



THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis
Volume 36, Number 4

www.TheOrindaNews.com

Delivered to 9,000 Households and Businesses in Orinda

12 Issues Annually
April 2021



COURTESY OF LORI A. CHEUNG

Volunteers met at the Orinda Library parking lot to load meals into this 1971 Ford fire engine owned by Michael Karp of Fourth Bore Tap Room and Grill. Twenty-two different Orinda restaurants prepared a total of 1,000 meals that were transported to four hospitals over a two-day period to thank frontline hospital workers for all their efforts during this past year.

GoFundMe Campaign Delivered 1,000 Meals to Hospital Workers

By SALLY HOGARTY
Executive Editor

Emergency vehicles deliver patients to local hospitals all too often but a 1971 Ford fire engine unloaded a very different cargo on March 16. Owned by Michael Karp of Fourth Bore Tap Room and Grill, the fire truck carried 250 boxed meals from various Orinda restaurants, 250 gratitude cards colored by local school children and a floral arrangement from the Orinda Garden Club to Concord's John Muir Medical Center.

Similar deliveries took place over a two-day period at John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek, Contra Costa Regional Medical Center in Martinez and San Ramon Valley Medical Center. Deliveries were

timed to take place at the end of hospital workers midday shifts.

A total of 1,000 boxed meals were delivered thanks to a \$20K GoFundMe campaign organized by The Orinda Association along with community partners Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary, Orinda Community Foundation, Orinda Chamber of Commerce, Orinda Garden Club, Rotary Club of Orinda and the Lamorinda Arts Council.

The program paid homage to exhausted hospital workers who have spent a challenging year dealing with COVID-19. It also supported Orinda restaurants which have struggled to stay open and gave community members a way to get involved and make a difference.

K-12 students in Orinda, Lafayette,

Moraga and San Ramon showed their appreciation by writing a message and coloring a gratitude card designed by Lamorinda Arts Council artist Tim Hancock.

"The Gratitude Card from the school

children is needed just as much as the boxed meal," said Lamorinda Arts Council member Elana O'Loskey.

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

David Biggs Hired as City Manager

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

From a pool of 52 applicants, the Orinda City Council chose David Biggs for the city manager position, replacing retiring Steve Salomon, effective April 5.

"I look forward to joining the Orinda team and getting out and meeting the community," Biggs said. "Working with the fire district to keep Orinda as safe as can be and contributing to help the Council achieve its goals are priorities for me."

With more than 35 years of senior local government experience, Biggs held city [SEE BIGGS page 4]



COURTESY OF DAVID BIGGS

David Biggs named City Manager, effective April 5.

Miramonte Youth Environmentalists Create Project HEART to Help Local Restaurants

By ANIA KEENAN
Contributing Writer

A group of students at Miramonte High School care deeply about the environment and decided to do something about minimizing carbon footprints – locally.

They created the Help Environmental Assistance Restaurant Takeout project, or

project HEART for short, and together, they have spent months working to make it all happen.

Before lockdown began last march, junior Devon Bradley's environmental activism was through his role as president of the Miramonte Environmental Solutions Club. The club had set its sights on secur-

[SEE HEART page 9]

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IN THIS ISSUE

News		Car Time	10
Business	16	City Council	1
Financial	7	Community	1, 3, 7, 12, 13
Crime/Police	5	Classifieds	12
Schools	1	Fitness Tip	2
Around Town		Letters to the Editor	4
Club/Meetings	Online	Entertainment	2
Events	7, 14	Everyday Orinda	14
Gallery – Orinda	11	The Orinda Association	3
Gallery – Wilder	Online	The Reel Less Traveled	5
Residents	5, 8, 15	Seasoned Shopper	8
Calendar	10		

PERFORMING ARTS / FITNESS TIP

Orinda Theatre Receives Honor

The historic Orinda Theatre was named the 25th most beautiful cinema in the world.

“We cannot wait for you all to see the completed restorations we’ve been making during our closure,” said operator Derrick Zemrak. “This honor is because of all of you. Thank you!”

Zemrak said they will continue to rent out the marquee at \$75 for short messages such as a Happy Birthday message, which is currently the theater’s only source of income. Longer announcements are possible at additional costs.

For more information, email joseph@zptvnow.com.

Please note the theatre marquee lights are only on the days theatre volunteers change the marquee.



COURTESY OF ORINDA THEATRE

California Shakespeare Theater Announces Season of Shared Light



COURTESY OF CALIFORNIA SHAKESPEARE THEATER

Cal Shakes Artistic Director **Eric Ting** and Managing Director **Sarah Williams** announce the company’s 2021 Season of Shared Light, where Cal Shakes will produce one play and allow other artists to use the space as well.

By SALLY HOGARTY
Executive Editor

While the Bruns Memorial Amphitheater stage has remained empty for the past year, the reduced staff at Orinda’s Cal Shakes has busied itself offering creative online events and thinking long and hard about its future.

“Over the past 10 months, we’ve done a lot of reflection about how to respond to the pandemic and movement for racial equity with compassion and humility,” said Artistic Director Eric Ting. “How might we seek to share resources rather than amass them, to cultivate relationships rather than transact them?”

The answer Ting and his staff decided upon resulted in Cal Shakes’ 2021 Season of Shared Light. The company will produce


one play, Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale*, and share its space throughout the summer with several local arts organizations and community groups such as Destiny Arts, Bandaloop and West Edge Opera. They will also continue offering online programming including “Shakespeare In-Depth” with Philippa Kelly.

“We’ll announce specific dates and ticket information once we have clarity about social distancing guidelines, capacity limitations and safety protocols for artists and audiences alike,” Ting said.

For more information on how the summer season is shaping up and current online viewing opportunities, go to www.calshakes.org.



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

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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA Board Giving Thanks



KATE WILEY KYLE ARTEAGA

Thank you for supporting The Orinda Association on our 75th anniversary.

This has been a year of unprecedented change. Sometimes lying awake at night, one can remember little things such as sitting inside Casa Orinda waiting for fried chicken or going to the Orinda Theatre for a movie. While we still can't do either, the day we can is getting closer.

One positive impact of our COVID-19 year, we are all rebalancing and centering ourselves around the basics: family, friends and communities. And while we certainly don't want to go through another year like we just did, we should celebrate this shared experience bringing us closer to our families, neighbors and the broader community in which we live.

At The Orinda Association are proud of our past and inspired by possibilities for Orinda's future. We are thankful to our teachers, health care workers, and local businesses for doing their part to keep Orinda the friendliest and best town in which to live.

Most importantly, we are thankful to each of you for supporting this community. Whether you are reading *The Orinda News*, watching our Fourth of July parade, walking through our Classic Car Show, volunteering for Seniors Around Town (SAT) or simply being friendly to your neighbors – you are an integral part of Orinda.

In honor of our 75th anniversary, we ask if you could donate \$75 this month on behalf of your household in support of SAT, a free door-to-door transportation program for Orinda senior residents.

They are the generation of Orindans who

built our schools, library, businesses, community center and parks. They advocate keeping Orinda safe and environmentally protected. It's our turn to help them remain independent in the homes in which they've lived and raised their families. A strong community supports all residents. And we want to continue serving Orindans for another 75 years.

If you've recently donated to The Orinda Association or SAT, thank you again!

To make an even more significant impact, please visit www.orindaassociation.org on our donations webpage to see if your employer matches donations or has a volunteer grant program.

This year we set a goal of raising \$7,500 from corporate matching programs. Such programs double your contribution to SAT and sometimes will match donations from spouses and retirees. It's a simple step to find out if your employer will match your donation. Your \$75 donation then becomes \$150.

Yes, we've all experienced unprecedented change and challenges this past year. Many have been able to adapt, rebalance and focus on challenges and opportunities and become better because of it. Over the past 75 years, The Orinda Association has adapted to remain relevant and valued.

Thank you for supporting the OA's programs and events, as a volunteer, a contributor or attendee. We couldn't do it without you!

Kate Wiley and Kyle Arteaga can be reached at katewileymail@gmail.com and Kyle@bulletgroup.com.

And the Lamorinda Winners Are...

By SALLY HOGARTY Executive Editor

It may have been on a Zoom Webinar rather than the Orinda Theatre's stage, but the winners of the Lamorinda Idol Winter Edition shined just as bright when they were announced March 14.

Forty-one soloists and 14 groups, ranging in age from kindergarten through high school, made it into the finals via performance videos. A panel of performing arts professionals then voted on the four soloist and three group winners with the general public voting for the audience award [SEE IDOL page 13]



COURTESY OF MUCHA FAMILY

Isabella Mucha was the Audience Award Winner in Lamorinda Idol Winter Edition. The fourth grader at Del Rey Elementary School sang "How Far I'll Go" from the movie *Moana*.

Double your donation with one click!

Find out if you are eligible to double your donation with a Corporate Matching Fund.

Many companies generously match the donation of their employees and their spouses, board members, retirees and even widow/widowers.

