



# THE ORINDA NEWS

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## Actors Bring a Real-Life Love Story to Performance at Orinda Theatre

By SALLY HOGARTY  
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Just in time for Valentine's Day, the Orinda Theatre presents A.R. Gurney's romantic play *Love Letters*, featuring real-life couple Linda Purl and Patrick Duffy.

"*Love Letters* is a show I've wanted to do for some time," said Orinda Theatre's owner Derek Zemrak. "It's the perfect show for Valentine's Day, very romantic and a favorite among celebrities. I was very happy Linda and Patrick were available to do the show."

Purl's extensive and varied acting accomplishments include recurring roles on such television shows as *Happy Days*, *Matlock* and *The Office*, as well as extensive Broadway credits and several solo jazz albums.

Duffy made his mark in television as heartthrob Bobby Ewing on the prime

time soap opera *Dallas*, which optimized the 80's cultural worship of wealth and greed. After *Dallas*, Duffy played opposite Suzanne Somers for seven seasons in the comedy *Step by Step*.

While the staging for *Love Letters* is simple, the texture, dynamics and humor in Gurney's writing is anything but. The meticulously crafted work uses the "epistolary" form where two performers sit or stand side by side reading from correspondence as they reveal their warm and complicated 50-year relationship.

"This play is such a flawless piece. It holds up over time and packs an emotional wallop," said Purl.

"There is a gift in reading a play like this," Duffy said. "To visually connect with the words without worrying what your next line is and knowing your partner is right next to you is a very rewarding experience."

[SEE LOVE page 5]



COURTESY OF LINDA PURL

Celebrities **Linda Purl** (*Happy Days*, *Matlock* and *The Office*) and **Patrick Duffy** (*Step by Step* and *Dallas*) bring real-life romance to the Orinda Theatre when they perform in A.R. Gurney's *Love Letters* Feb. 10. Thanks to the pandemic, the two busy actors had time to get to know one another in their own Zoom version of *Love Letters*.

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JEFF HEYMAN

Two Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) cars derailed in Orinda on the morning of Jan. 1. The incident is under investigation.

## BART Train Derails in Orinda

By KATHY CORDOVA  
Executive Editor  
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Two eastbound Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) cars derailed just outside of the Orinda station shortly after 9 a.m. on Jan. 1. The cars caught fire, forcing the evacuation of more than 100 riders.

Orinda police and MOFD responded rapidly, extinguishing the fire and transporting nine people to medical facilities for evaluation. There were no serious injuries.

BART officials reported that there was a loss of communication between the computer system that manages the tracks and a field device. Because of this problem,

the Operations Control Center instructed a train operator to manually align the route at the interlocking of the tracks. The train derailed when the operator attempted to manually move the train and it crossed onto the wrong track.

Full details of the incident are under investigation. BART representatives have 60 days from the date of the accident to provide the California Public Utilities Commission with a report. No report is available to the public until that time.

BART provided a temporary bus bridge while the Orinda station was closed. A large crane was used to re-rail the cars in order to tow them. The track was repaired and the line was reopened on Jan. 2 at 4:40 a.m. ■

## City Shares Fiscal Year Data on Measure R

By CAMERON SULLIVAN  
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At a Jan. 10 meeting of Orinda's Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Committee (SSTOC), city staff provided details of audited Measure R revenue and expenditures from the fiscal year 2022-2023.

As of June 30, 2023, the final day of the

fiscal year, the balance of available Measure R funds – officially known as Fund 106 – totaled \$4,643,294.

That figure reflects a July 1, 2022, beginning balance of \$3,347,112.

Fund 106 supplemental sales tax revenue for fiscal year 2022-2023 was \$3,803,247. Per the city's Annual Comprehensive Financial Statements, "Measure R exceeded

[SEE MEASURE R page 19]

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PLANNING DEPARTMENT / CARTOON

# Planning Department Pivots to Downtown Rezoning After Feedback

By KATHY CORDOVA  
Executive Editor

cordova@theorindanews.com

Acknowledging an “intense amount of public interest” during the Dec. 12, 2023, Planning Commission meeting to discuss rezoning of four “opportunity sites,” Planning Director Drummond Buckley addressed the community’s concerns at the Jan. 9 city council meeting.

