

Consumers in the Tesla community have found third party workarounds to use CarPlay. This further proves how much demand there is for CarPlay and Android Auto connectivity.

Xavier Estrada can be reached at xavier.estrada.freelance@gmail.com.

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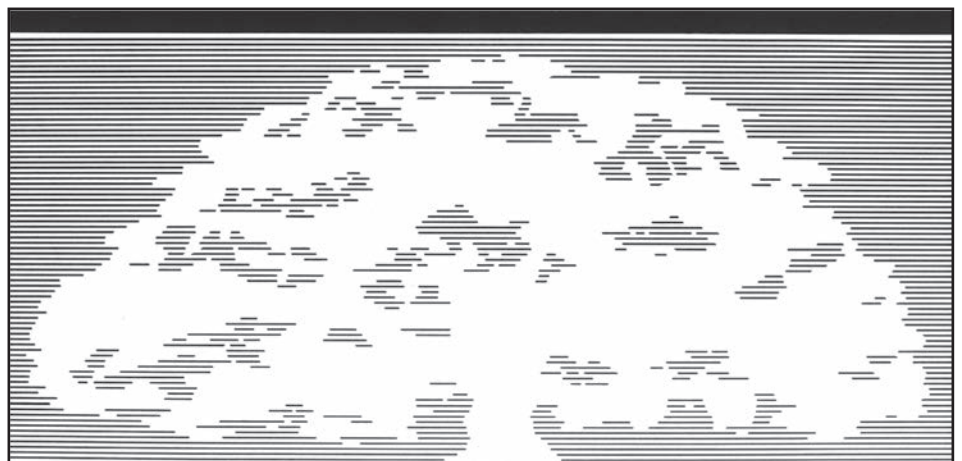
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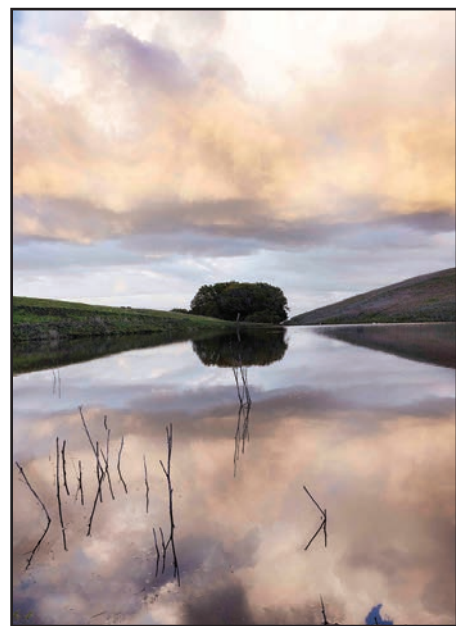
DAVID FONSECA

Art Gallery at the Orinda Library:
photography, paintings, miniatures and
Tabor art/artifacts

The talents of the following local artists are showcased June 3 – July 1, with a meet-and-greet reception June 10 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the library.

Bay Area educator and photographer Nancy Rubin (<https://www.nancyjrubin.com/>) shares her portraits of fatherhood.

“By 2015, I was doing a lot of street photography,” she said. “I realized I had photographed many fathers alone with their kid(s) rather than what was familiar not that long ago - a mother out with the kids or both parents with them. There seemed to have been a sea change of men feeling comfortable pushing a stroller or doing the shopping while accompanied by their kids. I found them irresistible. I made a point to



JENNIFER LOTHRIGEL

This photo, *As Above, So Below*, is from Lafayette photographer Jennifer Lothrigel's exhibit at the Art Gallery at Wilder this month.

document them.

“On two occasions, when I approached the fathers and explained my project and asked if they would participate, they said ‘You were my teacher at Berkeley High!’ It had been some 25 years since we had seen one another. They are both included in this project,” she said.