Go to: <https://orindaassociation.org> and Click on Donation tab



The Orinda Association

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

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

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

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

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EDITORIAL

Letters to the Editor

One More Safety Measure Needed as Schools Reopen: Ensure Safe Storage of Firearms

There are two facts about the current pandemic that, when added up, pose an elevated risk we may be overlooking as we prepare to reopen schools.

Fact one: as we have all heard and read – and maybe even felt – the pandemic has negatively affected mental health. The CDC warns that, “Many adolescents’ social, emotional and mental well-being has been impacted by the pandemic.”

Fact two: California gun sales rose dramatically during the pandemic, driven mainly by first-time gun purchasers, according to a UC Davis October 2020 report on “Violence, firearms and the coronavirus pandemic,” summarized by the Kaiser Family Foundation and using data from the FBI.

Be SMART is a program developed by Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America to bring together parents and all adults concerned about kids, guns and safety. Nearly 1,600 children under 18 are killed with guns in the U.S. every year (according to the CDC).

When it comes to incidents of gunfire on school grounds, up to 80% of shooters under 18 got their guns from their homes or the homes of relatives or friends (according to the CDC).

If we can prevent even one child gun death or injury, it’s our responsibility to do so. Visit www.besmartforkids.org to view a three-minute video, obtain graphics shareable on social media and find other resources you can use to learn about safe storage and help spread the word.

My message at this moment is the “S” in SMART (secure all guns). A 2015 national survey found that 13 million households with children contain at least one gun. The majority of children knew where the gun was stored (according to the *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 2006). Store guns (1) locked; (2) unloaded; (3) with ammunition stored separately. “Hiding” a gun is not securing a gun

California Penal Code Section 25100 mandates that in all homes where children live (or where children might reasonably be expected to enter), firearms must be safely stored. In Orinda, safe storage has been

the law since 2018, when the City passed a safe storage ordinance. Anyone can drop into the Orinda police station and pick up a gunlock.

Please ensure your firearms are safely stored and ask your friends to do likewise, to prevent gun violence in our community.

– CarrieLyn Donigan Guymon

Thank you Greg For Your Birdhouses

I recently researched and found in an old online article that Greg Moeller was named Lafayette Citizen of the Year in 2013 for his beautification efforts, making and displaying charming birdhouses on various street signs and planting daffodils in public spots.

My fellow Orindans and I, who live along the St. Stephens corridor, have also enjoyed Greg’s birdhouses that he posted along the length of that street. They make me smile and brighten every day that I travel my route home.

I particularly love the one with the mama quail and her baby. It’s too bad that it appears as if one of the birdhouses was vandalized this past year, leaving only a torn bracket left on the sign.

Thank you, Greg, for spreading your beauty into Orinda!

– Margaret Beck

Need Answers From Orinda’s Fire Board Representatives

Last month’s letter from Ian Baird regarding the cost of our firefighters was an eye opener. If his numbers are correct, \$22 million for 51 firefighters, averaging \$430,000 per year, per firefighter, is jaw-dropping. According to the Transparent California website, the average Orinda teacher earns – including benefits – \$100,000, less than a quarter of what a firefighter earns.

Both are valuable municipal employees with jobs effectively guaranteed for life. Why the huge disparity? Is it that teachers are worth one quarter of what firefighters are worth? Is there a surplus of people wanting to be and qualified to be teachers and a dearth of people qualified and desiring to be firefighters?

Do we have so much money for public safety and so little to do with it, those who provide that service might as well split what we have? If so, why did we have to vote for a sales tax to generate another \$2.4 million a year for fire prevention? What’s the answer?

Maybe Orinda’s fire board representatives (Craig Jorgens, Craig.Jorgens@gmail.com; Steven Danziger, stevedformofd@gmail.com; Michael Donner, mdonnermofd@gmail.com) can tell us.

– Steve Cohn



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	Page		Page
Automotive		State Farm, Bryan Silveira	13
Mash Gas and Food	1	State Farm, Kelly Sopak	6
Orinda Motors	10	Wilder Owners' Association	14
Orinda Shell Auto Care	9	Real Estate	
Beauty and Fitness		AG Realty	
CoreKinetics	5	The Gailas Team	3
Nancy Henderson Personal Training	6	Coldwell Banker	
Living Lean Exercise & Eating Program	16	Laura Abrams	11
Churches		Suzanne Toner Geoffrion	12
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church	8	Shellie Kirby	6
Cleaning Services		Dudu Real Estate Group	
Kirby Carpet Cleaning	13	Christina Linezo	9
Dental		The Grubb Company	
Dr. Mary Smith DDS	7	Rebecca Ciccio	7
Educational		Alexis Thompson	13
Orinda Parks & Rec	5	Sotheby's	
Garden/Landscaping		Ann Newton Cane	5
Ken's Redwood Fencing	16	Village Associates	
McDonnell Nursery	9	Shannon Conner	8
Tree Sculpture	2	Dexter Honens II	2
Medical		April Matthews	14
Canopy Health	15	Murphy Team - Karen & Hilary Murphy	7
Dr. Brian Clark, Psy.D.	13	Ann Sharf	16
Medicine Shoppe	7	Clark Thompson	6
Nonprofit		Restaurants/Catering	
Child Abuse Prevention Council	12	Baan Thai	8
The Orinda Association	3	Casa Orinda	12
Professional Service		Farmers' Market	8
5A Rent-A-Space	2	Siam Orchid	14
Green Sheds	7	Zamboni's Pizza Company	11
Law Offices of Victoria Robinson Smith	6	Retail	
Park Place Wealth Advisors	12	McCaulou's	16
Professional Property Management	2		

◆ BIGGS from page 1

manager and director positions in several California cities before taking the helm in Hercules in 2014. His extensive experience includes downtown and economic development projects.

According to Orinda Human Resources Manager Ginger Staten, Biggs will receive an annual salary of \$234,000, plus a \$500 monthly allowance for other benefits which “are equal to those received by management employees.” His contract runs through June 30, 2024, with provisions for one-year extensions.

Biggs earned a political science degree

at California State University, Fullerton and an MBA degree at the University of California, Irvine. Biggs is currently president of the California Redevelopment Association. Affiliations include the California Association for Local Economic Development, the International Association of Shopping Centers, the International City/County Management Association with a credentialed manager designation and the Urban Land Institute. Raised in Orange County, he and his wife Cate have two sons.

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

Correction

In the March issue, Sally Hogarty’s story on “Local Groups Honor Doctors and Nurses” listed one of the contributing groups as Lamorinda Rotary. It should have said Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary.

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

Send letters to: Editor, *The Orinda News*, P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563, or email to editor@theorindanews.com. Letters to Editor for the May issue are due April 8.

For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925.528.9225 (jill@aspenconsult.net), Elana O’Loskey at 925.984.1751 (elanao@mac.com) or Kathy Enzerink at 252.626.2109 (kathy@theorindanews.com). The deadline for the May issue is April 8.

POLICE / FILM

Career-Long Dedication to Integrated Pest Management Practices

By CHARLEEN EARLEY
Editor-in-Chief


How do you design a rat out of a garden? Easy. Ask Orindan Michael Baefsky, who recently won an award from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR). He designs other pests out of landscapes too.

“Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is important to me as a holistic approach to solving plant pest, disease and weed problems, because it starts with scientific analysis of the environment, moves on to creative solutions starting with biological adjustments and includes a feedback or recheck element that calls for ongoing monitoring,” said Baefsky, owner of a landscaping consulting firm called Trees, Bugs, Dirt, LLC.

He was honored, via Zoom, with the first Lifetime IPM Achievement Award through [SEE BAEFSKY page 11]




COURTESY OF MICHAEL BAEFSKY
Michael Baefsky relaxes at home at the end of a long day, doing his own mani-pedi during the pandemic, which is how he says, “integrated pest management strategies are applied in a more personal manner: stress reduction increases resistance to disease, isolation and quarantine prevents infection, no mask needed!”



THE REEL LESS TRAVELED

TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE



TOM WESTLAKE

Reports claim when Peter Jackson started the monumental task of bringing J.R.R Tolkien’s epic *Lord of the Rings* to the big screen, he treated it as if making one very long film.

His rationale intended to make it more consistent and cohesive overall as well as maintaining a better continuity, not only for the actors and crew but for the audience. It worked. To anyone who has the stamina and time, all three films can easily be viewed as a single whole, making for a better viewing experience.

This is hardly a new practice. There are several other examples of directors who have chosen to make an epic and then break it into easier to digest pieces: Gore Verbinski did so for the second and third *Pirates of the Caribbean* films as did the Wachowskis for the *Matrix* sequels.


The subject of this month’s recommendation notably worked the same magic in 1973. Richard Lester, an American director

most known for putting the Beatles on the big screen (*A Hard Day’s Night, Help!*) took it upon himself to try to bring Alexandre Dumas’s *The Three Musketeer’s* to cinematic life.

Along with Scrooge, Dracula and Sherlock Holmes, Dumas’s heroic characters have seen numerous incarnations projected on the silver screen, but Lester’s version is, by far, the most entertaining as well as the most faithful.