The planning department’s staff report reads, “Staff recommends the City Council receive the report, take public testimony, and provide feedback on next steps for implementation of the Downtown Precise

Plan and Housing Element goals, policies and actions.”

There was strong public opposition to the rezoning of four sites to include 286 new dwellings, all located on Moraga Way and all within a short distance of each other.

Buckley’s presentation at the city council meeting specified a long list of public concerns, including:

- Increased traffic and congestion on Moraga Way and in South Orinda
- Vehicular accidents on Moraga Way
- Pedestrian and bicyclist safety
- School capacity
- Evacuation concerns
- Lack of infrastructure to support additional housing



- Concentration of rezonings in South Orinda
- Lack of notification prior to the meeting

In response, the Planning Department staff took the following actions after the meeting on Dec. 12:

- Prepared detailed minutes of all the comments, from both public speakers and the commissioners.
- Created a Plan Orinda Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), found at [orindaca.iqm2.com/Citizens/Detail\\_Meeting.aspx?ID=2396](http://orindaca.iqm2.com/Citizens/Detail_Meeting.aspx?ID=2396).
- Committed to making additional enhancements to the Plan Orinda website in the coming weeks and months with an implementation focus.
- Recommended a pause in rezoning of the opportunity sites on Moraga Way and a pivot to rezoning the downtown sites.

City Manager David Biggs remarked that the “pivot” would mean the next rezoning actions would focus on downtown, but rezoning the opportunity sites would need

to be addressed in the future.

Mayor Darlene Gee asked Buckley to talk about the accomplishment of being one of only 13 of 109 municipalities in the Bay Area to have their Sixth Cycle Housing Element approved, and the public outreach that went into the plan.

Buckley said that the Plan Orinda process involved 15 public meetings about the Housing Element and probably another 15-20 meetings on related issues. California’s Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) approval of Orinda’s plan gives the city three years to complete the rezonings instead of a one-year deadline for cities without approved Housing Elements.

Gee emphasized that the city was required to plan for, but not required to build 1,359 new dwellings as part of the Housing Element. “The city must rezone to make way for new housing, but the city is not responsible for building housing,” said Gee.

“We create opportunities in compliance [SEE DOWNTOWN page 8]

**Orinda's Housing Element**, a component of the City's General Plan, outlines the strategies and policies which guide the development and preservation of housing in the City.

**The Sixth Cycle Housing Element** aims to address growing demand for affordable housing in the state by assigning a Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for every California municipality.

**The cycles span eight years**, with the sixth cycle extending from 2023 to 2031 and mandating that Orinda provide a plan to add 1,359 housing units in that time, 587 of which must be low or very low-income housing.

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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the Co-President  
78 Years Strong and Flourishing

CHRIS LASZCZ-DAVIS  
president@orindaassociation.org



I'm in Australia right now visiting family and friends (having a wonderful time) and trying to think of an "inspirational" message I can share as The Orinda Association's (OA) incoming co-president that hasn't been shared previously. After all, historically we've had an exemplary slate of OA leaders with vision, enthusiasm and eloquence. It's all been said, hasn't it? Or has it?

I recall one of the first few 4th of July celebrations in Orinda when our kids were toddlers. We walked our little red wagon with both kids tucked into it down the hill and into town to be greeted by the friendly chaos of the starting celebration.

The parade was a bit less organized in those early years, but colorful and festive it was. The parade started and we just walked alongside it, eventually becoming part of it. We hadn't filed an application to walk in the parade (I don't recall if we even needed one in those early years) but we did so, encouraged by many applauding our cute, decorated red wagon with our two cute kids.

We were sold - small town feel, friendly folks, beautiful weather and an opportunity to mingle with many other families.