“Most were total strangers who I encountered while walking or shopping. I am forever grateful to the fathers who let me interrupt their precious time with their children, who shared their stories and their feelings with a stranger and her camera. This exhibition honors those fathers, and all fathers like them. The interactions I had with them were heart-warming and always left me feeling hopeful,” said Rubin.

Contemporary oil painter and wildlife artist Alexandra Saunders (www.alexandraanders.com/) shared, “Painting makes me happy. It’s me going down the rabbit hole to start my day and connect with the wonder that surrounds us. I have worn many hats in my life, but the one constant is my love for animals and being surrounded by the wonder of nature and earth’s beauty. My art is central to my way of expressing my deep and abiding reverence and love for our planet and all living beings.”

Orinda resident Amelia Wilson is sharing her miniature figures, called “santons,” from the Provence region in France which were gifted to her by her mother-in-law.

The Orinda-Tabor Sister City Foundation (www.orindatoborsistercityfoundation.org/) is exhibiting arts and artifacts from Tabor.

The picturesque Czech city’s hills and winding roads are similar to Orinda’s. Our first Mayor, Dick Heggie, and former

of pimento gives the dish a dab of color and flavor.

The Orinda Farmers’ Market is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Orinda Way in Orinda Village. Visit www.cccfm.org, facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket, Instagram at OrindaFarmersMarket or call 925.322.6228.

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



JENNIFER LOTHRIGEL

This photo is from Lafayette photographer Jennifer Lothrigel's exhibit at the Art Gallery at Wilder this month. Her work is a meditation on belonging, lineage and connection to body and place.

Mayor Bobbie Landers, were instrumental in organizing the connection with Tabor.

Art Gallery at Wilder

Photographer and writer, Jennifer Lothrigel, presents her work in meditation on belonging, lineage and connection to body and place. She has multiple bodies of photographic work and this exhibit comes from two of those: “Briones,” about

her relationship to the place she lives and “Wind Mother,” named after the Hungarian Goddess Szelanya.

To schedule a viewing, contact Curator Ani Breslin at anistonbreslin@berkeley.edu. For more information, visit <https://lamorindaarts.org/current-exhibits-wilder/> or call the Council at 925.359.9940.

David Fonseca can be reached at davef52@gmail.com.

◆ SHOPPER from page 14

zucchini and scallopini), onion, jalapeno pepper and garlic.

Add corn and season with salt and pepper.

Cook over medium heat for 5 to 6 minutes stirring occasionally.

Sprinkle with cheese, lower heat, cover and cook for another 2 minutes.

Adding a diced tomato or a tablespoon

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28 Orinda Way – Orinda Community Center

THE ORINDA THEATRE

State of the Orinda Theatre – Locals Rally to Keep Iconic Landmark

By SAVANNAH CORDOVA
Contributing Writer

A “State of the Theatre” meeting, chaired by co-owner Derek Zemrak, was held May 7 to discuss recent changes to the Orinda Theatre and plans to keep it up and running smoothly.

Key topics included upgrades made over recent years and the need for the community to continue supporting the Orinda Theatre, beyond the generosity expressed during the pandemic. Hundreds of people donated to the theatre’s Go-FundMe campaign in 2020 and 2021, but high operating costs continue to pose a challenge even though it is now open

to the public.

Maintaining the iconic marquee was emphasized as a priority. According to Zemrak, the upkeep costs are upwards of \$10,000 a year and would benefit with a dedicated subcommittee for fundraising and further supervision.

“The marquee is an Orinda landmark,” said Kathy Kerr-Schochet. “We need to maintain it, no questions asked.”

Various aspects of the Orinda Theatre have helped it remain open, even as others in surrounding areas have closed. Among these are its successful concert series, special events for clubs and activist groups and low ticket prices.