Much of this has to do with the screenwriter. George McDonald Fraser, no stranger to historical fiction (he wrote the *Flashman* novels, which Lester also used as a source for a movie), injects a reality and weight to the period and this, along with the Lester wit, makes for the most engaging version of this famous tale.

And the cast! The term “all-star cast” gets too easily thrown around, but in this case, it could not be more accurate. Michael York, [SEE REEL page 12]



POLICE BLOTTER

February 7 through March 6

<p>Calls for Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 911 Hangup: 18 incidents Abandoned Vehicle: 1 incident Accident Property: 7 incidents Alarm False: 33 incidents Burglary: 1 incident Burglary, Auto: 1 incident Corporal Injury: 1 incident Death Unknown Causes: 3 incidents Disturbing the Peace: 1 incident Domestic Disturbance: 2 incidents Fire/EMS Response: 1 incident Found Property: 1 incident Grand Theft: 1 incident Grand Theft Vehicle: 1 incident Identity Theft: 1 incident Loud Music: 4 incidents Loud Party: 2 incidents Medical Hospital: 3 incidents Mentally Ill Commit: 2 incidents Missing Adult: 1 incident Missing Juvenile: 1 incident Outside Assist: 15 incidents Panhandling: 1 incident Patrol Request: 77 incidents Petty Theft: 2 incidents Possession of Controlled Substance: 1 incident Public Nuisance: 3 incidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reckless Driving: 2 incidents Robbery, Armed: 1 incident School Check: 10 incidents Security Check: 55 incidents Service to Citizen: 109 incidents Shoplift: 2 incidents Shots Heard: 2 incidents Threaten Officer: 1 incident Tow: 1 incident Traffic Control: 1 incident Traffic Hazard: 3 incidents Traffic Stop: 1 incident Unwanted Guest: 2 incidents Vandalism: 1 incident Vehicle Theft: 3 incidents Walk Through: 19 incidents Welfare Check: 15 incidents <p>Arrest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possession of Narcotics for Sale: 1 arrest Stolen Vehicle Recovery: 1 recovery Violation of Restraining Order: 3 arrest Warrant Arrest: 4 arrests
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– Compiled by David Dierks
Assistant Editor

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What's On Deck With Parks & Rec!

In an effort to serve as many community needs as possible, Orinda Parks and Rec is working with selected contractors to provide a variety of youth and adult enrichment programs, including youth summer camps (registration for Session I and II begins April 26). In all cases, we are committed to providing programming that meets or exceeds the latest county and CDC health and safety guidelines and protocol. Please stay tuned to our website for all the program details and latest information.

www.OrindaParksandRec.org

We Will Get Through This Together



Orinda Parks and Recreation Department
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A LAFAYETTE FAMILY OASIS

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CANCER / CLIMATE CHANGE

Esophageal Cancer Month: An Aggressive Disease

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

Cancer. The Big C. The dreaded word no one wants to hear. Recognized by its periwinkle-colored ribbon, April is Esophageal Cancer Awareness Month. This aggressive disease accounts for about 1% of all cancers diagnosed in this country and there is no cure.

According to the American Cancer Society, an estimated 1.8 million people were diagnosed with cancer in 2020. Lung cancer, the deadliest type, accounted for 22% of the cancer-related deaths.

Esophageal cancer is rarely curable,

leaving patients with palliative, rather than curative, care treatment options.

Risk factors include age, obesity, tobacco and alcohol use. According to *PRNews-wire*, "In 2020, gastric and esophageal cancers combined to kill over 1.3 million people worldwide — making it the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths."

Cancer of the esophagus, most often found in men older than the age of 50, often remains undetected until symptoms reach an advanced stage. By then, the five year survival rate is less than 20%. Indigestion, heartburn, coughing and swallowing difficulties, all esophageal cancer symptoms, can be overlooked, ignored or attributed to other benign causes.

Self diagnosis can lead to taking over-the-counter medicines for acid reflux or mild cold symptoms. In the meantime, the cancer continues to grow and can spread

to other organs.

April is also Testicular and Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Month.

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

Editor's Note: After being treated for acid reflux and bronchitis for years, the writer's husband was diagnosed with Stage IV Esophageal cancer. Given a prognosis of eight months to live, he and Kathy continued to sail and travel for 21 months before cancer won the battle in 2012.



PHOTO COURTESY OF AWARENESS DEPOT
April is Esophageal Cancer Awareness Month. The American Association for Cancer Research estimated over 16,000 people in the United States died from the disease in 2020.

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Ringling the Bell for Climate Change

By LESLIE O'BRIEN and
NANCY THURSBY
Contributing Writers

Members of Orinda Community Church and Rev. Elizabeth Robinson, pastor, gathered outside the church on March 11 to celebrate the Sacred People, Sacred Earth: Sounding the Alarm for Creation, which called attention to climate change. Those gathered read the Interfaith Power & Light (www.interfaithpowerandlight.org), Climate Blessing and Prayer and Eartha Newsong rang the church bell 11 times (signifying the 11th hour warning of climate change) at noon.

Congregations around the world rang bells, blew shofars, and sounded gongs to rally for a compassionate, just response to COVID-19 and climate change. The worldwide event was sponsored by www.greenfaith.org.

The Sacred People, Sacred Earth event is one of the many programs in which Orinda Community Church has participated in to support climate change awareness. The church recently received the designation of "Creation Justice Church" by the United Church of Christ, calling it to care for creation and seek justice for the oppressed. The church engages in critical thinking about the socioeconomic dimensions of environmental justice, such as race, class and global inequality.

All are welcome to visit the church campus to enjoy its outdoor labyrinth as well as its Creation Justice Stations of the cross created by the children of Orinda Community Church.

Leslie O'Brien and Nancy Thursby can be reached at lesliedarwino@gmail.com or nlthursby@comcast.net.

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COURTESY OF SALLY HOGARTY

Eartha Newsong (R) and **Nancy Thursby** of Orinda Community Church (OCC) joined churches around the world in supporting climate change. To highlight the importance of taking immediate actions to save the planet, OCC and churches throughout the Bay Area rang bells 11 times at noon on March 11.

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FINANCIAL NEWS / FORUM

Middle East Update Topic for First Friday Forum

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

“We can look for significant changes occurring in the Middle East this year,” said Dr. Raphael Danziger. He will discuss these when speaking at the First Friday Forum (FFF) lecture series, sponsored by the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, with the topic, *Middle East Update*.

The speaking event is online April 9 at 10 a.m. While this monthly event is typically on the “first Friday,” please note this

April event will be on the second Friday since Good Friday falls on the first Friday of the month.

Danziger has lectured extensively on the Middle East.

“The United States, still a key player in the region, is already in the process of fundamentally revising its regional policy under President Biden,” he said. “America’s new policy and its implications throughout the region will be the focus of our briefing.”

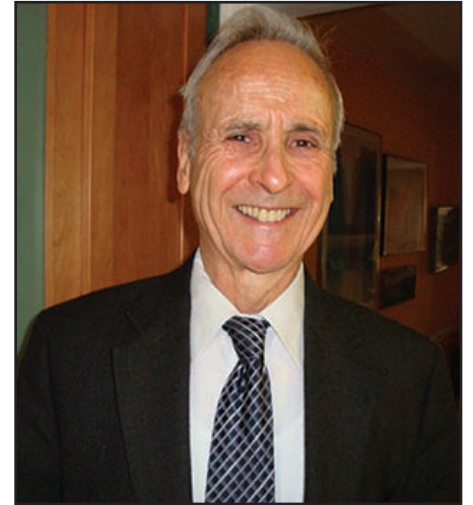
Danziger is a senior research advisor to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and editor-in-chief

emeritus of their newsletter, *Near East Report*. He has published a book and many articles on the Middle East and North Africa. His op-eds have appeared in the *New York Times* and other leading newspapers. The PBS News Hour and other news programs also interviewed him.

Holding a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Studies from Princeton University, he received his MA degree from the University of Washington, Seattle and his B.A. from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Danziger was a foreign policy analyst at the American Jewish Congress and taught Modern Middle Eastern history at the University of Haifa in Israel and at the University of Washington.

He was also a visiting fellow at Princeton University and a consultant on Middle Eastern affairs at the Hudson Institute.

Nancy Holtzapple, a member of the FFF team, is happy to have Danziger as its April [SEE FORUM page 10]

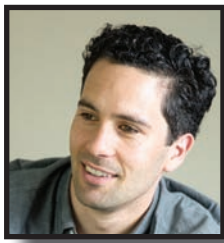


COURTESY OF DR. RAPHAEL DANZIGER
Dr. Raphael Danziger is the guest speaker for the April First Friday Forum. His topic is called, Middle East Update. The Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church sponsors the free, monthly online forums.