It's been well over 30 years since that 4th of July celebration, but Orinda still

continues to amaze, evolve and inspire with an influx of new families, cultures, views, expanding opportunities and a giving heart.

The Orinda Association, fostering community events and programs since 1946, boasts a number of signature events - the Classic Car Show (20 years), *The Orinda News* (40 years), 4th of July celebration (40 years), Seniors Around Town (18 years), community forums (40 years), Volunteer Center (20 years), and a few "one-off" initiatives (i.e. local restaurant/hospital worker food program during COVID-19, which also included our school children's personal gratitude notes to hospital workers).

Our community's "secret sauce" for getting so many things launched and sustained is the interconnected web of collaborations, which exist amongst the many non-profits, both within Orinda and with the broader Lamorinda community of partners.

We can't accomplish what we have, absent the leveraging that goes on each day with organizations whose goals are generally aligned and complementary - the local governing councils, five local Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis, Lamorinda Presents, Lamorinda Arts Council, Scouting organizations, Lamorinda Village, local schools, Lamorinda

[SEE MESSAGE page 12]

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

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Did you see her at lunch?

I hope you did not miss her! She was on the cheer team, yoga and public speaking. She ate lunch at the tables. I hope, as a Miramonte student, you did not miss Miramonte student Eliska Turmova, our fall/winter visiting student from Tabor, Czech Republic, Orinda's Sister City.

Seeing that English is her fourth language, she did pretty well in class! She was a straight "A" student for her one semester.

With many tears, we recently left her at SFO airport for her return trip home.

We are now in the process of choosing the next of almost 25 students we have hosted in the past from Orinda's Sister City, Tabor.

Now is when we need an Orinda Miramonte family to look forward to an international experience by hosting the next student. Think about adding to your household for one semester with the fun of showing him or her around California and all the places you love!

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Bobbie Landers, Contributing Writer  
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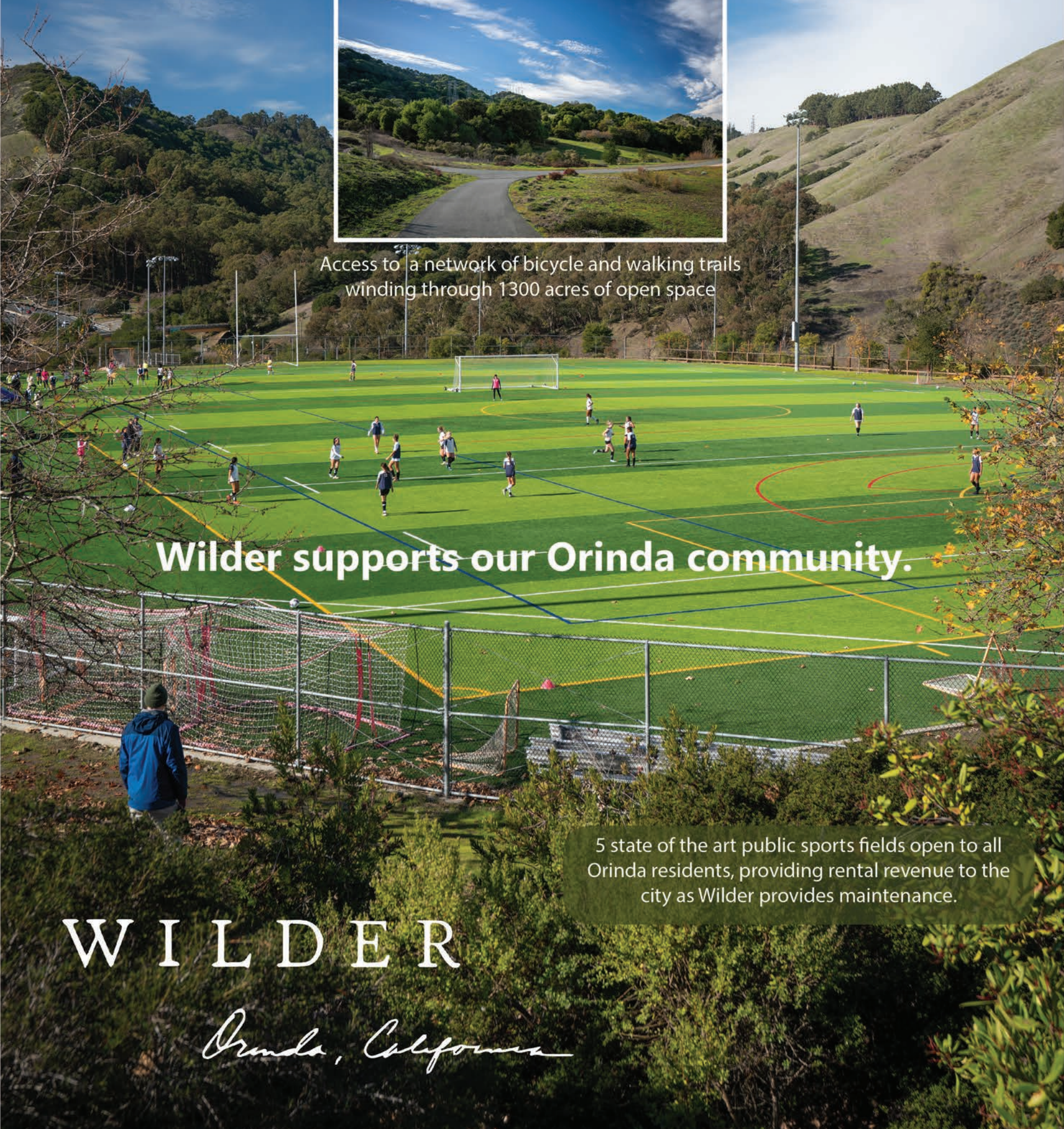
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## ORINDA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION / ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