“Independent theatres like us have the



SAVANNAH CORDOVA

Derek Zemrak, co-owner of The Orinda Theatre, chaired a “State of the Theatre” meeting on May 7 to report on recent changes and discuss future plans. Attendees included (L-R) Harvey Schochet, Kathy Kerr-Schochet, Dave Graeven, Derek Zemrak, Marty Lewis, Leonard Pirkle and Rich Lewis.

creativity and flexibility to keep the industry going,” said Zemrak. “But the commu-

nity needs to own it.”

[SEE THEATRE page 19]



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◆ CALENDAR from page 16

- 4 **The Orinda Association** presents the William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Awards. 1 p.m. Wilder Art and Garden Center. See Board Message p. 3.
- 5 **Orinda Parks and Rec Summer Camp** begins. Visit www.orindaparksandrec.org to register.
- 7 **Orinda Library Toddler Storytime** Come for stories, movements and rhymes for one to three-year-olds and their caregivers. 10:30 a.m. Also, June 14, 21, and 28.
- 8 **Concerts-in-the-Park** with *Three-Day Weekend* 6 p.m. Orinda Community Center Park.
Orinda Books Story Hour picture book reading in the Children’s Corner (ages 2-6) with Megan. 11 a.m. Also, June 22. Email info@orindabooks.com for reservations.
- 10 **Art Gallery at the Orinda Library** Reception 3 p.m. Visit <https://lamorindaarts.org/ekphrasis/>. See article p. 17.
- 13 **Orinda Books** Jane Delury discusses her new novel, *Hedge*, 11 a.m. Email info@orindabooks.com for reservations.
- 15 **Orinda Theatre Free Movie Night** presents *Auntie Mame* at 6:30 p.m.
- 17 **Chiller Diller Theater** presents *Tales from the Crypt*, 7 p.m.
- 18 **Orinda Books and Orinda Library** Author Jennifer Ackerman discusses *What an Owl Knows*. Event supports Golden Gate Raptor Observatory’s research program. Orinda Library Auditorium. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/jennifer-ackerman-author-of-what-an-owl-knows-tickets-606013321157>.
- 20 **Orinda Library’s Fireside Chat:** Harry Potter as Literature. 6:30 p.m.
- 22 **Opera In the Park** presented by Orinda Rotary Club. 6 p.m. Orinda Community Center Park.
- 23 **International Film Showcase** is Mongolia’s Oscar submission, *The Steed* for at least a week. Visit www.OrindaMovies.com for showtimes.
- 24 **Summer Memories**, Marty Nemko performs a solo-piano concert of standards, show tunes and love songs. At the patio in front of the Orinda Library and Caffe Teatro, 26 Orinda Way. 11 a.m. to noon.

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

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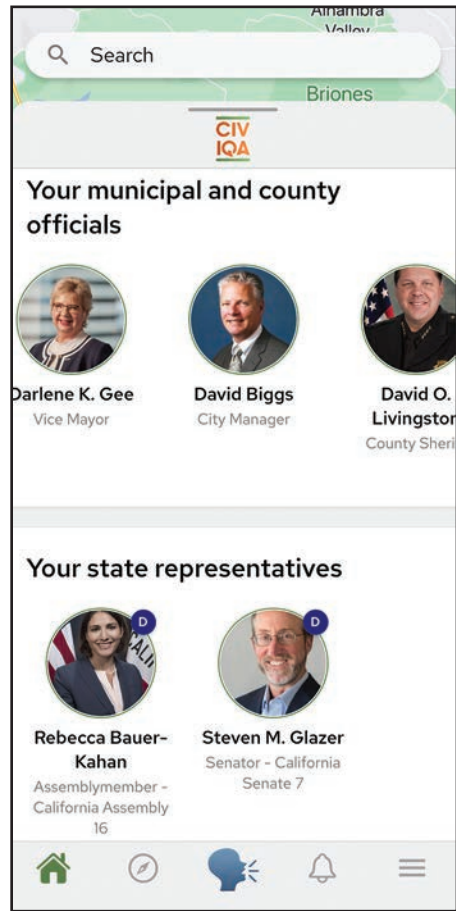


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BUSINESS BUZZ

App Creators Build Community and Legislative Consciousness

By CHARLEEN EARLEY
Editor-in-Chief



When friends Arshad Ahmed and Aly Ibrahim saw the need for more inclusive, responsive and accountable governance, they created Civiqa, a phone app.