FINANCIAL NEWS

REALTORS NAVIGATE “VOLCANIC” ORINDA REAL ESTATE MARKET

DAVID BORN, CFA, CFP



The past 12 months saw office closures, work-from-anywhere-forever announcements, and rumblings of state income and wealth tax hikes. All of these factors brought increasing angst around the future of Orinda home prices.

But those factors didn’t spell doom for local home prices.

“We have not seen a mass exodus from California,” said local agent Ann Sharf of Village Associates Real Estate. “There’s a realization the suburbs are where it’s at, partially from the pandemic and partially from people being able to work from where they want to work. And, borrowing costs are so attractive.”

In many ways Orinda’s gain has been the San Francisco condo market’s pain, as the changes in daily living have had opposite effects on the market. New Orinda homeowners, however, are coming from a wider funnel.

“We have buyers coming from Marin; they’re coming from San Francisco; they’re coming from the Peninsula. Our prices are attractive to them. It’s a very strong seller’s market and it’s frustrating buyers,” said Laura Abrams of Coldwell Banker.

Sharf and Abrams, who both work with sellers and buyers, described the market as hotter than the 2004-2007 market. “It’s volcanic,” described Abrams.

Blockbuster IPOs and smaller SPAC stock listings (discussed in our February column) have increased the cash buying power of founders and early employees at those companies, particularly over the

past two years.

“There is a lot of cash and the loan underwriting standards are still high. In 2006, it was based on shoddy lending. Not this time,” Sharf noted.

The influx of cash comes while interest rates remain near record lows. Cheaper borrowing costs mean that the same monthly payment can fund a larger price tag.

Borrowers who plan on living in a home for 30 years with a comfortable monthly payment don’t need to be as worried about a short-term pullback or stagnation in home prices. They plan to live in the same house, no matter what someone from across the Bay is willing to pay.

On the other hand, some Orindans may move to take advantage of current prices and the new Proposition 19 rules that allow for more flexibility in transferring the current property’s tax basis. Yet, while there may be some local sellers because of Proposition 19, the tax change will also make moving more attractive to more buyers looking at Orinda.

“If you are planning on leaving the area, there has never been a better time to sell your home,” advised Abrams.

“It used to be hard to sell a \$3 million house. Not now,” said Sharf. “But with current protocols, it’s even more important to stage, present and photograph effectively because there are no open houses.”

David Born can be reached at david.born@brightonjones.com.

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SEASONED SHOPPER / LOCALS

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Asparagus Active Harvest Month

BARBARA KOBSAR



Look for bundles of fresh asparagus standing neatly at attention at the market stands. April is the most active harvest month and the best time to enjoy these local spears of “grass.”

Asparagus is a member of the lily family along with onions, garlic and leek. The crop takes three years to establish (from seed to harvest) but with proper conditions and maintenance, this perennial sends out shoots each spring for 10 to 15 years.

Color of the spears and condition of the tips determine asparagus quality. Whether pencil thin or thick-as-your-thumb, asparagus stalks should be crisp, well rounded and mostly green. Buds that form the tip

of the asparagus should be dry, firm and closed to form a point. The small, lower woody white portion helps retain moisture in the spear and is easily snapped off during preparation.

Plump spears of asparagus are always my choice and simple preparation is always best.

Bend each spear gently to make a natural break between the tender and tough portions. Use the lower portions in soups or stews. Wash the remaining portions under running water. Some prefer to peel the stalks: I prefer to leave them natural. Add about ½ inch of water to a large, flat pan and bring to a boil. Add asparagus, cover and

simmer 3 to 4 minutes or until just tender when pierced with a fork. Do not overcook or it will be dull and mushy!

Roasted asparagus is simply delicious. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Prepare asparagus. Pat dry. Place spears on a baking sheet, sprinkle with salt and pepper and drizzle with enough olive oil to lightly coat the asparagus, Bake 9 to 14 minutes depending on the thickness of the spears. Transfer to a serving platter and season with a squeeze of fresh lemon or a sprinkle of finely grated Parmesan cheese or a small handful of fresh chopped parsley or mint.

If necessary, store unwashed asparagus, wrapped in damp paper towels in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for two to three days.

The convenience of pre-ordering and curbside pickup from the Orinda farmers market is available by downloading Tap4Markets from your mobile app store.

The Orinda market is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Orinda Way in Orinda Village. More information is available at www.cccfm.org, [facebook.com/cccfm](https://www.facebook.com/cccfm) [SEE SHOPPER page 13]



COURTESY OF BARBARA KOBSAR
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Former WIRED Editor-in-Chief Makes Orinda His New Home

By KYLE ARTEAGA
Contributing Writer

One of Orinda’s newest residents, Chris Anderson, has achieved notoriety by championing the new while predicting the future. Based on initial experiences with his new community, he’s predicting good things for Orinda.

Anderson is the CEO of 3DR (a drone software company) and former Editor-in-Chief of *Wired Magazine*. His 2006 publication, *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business is Selling Less of More*, gained a strong readership.

Throughout his career, Anderson has made predictions that came true. He predicted Amazon’s ascension and how future

events could create niche markets.

Chris, Anne and their five kids moved from New York in the early 2000s to the Berkeley Hills. As a returning Cal alum, he found Berkeley both exciting and familiar. The family looked at a few houses in Contra Costa at the time but saw it as too removed from the urban vitality.

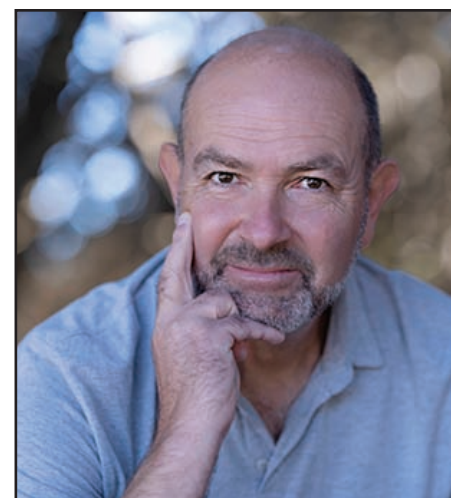
Once COVID-19 hit, however, they opened their eyes to alternatives. Anne kickstarted the process by grocery shopping at Orinda Safeway. Soon, both she and Chris realized that Orinda offered many benefits with a less hectic lifestyle.

They moved to Upper El Toyonal in September, and, so far, they have been pleasantly surprised by the quality of life in Orinda. They traded the city views from their Berkeley home for thoughts of horse country. Chris goes out every day to take a picture of that view and credits it for helping reduce his blood pressure.

Chris and Anne have a daughter at Orinda Intermediate School. After the spring semester in Berkeley and the fall semester in Orinda, the family continues to be impressed by how much better prepared Orinda Schools are with technology and curriculum preparation. Chris said, “OIS is incredibly well organized; they have great communications. There are demonstrable advantages to coming here.”

Orinda’s friendly reputation has also proven true for the Andersons. Finding El Toyonal to be a perfect walking and running area, they have been able to meet most new

[SEE ANDERSON page 9]



COURTESY OF CHRIS ANDERSON
Chris Anderson, former Editor-in-Chief of *Wired Magazine*, said his family has met more neighbors in their first four weeks in Orinda than they had met on their street in 17 years in Berkeley.

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CONTINUATIONS



COURTESY YUJI WATANABE

(L-R) Ryan Sinnreich, Julian Rustigian, Aidan Chan, Vajra Vo, Wyatt Barnes, Jonas Dao, Devon Bradley, Leo Cardozo, James Patrick, Dalai Vo, Sheng Shu, Joseph Manio, Ethan Lee, Aaron Lee and Logan Lee members of Project HEART stand in front of the Orinda Theatre before going to meet with local business owners.

◆ HEART from page 1

ing a Styrofoam ban in Orinda, but when COVID-19 safety guidelines began to take a toll on local restaurants, so Bradley knew he needed to adapt his goals.

“We had already worked with restaurants to reduce the amount of plastic waste. I wondered how we could reduce plastic waste from restaurants while also helping them because as soon as the pandemic hit, restaurants experienced an influx of takeout orders,” Bradley said.

Combining the club’s two desires, to reduce plastic waste and protect local business, Bradley constructed Project HEART. Together with club members, Bradley works to provide sustainable, non-plastic based take-out containers to Orinda eateries. Local restaurants Serika, Reem’s Steaks, Petra Mediterranean Food, Maya Mexican grill, Baja Calia, Baan Thai, and Cafe Teatro are among those that have all partnered with HEART.

Bradley was confident in the ability of his project to support Orinda businesses, but he couldn’t shake the idea that his club’s original mission – a local Styrofoam ban – would have a greater impact. In early January, when Bradley first became aware of the Polystyrene [Styrofoam] Ban passed in Contra Costa County in March of 2020, he thought, briefly, that he might be able to retire his cause, but to no avail.

He soon learned the current legislation only bans the use of polystyrene in food and beverage containers used by businesses in unincorporated communities, or communities outside of official city limits.