## Orinda Community Foundation Selects 21 Non-Profits for 2023 Grants

By S. K. GUPTA  
Staff Writer

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“Our need will be the real creator,” said Plato.

It was the late 2000s and the Great Recession, and subsequent reduced revenues, forced the City of Orinda to cut back drastically on its funding of community services and events.

Sue Severson was the Orinda mayor and she, along with four other volunteers, created the Orinda Community Foundation (OCF), with the goal of creating an organization to help fill the gap for essential community support services.

“OCF is a one-stop shop for supporting non-profits in Orinda,” Severson explained. “We raise money from the community and give it back to the community through multiple non-profits.”

Richard Westin, co-founder and current OCF President said, “We donate every dollar we raise.”

The OCF has no paid staff – the work is shared by the all-volunteer Board of Trustees. The current 14 trustees bring a wide variety of governance experiences to keep the non-profit functioning efficiently. The unifying desire is to keep Orinda special for its residents.

“We focus on being efficient – careful with expenses, but generous with donations,” added Westin.

OCF’s simple process is to raise most of the funds from the community by sending out a newsletter with a donation envelope. Grant applications are accepted in September and October, with grant recipient winners announced in November.

Trustees selected 21 beneficiary organizations whose grant proposals promise to enhance the quality of life in Orinda.

Although focused on Orinda, OCF also provides grants to non-profits like the Lamorinda Idol and Lamorinda Adult Respite Center (LARC), which support the greater Lamorinda community.

The list of recipients ranges from the 4th of July Parade and Car Show to Concerts in the Park, Youth Ink Writing Contest and Senior Field Trips.

Although many of this year’s recipients have received OCF grants in previous years, two new ones include Fire Safe Moraga Orinda (FSMO) and Xenophon Therapeutic Riding Center.

Mari Parino, Executive Director of Xenophon, a therapeutic riding center offering services to children with disabilities, veterans and others, is very appreciative of the OCF grant.

“Each dollar helps offer life-changing experiences for individuals with a wide

range of disabilities,” she said.

FSMO is a new non-profit that helps residents prepare for and respond to the effects of wildfire.