Available for iOS and Android, the free, downloadable app launched in January and is designed to promote local, political participation.

“It is unprecedented in making available at anyone’s fingertips, information about the stack of governments responsible for every location in the entire United States and the legislative and policy work happening there,” said Ahmed, of Orinda. “It empowers constituents in each location to organize politically for the changes they seek.”

They basically saw a need and filled it. “We asked ourselves where’s the digital forum that harnesses the power of mobile for transparent, collaborative discourse between public officials and constituents?” said Ibrahim, who recently moved from Lafayette to a Washington, D.C. suburb.

Ahmed had a legal practice and taught law at UC Berkeley Law, UC Hastings College of Law, Vanderbilt Law School and Wake Forest Law School, while Ibrahim worked at Pinterest and Google. The two put their careers aside to focus on building Civiqa.

ARSHAD AHMED
Created out the desire to promote a more inclusive, responsive and accountable governance, friends **Arshad Ahmed** and **Aly Ibrahim**, designed a free, downloadable app called Civiqa, which is available for iOS and Android phones.

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In addition to theatre programming, Zemrak gave a rundown of repairs and upgrades made during the pandemic, including cleaning the glass panels of the marquee, restoring neon lights which had been sealed off since the 1980s and redoing the bathroom tiles and carpets.

Much of the work was done by volunteers, demonstrating the profound need for this kind of involvement to keep the Orinda Theatre operating at a high standard.

Attendees agreed that community participation is paramount going forward, both in terms of attendance and involvement.

“The theatre needs participation as much as it needs cash,” said Harvey Schochet. “And it should be a central meeting point. This is a place where we should all come and feel community pride.”

Attendees advocated for more substantial fundraising efforts and awareness campaigns for the theatre’s many offerings.

“The Orinda Theatre is a best-kept secret,” said Schochet. “That’s its downfall. How do we get this to be a better-known spot?”

The throughline of the meeting is community participation and getting personally involved is the best way to help secure its future.

“Orinda needs volunteers to get this thing going. We need all hands on deck helping out,” said Dave Graeven.

“People would miss this place enormously if it closed,” said Schochet. “The initiative has to start here.”

Savannah Cordova can be reached at savannahcordova@gmail.com.

Want to get involved with the Orinda Theatre? Call 925.254.9060 to inquire about volunteering.
For more information, subscribe to the Orinda Theatre newsletter at www.orindamovies.com.

Together they brainstormed ideas for a digital forum to make organizing campaigns in one’s district easier – whether it’s filling a pothole or changing local policy.

“It’s obvious to anyone paying attention to the state of our democracy there’s a dire need for a service which feels balanced from a political standpoint, not biased one way or the other and where the system promotes responsiveness and accountability among decision-makers,” said Ahmed.

Civiqa is community-specific and maps to every government jurisdiction, from congressional to school districts. Locally, there are action cards for the City of Orinda, Acalanes Union High and Orinda Union School Districts.

“The app is granular enough to cover organizations and officials. There’s an action card for the Orinda City Council – as well as each councilmember,” said Ahmed. “This means any citizen can upload a Q&A with the mayor or city manager for everyone to see.”


“It’s a unique way for neighbors to get together to track and engage our public officials, not to mention it offers a new and exciting platform for public officials to demonstrate, in real time, their responsiveness and accountability to their constituents and supporters.”

The duo hope Civiqa helps promote transparency and accountability in local communities.

“Who better than high schoolers – insiders – to know what’s worthwhile to report on within their school action card, or who better than a resident to post video footage of the reception he or she got when asking a question at a city council meeting?” said Ibrahim.