Having gained greater insight into the issue, Bradley reignited his campaign for a Styrofoam-free Orinda, but this time changed his methods to incorporate the HEART project. Bradley debuted this new message at the Jan. 19 Orinda City Council

meeting, hoping to sway members by offering to use HEART’s resources to support local business as they transition away from polystyrene-based products. After gaining little ground throughout February, Bradley, along with other members of HEART, reappeared at the March 2 City Council meeting, hoping to remind members of their mission.

According to Bradley, he is satisfied with how the meeting went and looks forward to working with the City Council in the future.

“The presentation went well. Clearly it was well-received,” Bradley said.

Bradley shared that, in the long term, he does not expect project HEART to extend past the pandemic and that his club would transition back towards more school-oriented goals once restrictions are lifted and restaurants aren’t relying as heavily on take-out.

“We are working with RecycleSmart to develop more sustainable waste management practice for on-campus [Miramonte], like the use of compostable supplies,” Bradley said.

While Bradley continues his advocacy for a more sustainable Orinda, his experiences leading the Miramonte Environmental Solutions Clubs and project HEART have inspired him to pursue a similar path post-high school.

“My dream job would be working for an environmental start up but whatever I do in the future it would have to be related to the environment. I don’t think I could do anything else,” Bradley said.

Ania Keenan can be reached at ania@7keenans.org.

◆ ANDERSON from page 8

neighbors out on a stroll. Between the local email lists, NextDoor and zucchini bread deliveries, Chris believes “we’ve met more neighbors in our first four weeks in Orinda than we had on our street in 17 years in Berkeley.”

One of the biggest surprises for the Andersons is that it’s easier to get to the city than from North Berkeley because they are now closer to the highway and BART. Chris said, “People don’t realize that while Orinda technically is farther east than Berkeley from San Francisco, because it’s so well linked with the improvements to the tunnel and BART, it’s actually faster to get there.”

One more thing Chris likes best about Orinda? “I love the newspaper! It’s such a small-town gift – reassuring, lovely – a great antidote to the rest of the media. I’m encouraging everyone I know to look to the East Bay.”

Kyle Arteaga can be reached at Kyle@bulleitgroup.com.

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Library Reopening

Contra Costa County Library will reopen most community libraries to the public for Grab & Go service beginning Monday, April 26. The libraries will be open with limited occupancy and offer select services.

Visit ccclib.org/libraries-reopen for complete details about available services, locations and safety protocols.

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CAR TIME / CALENDAR

CAR TIME

ELECTRIC, HYBRID OR PLUG-IN HYBRID?



JOHN VANEK

Many people in the Lamorinda area may be considering their next vehicle to be electric and/or hybrid. There are many options available, and the technology is growing every day.

Keep in mind that the landscape for transportation will change dramatically in the next ten years, but we are taking about right now. What to buy? The best choice depends on your needs as a driver.

It is true that there are many advantages to the hybrid vehicles that are built today.

Hybrid vehicles offer much better economy and a necessity for less maintenance. You also do not have to plug them in. These vehicles are best suited when your daily driving is around town or low speed commuting.

That is when the electric motor comes in to play, saving fuel. Still, you can drive long distances without running out of charge since the system recharges itself. The batteries will eventually require replacement and the need to be recycled.

The plug-in hybrid allows you to run on straight battery, extending the low speed and overall range. This will require the purchase of a charging system for your house. Again, batteries will eventually require replacement.

The plug-in option also offers the choice to drive away from the grid and not worry about charging the battery. Keep in mind, hybrid vehicles still have gas engines and require the normal maintenance.

Owning and driving a full electric vehicle requires specific driving patterns. The infrastructure for electric vehicles is expanding

and will get better. You can also set up your house with solar energy and use sun power to charge your car.

With no combustion engine, the maintenance expense is cut way back. Owning a full electric vehicle, however, should fit your lifestyle and driving patterns.

Because you can count on the fact that there will be better systems within a few short years, it might be handy if you still had a gas burner in the household. Manufacturers will keep improving electric systems until the point where there are no drivers.

The advice I would give on buying an electric car is this: Be cautious of start-up car companies that currently have no vehicles on the road. Remember there are other worthy luxury electric vehicles on the market than Tesla!

Names like Audi, Cadillac, Hummer and even Mustang are releasing some exciting products. As usual, be a good consumer of automobile ownership. I am always available for automotive consultation.

John Vanek can be reached at service@orindaclassiccarcenter.com.

◆ FORUM from page 7

guest speaker.

“Dr. Danziger has outstanding qualifications for lecturing about the Middle East, an area of the world where there is much conflict. I’m sure it will be a timely, informative lecture. Be sure to register,” said

On the Calendar in April

Orinda Library Online events. Daily storytimes and events can be viewed at: <http://bit.ly/2OPI6or>. Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way, for front door service only until April 26 when the library reopens: Mon. through Thu., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Fri. and Sat., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; closed Sun. Call 925.254.2184 for more information or visit <http://ccclib.org>.

Christian Science Church, Prayer Garden open to all for Quiet Meditation. Pray, read, meditate. Books and periodicals with a spiritual perspective on current issues are free to all. Attendant on site from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., but you are welcome any time during daylight hours. 24 Orinda Way, Orinda.

Art Gallery at Wilder, view a virtual exhibit of paintings by the late Heather Metcalf, an active member of Moraga Art Gallery where a companion exhibit will be on display through April 25. For details visit www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries/. See article p. 11.

Lamorinda Idol, registration through April 30 for Summer Edition. Go to <https://lamorindaarts.org>. See article p. 3.

Art Gallery at the Orinda Library, view the solo show of Denise Nomura entitled “Refuge in Nature” through April 30. Visit <https://lamorindaarts.org> for details. See article p. 11.

Orinda Farmers’ Market, 9 a.m. Orinda Way in front of Rite Aid and the Community Park. www.cccfm.org or market hotline at 925-431-8361. Also April 10, 17, and 24. See article p. 8.

Lamorinda SuperShorts Three-Minute Movie Challenge invites people to submit films by May 14. Winning films receive prizes and will be screened on a live virtual award program May 19 at 7 p.m..

Orinda Books Pat’s Book Club will meet via ZOOM to discuss *Deacon King Kong* by James McBride. 4 p.m. All are welcome. The book is available at Orinda Books. To attend, phone 925.254.7606 or email info@orindabooks.com to receive a Zoom link.

First Friday Forum webinar presentation with Middle East expert, Dr. Raphael Danziger at 10 a.m. via Zoom. To register, go to lopc.org/first-friday-forum and click on the registration link. See article p. 7.

Poul Anderson Writing Contest submission deadline midnight. For more information contact contest@friendsoftheorindalibrary.org. See article p. 12.

Orinda Garden Club Annual Plant Sale 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Orinda Library Plaza. See article p. 14

CITY/FIRE MEETING SCHEDULE

City Council. First and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., www.cityoforinda.org for Zoom link.

Historic Landmarks Committee. Fourth Tuesday, 3-5 p.m. Call 925.788.7323.

Moraga-Orinda Fire District. Third Wednesday, 7 p.m. For agenda, go to mofd.org/board/meetings.

Planning Commission. Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., cityoforinda.org.

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

Holtzapple.

Registration is required to attend the online forum. Simply go to lopc.org/first-friday-forum and click on the registration link.

Bobbie Dodson can be reached at bobbiedodson@comcast.net.



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VISUAL ARTS

Library Gallery: Seeking Nature's Deep Calm in Tahoe

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

Lamorinda Arts Council President Denise Nomura is featured in a solo show for the month of April in the virtual Art Gallery at the Orinda Library.

Nomura was introduced to the world of art at a very young age by her grandmother, an accomplished painter. Together, they mixed paint, created collages, and talked about how shadows and light can define artwork. As a child, Nomura loved the process of mixing paint to create new colors and even the smell of the paint. To this day, the process still brings her grandmother to mind. She has no formal academic training but has taken many classes.

"My real passion was launched in Japan when I learned sumie and nihonga water-based painting," she said. After seven years in Japan, she returned to the U.S.

When she tried oil painting, she loved it immediately. Her focus continues to be capturing moments of time in the natural world. Since she often travels to Tahoe, you will see oil paintings of the lake, rocks and sky with an emphasis on clouds. She admits to a total obsession with clouds at the moment.

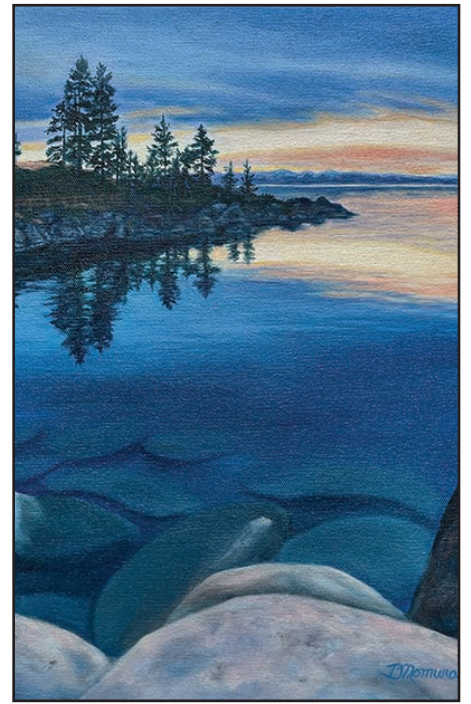
"Photographs of nature were not enough for me. I work to replicate what I experience in nature on canvas. I paint soothing, calming scenes so that I can come back to them again and again to receive those messages," said Nomura. Of late, she's been commissioned to paint lots of little furry animals. She said, "It's so much fun to see the delight in people's eyes when they view their little friend on canvas."