“We appreciate the OCF grant to help us get started,” said FSMO President Dennis Fay.

“The Orinda Community Foundation is a wonderful asset for Orinda in building

the community with respect to promoting arts, encouraging talent and retaining our history,” said Steve Harwood, chair of Lamorinda Idol.

Thanks to the generosity of Orinda residents, nearly \$600,000 has been donated by OCF to various community non-profit organizations since its inception in 2010. ■

## Promise and Peril of Generative Artificial Intelligence Presentation

By The Orinda News Staff

Orinda resident Dr. Po Chi Wu will be presenting a talk, *Promise and Peril of Generative Artificial Intelligence* at the Feb. 13 meeting of the American Association of University Women - Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch. His talk will explore the topics of what is artificial intelligence (AI) and what it isn’t; its evolution to present-day technology; its opportunities and limitations; and, to the extent available, legislative activity addressing AI at present. Specific case study situations will be discussed with some opportunity to brainstorm how our communities, policyholders and other stakeholders can weigh in and help develop guideposts.

Dr. Po Chi Wu describes himself as an investor in human capital-smart people and smart ideas. He is an active advisor at Sky-Deck, the incubator/accelerator program at UC Berkeley, and he advises several startups around the world. His passion for making a difference has grown over several decades of experience as a venture capitalist and entrepreneur in Silicon Valley and in Greater China, and most recently, as an

adjunct professor teaching entrepreneurship in Hong Kong and Berkeley.

Wu is co-founder and senior partner at FutureLab Consulting, which is focused on new technologies at the intersection of blockchain, artificial intelligence, and quantum computing. He is co-author of *Agile Innovation: the Revolutionary Approach to Accelerate Success, Inspire Engagement, and Ignite Creativity* and *Quantum Design Sprints*.

In the non-profit world, he is co-founder and director of Entrepreneur Futures Network (EFN), which provides mentors to business plan competitions at major universities such as Yale, NYU and the University of Michigan. In Hong Kong, he was co-founder and vice-chairman of Invotech, where he championed the role of entrepreneurship in building smart cities.

Wu has a doctorate in biochemistry & molecular biology from Princeton University and bachelor’s degrees in mathematics and music from UC Berkeley.

The talk will be held at Serbian Orthodox Church Community Hall, 1700 School Street, Moraga, CA on Feb. 13 from 10-11:30 a.m. ■

## ◆ LOVE from page 1

The two performers also have their own unique love story that involves lots of missed opportunities and a long-distance romance.

They met while doing a play reading in 1980, but didn’t see each other again until 20 years later when Purl found herself in London to see her friend Richard Thomas in the play *Art*, which also starred Duffy. Again, it was just a quick hello.

Twenty years later, however, they met at a celebrity signing and had time to strike up a real conversation.

“Pat had lost touch with Richard and through a three-way text, I was able to connect them again,” said Purl. “Then the pandemic hit, Richard dropped off our texts, but Pat and I continued.”

The texting morphed into nightly Zoom meetings that went on for two months.

“It was a sequence of love letters via Zoom,” Duffy said. “We thought there was something in this relationship, and we needed to decide if it was real, so I drove 23 hours from Oregon, where I was living at the time, and ended up on her doorstep in Colorado. We’ve never been apart since.”

Purl added, “We often look at each other and just marvel how things have worked out.”

Duffy and Purl had a chance to do *Love*

*Letters* a few years ago while touring with the thriller *Catch Me If You Can* in Europe.

“We went from England to Belfast for a performance, but our set didn’t show up and our producer asked us to do *Love Letters* instead,” explained Purl. “We jumped in with no rehearsal and did it for several nights until our set for the other show finally arrived.”

Duffy confirmed what a wild adventure their Belfast performance was and noted how excited they are to perform the show again under much calmer circumstances in Orinda.