He added, “Reporting on the app generates a searchable, historical repository which will only get more useful and valuable as AI search technology becomes ubiquitous.”

Planning to partner with high schools
[SEE BUZZ page 20]




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MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Q&A with Torre Major, Owner of Family-Run Orinda Shoe Repair

By KATHY CORDOVA
Executive Editor

One of Orinda’s oldest businesses may be hidden away on a discreet side street in the Village, but that doesn’t mean it’s forgettable – in fact, quite the opposite. Loyal customers from Neiman Marcus in San Francisco to designer shoe devotees in Los Angeles not only discovered it, but they keep coming back for the artisan work and friendly service.

Orinda Shoe Repair has operated as a family business for 71 years, passed down through the generations. It’s currently helmed by Torre Major with help from Sherry, his wife of 41 years, and his 31-year-old son, Tyler.

How did Orinda Shoe Repair get its start? Has it always been in the same location?

It started with my stepdad in 1952. Originally we were where Village Pizza is now. We moved to this location (19 Avenida De Orinda) in 1958.

Have you always had a passion for shoes?

I can remember as a little kid watching my stepdad in the shop. He taught me to work on other people’s shoes as if I was working on my own. We buy the best materials, the best polishes and source from bespoke manufacturers in Italy, Germany and France. I’ve always appreciated high-quality things.

I like it when people, who buy well-made shoes, want to repair them instead of tossing them in a landfill. We try to keep prices low so people can keep their nice stuff. We don’t want anyone to over-pay, but we have some people who pay a

lot of money to preserve something they value, maybe something sentimental to them.

Do you have any other great passions?

When I was five years old, I took my first flight with my family from Oakland to LAX. The pilot invited me into the cockpit and let me sit in there with him and he showed me around. We took off and I looked out the window. From that point on, I wanted to be a pilot.

I got my pilot’s license and flew charters and worked as a private pilot for a family for many years. I purchased the shoe repair shop from my stepdad when he retired in 1991 to keep it in the family. Until three years ago, I worked both as a pilot and at the shop with my wife and son.

Do customers come from all over the Bay Area and beyond?

Yes, one shoe aficionado told me he read Yelp reviews for shops from San Diego to Seattle and ours was the best. He sent us shoes to work on and when he saw our work, he was sold. He only uses us now and we ship shoes back and forth to Los Angeles.

You also repair things other than shoes. What’s the strangest thing you’ve ever worked on?

One lady brought in a Venetian leather garbage can. Over time the bottom wore out, but we fixed it and when we were done, it looked brand new.

What do you like best about having a business in Orinda?

When you’re nice and personable to



JEFF HEYMAN

Orinda Shoe Repair has been a family-run business for 71 years. Torre Major (R) runs the shop with his son Tyler (L) and his wife Sherry.

people and you follow through on what you say you can do, they come back. I like to see the end result when the customer is happy and looks at our work and goes “Wow!” I’ve seen three generations of Orinda families. I’m surprised at how many people I’ve gotten to know over the years.

Do you know a fascinating resident or businessperson in Orinda? Send your ideas to editor@theorindanews.com.

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

◆ BUZZ from page 19

and colleges, they anticipate journalism students filling a transitional zone between novice and professional, where the app is a low-risk, high-reward digital space to practice their craft meaningfully.

“They can write about local issues important to them and their neighbors and make their reporting immediately available to local audiences,” said Ahmed. “With the app, there’s no waiting for publication. Knowing their reporting will become part of their public portfolio, is far more motivating than the alternative – graded articles, never to be

seen or benefitted from.”

Ahmed and Ibrahim see the potential with Civiqa.

“The app enables users to follow state and federal legislation by topic, driven by our machine-learning engine,” said Ahmed. “It’s a service that’s never before been available to the public at no charge. Our freely available AI legislative-tracker is a game changer.”

For more information, visit <https://www.Civiqa.com/>.

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



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