Nomura often paints with a group led by instructor Gary Bergren at the Walnut Creek Center for Community Arts. They

offer ideas and suggestions about how to improve each painter's work. "The advice is always good and the friendships I've made even better," said Nomura.

"Seeking Nature's Deep Calm" is her theme for the 12 pieces she is showing. Nomura wants people to know she is still learning and evolving as a painter, like many of her fellow artists. With each painting she gains more knowledge and confidence. Visit www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries/ to view her work.

All Council art exhibits are virtual until COVID-19 restrictions change. To learn more about the Lamorinda Arts Council go to www.lamorindaarts.org. For questions email Curator Maggie Boscoe, galler@lamorindaarts.org or call 925.359.9940.



COURTESY OF DENISE NOMURA

Denise Nomura's *Stillness Runs Deep*, a 12" x 16" giclée on fine art paper, evokes the deep calm within Lake Tahoe and the luminous sky above it.

◆ BAEFSKY from page 5

DPR on Feb. 18, for his career-long dedication to IPM advocacy and education. He provides professional IPM consulting with an emphasis on developing site-specific IPM plans for public and private entities.

Baefsky believes integrated pest management practices should be everyone's concern.

"Orinda News readers that love their homes and the landscape of Lamorinda, the Bay area and beyond, should be encouraged and inspired by the practice of a pest control approach that is based on a scientific assessment of the environment and seeks to optimize biological solutions to pest, disease and weed problems," he said.

He said originally his company was called Michael Baefsky, Horticulture Consultant, which later morphed into Baefsky & Associates, with the advent of several exciting collaborative projects for various public agencies.

"After the big recession, I decided to focus on the key elements of my teaching and consulting, which are Trees, Bugs, Dirt – a name that I hope will continue even after I am no longer around," he said.

Having held advisory positions in the Bay Area and helped develop many IPM publications, Baefsky recently worked with the San Francisco Department of the Environment to co-author *Pest Prevention by Design – Landscapes Guidelines for Designing Out Pests*, an interactive IPM model that focuses on designing landscapes to prevent pest invasions.

"The publication is about stepping back and implementing good design approaches

that minimizes pest problems in the landscape," said Baefsky. "There is a companion volume about designing out pests from structures too."

Baefsky's family supports his IPM efforts. "My wife Gini has always supported my IPM implementation around our house and garden, even when it's not always successful," he said.

One of his sons and his wife are holistic cattle ranch managers as well.

"They are constantly innovating IPM methods for a wide range of rangeland pests encountered, more grazing for invasive exotic weed control and (implementing) various in-

novative measures for managing populations of wild boar and rattlesnakes," he said.

Not all pests are actually pests.

Baefsky said pests are defined in IPM as populations of organisms that create problems for humans.

"When there are so many organisms of the same species that a host or target is bothered or harmed, then that population is called a 'pest' problem," he said. "For example, a high population of potential pest organisms like Argentine ant (*Iridomyrmex humile*), may bother people inside their homes, yet in the landscape they may have beneficial aspects, such as controlling

termites and aerating the soil."

Running his consulting business, educating others and winning the IPM Achievement Award, Baefsky said, feels wonderful, even though he's missed the hands-on, interactive education during this pandemic.

In his downtime, he has other, equally important interests.

"I work in my own garden, watch birds, take walks, ride my bike and primarily sing, play and study Turkish and Arabic music, with a little Americana thrown in for fun," he said.

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

The Spring Market is off to a wild start!

Now is the time to list and sell

<p>Pending</p>  <p>341 Camino Sobrante, Orinda Offered at \$2,600,000 This Mid-Century home offers the best of California indoor-outdoor living: open floor plan, floor-to-ceiling windows, sweeping views of the Orinda Hills and golf course, and a sparkling pool surrounded by a Brazilian hardwood deck and pergola. www.341caminosobrante.com</p>	<p>Active</p>  <p>40 Camino Del Diablo, Orinda Offered at \$1,585,000 The home features amazing views of Briones reservoir, day and night, and a panoramic view that stretches to the edge of Mt. Diablo beyond Briones Reservoir and a recently remodeled IPE deck to enjoy the views easily from the family room. www.40caminodeldiablo.com</p>
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STUDENTS / CLASSIFIEDS

Poul Anderson Writing Contest

By ELLA DULSKI
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The submission deadline for 2021's Poul Anderson Writing Contest this year is Friday, April 16 at midnight.

The contest, open to all Orinda high school students, is named in honor of the late Poul Anderson, a popular science-fiction writer and Orinda resident, who was a true friend to the community for 40 years.

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

A panel of local judges, involved professionally in reading, writing, or publishing, will adjudicate the entries. Awards go to best entries, regardless of category. There will not necessarily be one award in each category.

Up to four winners will each be awarded



\$500 prizes at the end of the school year, underwritten by the Friends of the Orinda Library. The winning entries will be posted on the Friends' website.

Entries can only be submitted electronically this year. Instructions are on the 2021 Contest Entry Form, which can be found on the Friends of the Orinda Library website.

If you have questions, please contact contest@friendsoftheorindalibrary.org.

Ella Dulski can be reached at elladulski@yahoo.com.

◆ REEL from page 5

Oliver Reed, Faye Dunaway, Christopher Lee, Charlton Heston and Raquel Welch, in a brilliant comic turn, all commit to this adaptation 100%.

Moreover, this version has some of the best fight choreography ever seen. As no stranger to sword-play, I admit when I first saw this I was dumbfounded. These are "real" down and dirty sword fights, complete with gut punches, kicks and more than a little cheating. These are not the moves Errol Flynn or Douglas Fairbanks delivered.

There's another element to these films that makes them unique, something that happened behind the scenes. Richard Lester did shoot *The Three/Four Musketeers* as one film, but he cut it in half to release each segment a year apart (1973/1974). Though this proved fortuitous for the studio and audiences, the actors only got paid once! Needless to say, they weren't pleased about this and a new law, called The Salkind Clause (Alexander, Ilya and Michael Salkind were the producers), went on the books.

Despite this, both films were a massive success, even though the second of the two is a little darker in tone. Lester even filmed an epilogue of sorts.

Managing, by some miracle to reassemble most of the original cast, he

made *The Return of the Musketeers* nearly 15 years later (based on another Dumas novel, *Twenty Years After*). Unfortunately, that one was not so well received and was also marred by tragedy. The first two were a "lightning in a bottle" phenomenon, and too much time had passed. Worse, Roy Kinnear, who played Planchet, died in a riding accident during filming, casting a pall over the production. (It was almost never released and Lester all but quit directing).

Still, the films should be sought and savored. In many ways, they mark the end of an era, at least from a swashbuckling standpoint. Indeed, there was no other film like them until Disney's *Pirates* films. When some critics proclaim they don't make films like this anymore, this is what they're talking about.

And, to close, I'd like to say a few words about local goings-on. Though there won't be a California Independent Film Festival Association (CAIFF) program this year (at least, as far as I can tell), that does not mean that our local film buffs have been sitting idle.

The Lamorinda Arts Council is making sure of this with its "Super Shorts: Three-Minute Movie Challenge." During April and May, you may notice young filmmakers skulking about town with film equipment in tow. The films are due May 14. Then, we lucky folks will be able to view winning entries at a live virtual award program May 19 at 7 p.m. For details, go to www.lamorindaarts.org/supershorts/.

So that's something to anticipate. As always, remember to go towards those wonderful images made of light for that's where the reel magic lies.

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

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STUDENTS



COURTESY OF ROXANNE CHRISTOPHE
Team Stampede, the Orinda all-girl robotics team, is on their way to the Northern California First Lego League robotics finals. From top left, **Sophie Davis, Alexia Gkatzimas, Grace Kosla, Trisha Madannavar, Lina Parikh and Lauren Stuffmann.**

Orinda All-Girl Robotics Team on Their Way to Finals Competition

By ROXANNE CHRISTOPHE
Contributing Writer

Team Stampede, the all-girl robotics team from Orinda, who won the award for “Best Robot Design” at the FIRST® LEGO® League robotics tournament held on Feb. 13, competed in the Northern RePlay California Championships on March 14. Although they did not go on to the summer championship, Team Stampede members thoroughly enjoyed the competition.

“Being a rookie team, they were fascinated by the innovation and the advanced capabilities of the more seasoned teams,” said team coach Deepa Bangalore. “The team is very proud of their showing at the championships, which included improving their robot design, conducting interviews with industry experts and dramatically increasing their technical scores. With their confidence high, they look forward to completing again next year.”

Fifth grade Wagner Ranch Elementary students – Sophie Davis, Alexia Gkatzimas, Grace Kosla, Trisha Madannavar, Lina Parikh and Lauren Stuffmann – comprise the team. Participants spent the past year designing and preparing their

robot.

FIRST® LEGO® League Challenge introduces science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) to children ages 9-16 through fun, exciting hands-on learning. Participants gain real-world problem-solving experience through a guided, global robotics program. The program is designed to inspire participants to experiment and grow critical thinking, coding and design skills through hands-on STEM learning and robotics.

According to UNESCO, only around 30% of all female students select STEM-related subjects in higher education with robotics engineering being a male dominated field. The girls say they are thankful to Elise Chang of Miramonte High School who was instrumental in helping launch Team Stampede last year to challenge such statistics.

For more information about forming a robotics team, email Christine Gkatzimas at cgkatzimas@yahoo.com.

For more information on FIRST® LEGO® League, visit www.firstinspires.org/robotics/fll.

Roxanne Christophe can be reached at roxanne@girlscrushingit.org.

◆ IDOL from page 3

winner.

Lamorinda Art Council organizers designed a festive on-line awards ceremony complete with excerpts from the winning performances and comments from the elated winners. By the time the evening ended, four solo performers, three groups, and one Audience Award Winner had been named as follows:

Solo Performers

- K-2nd – Jessica Yu
- 3rd-5th – Anna Tanner
- 6th-8th – Isabelle Porcella
- 9th-12th – Sabrina Hernandez

Group Performers

- K-5th – Power of Two
(Cara Impallomeni, Miranda Klein)
- 6th-8th – Crescendo Voices
(Curtis Resnick, Alliana Lili Yang)
- 9th-12th – Jaden & Mina
(Mina Lim, Jaden Maspatella)

The Audience Award Winner

Isabella Mucha

Plans are already underway for the Summer Edition of Lamorinda Idol with registration running April 1 – 30. Go to <https://lamorindaarts.org/>.

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

◆ SHOPPER from page 8

OrindaFarmersMarket and Instagram at OrindaFarmersMarket or call the market hotline 925.431-8361.

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

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

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ORINDA GARDEN CLUB / EVERYDAY ORINDA

Shop Orinda Garden Club's Plant Sale on April 17 at Library Plaza

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff writer

What do Danube, Alice's Dream and Faelan's First Snow have in common? They are all varieties of tomatoes, propagated by Sue Andersen-Berger, available at the Orinda Garden Club's Plant Sale April 17, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., on the Orinda Library Plaza.

Anderson-Berger describes these favorite tomatoes this way: "Danube is a compact cherry tomato, a tasty treat to pop in your mouth as you walk in your garden. Alice's Dream, a yellow/orange beefsteak with purple shoulders, is beautiful. Faelan's First Snow, a Cherokee Purple with variegated leaves, looks as if snow has fallen upon the leaves. All are unique and delicious."

Anderson-Berger has grown tomatoes on a large scale since 2012. Large scale means 900 to 1,200 plants a year, including over 100 unique, hard-to-find varieties.

The plant sale proceeds will go towards Orinda Garden Club's educational meetings and programs as well as public instruction in the fields of gardening, conservation and environment.

These plants, which the club members have carefully nurtured, are ready to go home to gardeners in the area. Shoppers will find perennials, which are pollinator friendly and drought resistant, and a selection of annual flowers including more than 19 varieties of sunflowers, cosmos, and zinnias. Several varieties of salvias will be prominent on the plaza. Jean Rowe says these plants are easy to grow, produce beautiful blooms, attract pollinators, and don't require much water.

Rowe, co-chair of the Garden Club's event, promises a wide variety of vegetable



COURTESY OF JEAN ROWE

Jean Rowe with her multitude of vegetable seedlings. The plants will be ready for the Orinda Garden Club's plant sale held at the Orinda Library Plaza on April 17, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

and flowering plants propagated by club members.

She explains, "While a few members have greenhouses, many had to set up 'makeshift' environments for these plants to mature over the winter. For example, I enclosed an alcove in front of our house with plastic to create a warmer place for the young plants. The key is providing light and warmth."

Another ardent gardener in the club, Susan DiStefano, bought her first greenhouse over 25 years ago and has been propagating ever since. Last year she propagated over 1,000 seedlings of vegetables and shared them with Sleepy Hollow Elementary, Orinda Intermediate, and Del Rey Schools. She worked with students, teaching them propagation techniques. Her contributions to the sale will be salvias and zinnias, as well as veggies and herbs.

Expect a huge supply of vegetable and herbs including 30 plus varieties of Sue's [SEE GARDEN page 15]

Everyday Orinda

DARE WE DISCUSS THE OTHER CONTAGIOUS PLAGUE IN ORINDA: HEAD LICE?

MIMI BOMMARITO



With activities curtailed and distancing enforced, undoubtedly cases are way down. Once kiddos can huddle again, watch out. Like dust and telemarketers, lice will never be eradicated. The pungent aroma of tea tree oil will waft through school halls while a very un-scenic 'Mt. Wash-more' dominates the utility room at home.

It'll be mostly awesome resuming our former way of life. Ninety percent elation and 10% "Oh snap, I forgot about how much I hated (insert a variety of issues here: evening meetings when you'd rather sit on the couch and digest, parties where you're expected to buy things, any gathering combining alcohol and sign-up sheets, hosting middle-school slumber parties, waiting for that friend who's always late, parking garages, pinch-y shoes, critter head.)"

I know what my fellow bedraggled parents are thinking: "Please. It's all we can handle just getting our littles back in the classroom." And parents, I hear you, loud and clear. It's just that with all the current restructuring, right now could be the perfect time to sneak in some change.

My years in parents' club leadership roles were truly rewarding, but I faced an impenetrable wall attempting to change protocol on lice prevention. After an exhausting battle with head lice as a newcomer to Orinda, implementing some proactive prevention was the main reason I agreed to serve as co-president of the Glorietta Parents' Club back in 2010.

As I shared my ambitious plans for lice reform with my friend Laurie Rothermel, I recall quite vividly the skeptical "good luck with that" expression on her face. Can that Berlin Wall now crumble? If we believe in masks and temperature checks, can we not also believe in routine scalp checks?

Imagine if we dealt with COVID-19 the same way we dealt with lice here, basically not screening for it and discharging a child from school after numerous opportunities to spread it.

Previously, parents were told we never had the budget for any lice screening, along with some mumbo-jumbo about the state of California having protections in place for a student privacy – especially aggravating. We're not talking sexually transmitted infections here, folks. Additionally, we had scores of willing parent volunteers ready to

assist with screenings.

Parents need to know that in other states the sweet and sweaty little scalps of all elementary students are routinely checked for lice at least twice a year, usually after a return from any extended holiday. These peremptory checks work wonders offsetting infestations. Ask friends and relatives in other states.

I was the poster parent for why the current reactive, rather than proactive, system does not work; the classic case of denial, ignoring all the school's written exposure notices until my daughter's head started itching. She couldn't finish her piano piece without stopping to scratch her head, which doesn't go over so gracefully at a recital, even if your kid is closer to Chopsticks than Chopin. I finally checked her head, everything appeared normal. "However," I thought, "I'm in my forties now, and a lot more dependent on my reading glasses. Perhaps I'd better fetch those and examine her again."

"Jesus, Mary and Joseph!" as my dear departed father often shouted at offensive drivers. Once magnified, my precious child's head looked like an ant farm! I claim, to this day, my grandest expression of motherly love was revealed the moment I saw those bugs. Instinct urged me to shriek like Jamie Lee Curtis in *Halloween*.

Summoning every ounce of restraint, I somehow pretended a head full of live, crawling insects was no biggie. With quaking hands, I dialed East Bay Pediatrics. Oh, and it was super fun telling all my brand-new Mom friends that we just exposed them to head lice. Would they hear banjo music in their heads every time they approached our home? Once I learned how common lice are around here, at least that worry was assuaged.

The Nuvo Method for head lice removal using Cetaphil cleanser was the only treatment that successfully worked for our family – www.nuvoforheadlice.com. But let me tell you, we battled those evil weevils for months. Local lice removal services like Love Bugs in Lafayette are very reliable but require appointments and can be quite costly, especially if the infestation spreads to siblings. Nit combing rates can run \$90 per hour. Chemical treatments should be

[SEE EVERYDAY page 16]



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AUTHORS

Local Authors Publish Exposé on Past and Present Progressive Movements

By ANIA KEENAN
Contributing Writer

Demonstrators stood with hands held together in front of the Lincoln Memorial. The date was August 18, 1963, when it was still unusual to see African Americans and white people holding hands in public. The crowd was a part of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, protesting for racial justice and civil rights. Standing a distance away, photojournalist Leonard Freed captured this historic shot, signifying interracial support for the civil rights movement.

Nearly 80 years later, Freed's cover photograph embodies the point-of-view of local husband and wife author-team's Melanie and Ken Light's newest social documentary book: *Picturing Resistance, Moments of Social Change from the 1950s to Today*.

Although the specific focus of the project was new, both Melanie and Ken have spent their professional careers focused on social change.

Ken, a professor of photojournalism at U.C. Berkeley, was first published as a photographer at the age of 18 when he captured images of the unrest that took place in the aftermath of the 1970 Kent State Shootings. For Ken, that was a turning point in his career, when he realized that photojournalism would be his path.

"I was caught in that tornado of social change, and I realized that photography had an important way of recording history," Ken said.

Throughout his career, he continued to turn his lens on progressive movements, producing 11 books of photographs focusing upon specific movements and broader change over time.

Melanie also developed a focus on social change, although her resume has been more multifaceted than Ken's. As an executive founder of Forovision, an international non-profit that supports documentary photographers, Melanie is a certified fine art appraiser managing a private art and book collection. Prior to the pandemic, she taught and lectured internationally.

According to Melanie, her work is driven by the particular question that captures her interest at the time.

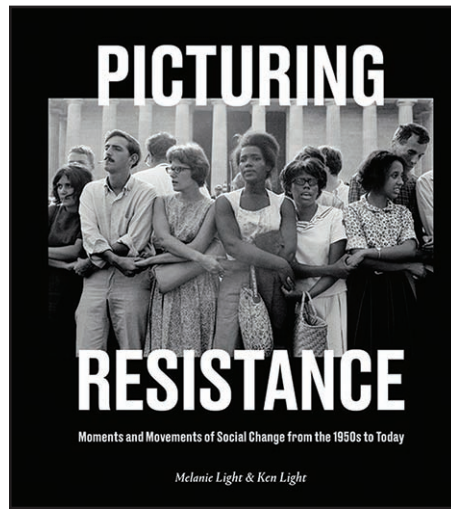
"That's how my life has been driven, by whatever question consumes me," Melanie said. It was this vibrant curiosity that drew Melanie to a job in the stock market out of college, and more recently to found the Orinda Fire Wise Council after becoming concerned about the lack of wildfire preparation in her neighborhood.

Creating *Picturing Resistance* was not Melanie and Ken's first joint project. The two worked together on previous documentary books, *Coal Hollow* and *Valley of Shadows and Dreams*. This, however, it was their first collaborative project working for a publishing company.

Their previous projects had been self-driven, brainstormed and funded. In the case of *Picturing Resistance*, the Lights were contacted by Penguin Random House and given the assignment to capture progressive social movements from 1955 to 2019.

Although they can't know for sure, the Lights have a shared suspicion that their assignment for the book stemmed from an art show they curated at the Berkeley Arts Center in 2017. Called "Resistors," it covered 50 years of political resistance in the Bay Area.

"That gave rise, we think, to one of the editors seeing the show and contacting us to expand it to be a national overview of



COURTESY OF ANIA KEENAN
Front cover of *Picturing Resistance*, a book written by Ken and Melanie Light, which shows protests in front of the Lincoln Memorial during the 1963 March on Washington.

grassroots resistance," Ken said.

In the process of creating the book, Melanie and Ken divided the work so that they could each exercise their expertise. Melanie did most of the research and writing, combing through a lengthy list of sources to gather information about the dozens of social movements featured throughout the book's six chapters. She then took this information and crafted short summaries for every chapter of the book as well as explanations for each of the photographs.

Ken was responsible for jump-starting the process of selecting photos from his own work, and the work of other photojournalists, that would provide the best visuals for Melanie's explanations.

According to the couple, Ken possesses a somewhat encyclopedic memory when it comes to photography. He drew on professional connections and his background in activism to retrieve the images he most desired for the book.

The personal connections the Light's share to the movements featured in their book increased both their dedication to authenticity and the pressure that they felt to "get it right." Ken said, "People's lives were really in these movements, and they are the guardians of history."

The overall message the Lights concluded that they wanted young people to get from their book is a respect for history and for the generations of activists that came before them. "Sometimes, especially young people, become politically active and they'll think that they are inventing something new. And, it's like 'No, your grandparents did the exact same thing,'" Melanie said.

Ania Keenan can be reached at ania@7keenans.org.

◆ GARDEN from page 14

hard-to-find tomatoes, 13 varieties of peppers, squash, and beans. Succulents, increasingly sought after, will be there too.

But that's not all. Tables with useful information for the entire family will be set up, covering such topics as conservation, composting demonstrations, worm composting and fire safe landscaping.

There's a Marketplace too which will feature spring wreaths and decorative herb boxes made by members; garden related accessories; floral notecards; botanical prints; herbal creams and remedies; and birdhouses made by Greg of Lafayette. Orinda Books will have gardening books for purchase.

Bobbie Dodson can be reached at bobbiedodson@comcast.net.



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BUSINESS BUZZ

Business Buzz

PUTTING A PERSONAL FACE ON LOCAL BUSINESSES

ELANA O'LOSKEY



Park Place Wealth Advisors Inc.

Jean Gannett has been a part of the Orinda community since the '80s when she opened her financial planning office



COURTESY OF ELANA O'LOSKEY (L-R) **Jean Gannett, CFP®** and **Daniel Gannett** are a mother-son team of independent financial planners who take a holistic view to life's financial needs at Park Place Wealth Advisors Inc., 18 Orinda Way. Both are involved in the Orinda Rotary and other community organizations.

in her home. In 2005, she moved the business from her home to its present location at 18 Orinda Way. Jean's son Dan joined her in 2006, and together they have created what they describe as an independent financial planning business with a holistic view towards life's financial needs. "What that comes down to is client goals first," said Dan.

Jean, a licensed Certified Financial Planner, stresses that Park Place Wealth's independent status gives her and Dan the flexibility to bring a variety of investment strategies to the table to meet desired goals. They offer fee-based investment management, insurance for life and long-term care needs.

Dan holds multiple licenses in securities, mutual funds, life, health, annuities, and real estate. With 14 years of industry experience advising high net worth clients, endowments, companies, and trusts, he said, "When you do this kind of work for a long time, eventually the experience of interacting with your clients is like that of a big family." He enjoys hiking, fishing and hunting when not busy at work.

Jean served six years on the board of directors at Associated Securities Corpo-



COURTESY OF MAYA KOBASHIGAWA

Maya Kobashigawa, U.C. Admissions Consultant, is pictured on the far left in her backyard with a parent and high school student while they discuss applying to a U.C. campus.

ration and for eight years on the board of directors at Foothill Securities, Inc. She is involved in Nile, Daughters of the American Revolution and Orinda Rotary. For relaxation she enjoys painting, reading and being outdoors.

Both are active in the Orinda Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club of Orinda; Dan is immediate past president of the Rotary Club. He's proud that it supports Miramonte Scholarships, Field Day, the Orinda Fourth of July Parade, local scouting, Meals on Wheels, The Food Bank and many other community projects. They both always have, and still do, serve on the boards of several nonprofits in the community.

Park Place's hours at 18 Orinda Way are Mon. – Fri. 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. All COVID-19 precautions followed. You can reach Park Place Wealth at 925.254.7766, dan@parkplacewealth.com or visit www.parkplacewealth.com.

Maya Kobashigawa, U.C. Admissions Consultant

Because U.C. application openings began last August, Maya Kobashigawa decided she could not wait for COVID-19 restrictions to ease. She opened her admissions consulting business in July of 2020. By pivoting to hold her consultations pandemic-safe, she was able to answer the calls for help she was getting from students and parents. They meet outside in her backyard in Lafayette wearing masks and observing social distancing.

Kobashigawa has been an admissions reader for several U.C. campuses, including Berkeley, San Diego and Santa Cruz in the past five years. She has read and scored thousands of undergraduate application in this capacity.

After working as an educator at Burton Valley Elementary in Lafayette, she took

a break when her daughters were born. As they got older, she decided to explore something different in the field of education. She volunteered at a low resourced high school to help students navigate the whole process of college applications, interviews, etc. Finding the work satisfying, she decided to continue in this field.

Because she is not a college counselor, there is no four-year commitment. Students and parents can meet with her just once if that is all they need. Her goal is to leave parents and students more prepared when they apply within the U.C. system. It provides her with great joy to share her skills and give back to her Lamorinda community.

Kobashigawa works within the student and parent's schedule, usually after school during the week or on weekends. Reach her at 925.202.6153 or at mayakobash@comcast.net to learn more.

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

◆ EVERYDAY from page 14

thoroughly researched as they contain highly toxic substances. As the lice get stronger, so do the chemicals.

Treating lice is expensive, and chemical methods can be harmful to a child's health. Infestation is a nuisance and quite time-consuming and stressful for everyone involved. In light of all we have learned about disease prevention in the wake of the Coronavirus, I hope our school district will re-evaluate its approach to a timeless problem that will soon resurface. Avoid all of this – Screening beats Screaming.

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

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