“Linda is passionate about theater work,” Duffy said. “I started in theater in the ‘60s, but then my television career took off, and I didn’t do theater for the longest time. When I look at the substantial theatrical roles Linda has done, I feel like I’m just a spear carrier waiting in the wings.”

While Purl is much more complimentary about Duffy’s stage roles, she does agree with him about being excited to perform *Love Letters* in Orinda.

“Coming out of COVID, it means more to go to a live event. I don’t think any of us take it for granted as perhaps we did before COVID,” she said.

*Love Letters* performs Feb. 10 at 7 p.m. at the Orinda Theatre, 2 Orinda Theatre Square. Call 925.254.9060 or go to [orindamovies.com/events/](http://orindamovies.com/events/) for tickets. ■



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EDITORIAL

# Editorial: One Eventful Year at *The Orinda News*

By Kathy Cordova  
Executive Editor

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The February issue marks my one-year anniversary with *The Orinda News*.

It's been a wild ride!

In January 2023, we heard about a lawsuit filed against Miramonte and the Acalanes Union School District about accusations of sexual assault by a teacher and negligence on the part of the school and district.

I had never seen anything like this in the pages of *The Orinda News*. It's an understatement to say I was anxious about running this story - especially in the first issue under my helm.

When I brought the subject to our editorial board, the decision was unanimous. It was news; it happened in Orinda and we're *The Orinda News*.

The feedback was immediate and almost uniformly positive and supportive.

"It's important that there be accountability ... even if all the original people involved are no longer at the school, putting all the known facts out there and allowing your readers to decide is super important," one reader wrote.

Most Orindans appreciated the light we shone on a difficult and controversial subject. They welcomed the conversations the story initiated with students and parents.

In addition to navigating this crucial story early in my tenure, I've also had to weigh in on different opinions and shape our overall direction. Over the past 12 months, I've had no shortage of input about what people

wanted *The Orinda News* to be.

Some wanted fun features about local people and personalities.

Others demanded (in frequent, long, detailed emails) investigative reporting about specific, hot-button issues that would require a team of New York Times journalists to meticulously read thousands of pages of reports and meeting minutes, run down quotes and fact check.

We've tried to balance both interesting human interest stories and solid news reporting - to the best of our ability with the limited resources of a local, not-for-profit newspaper.

Looking back, I am proud of everything our amazing, devoted team has achieved this year.

In addition to our annual coverage of community events like the 4th of July parade, Classic Car Show, Lamorinda Idol, Art of Mixology, Citizen of the Year and the California Independent Film Festival, we accomplished the following:

- Reporting hard news, like the Miramonte lawsuit, police car vandalism which generated an arrest and subsequently dropped charges, the \$100K MOFD settlement, wildfire evacuation issues and the controversial rezoning of properties to meet our state requirements to add more housing.
- Deep dives into explaining complex issues like the Sixth Cycle Housing Element and Measure R expenditures.
- New features like "Meet Your Neighbor," "Married 50+ Years" and "Dis-

[SEE EDITORIAL page 18]

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## Letters to the Editor

### A Better Plan for Orinda Rezoning

As reported in *The Orinda News* January 2024 issue, Orinda staff's presentation of the city's current plan regarding the first phase of the proposed rezoning of the city to increase density was misleading.

First, although the Housing Element proposes to rezone downtown to only add 421 units, the council-approved Environmental Impact Report, which includes the Downtown Precise Plan rezoning of sites not included in the Housing Element, states that as many as 1,618 units may be built downtown.

Second, regarding the CalTrans site near the Caldecott Tunnel, Housing and Community Development (HCD) did reject the city's plan for a low density, low income-only isolated project without amenities. Notably, however, HCD also directed the city "to rezone the CalTrans Gateway site and decertify the site to allow for affordable housing development by January 2026."

These apparently inconsistent (HCD) actions are best explained as indicating a willingness to consider an amended proposal making better use of that site.

A better plan would use that site for a high density, mixed income, mixed use small village with amenities.

This would allow the city to eliminate Miramonte from the planned upzoning (187 to 233 units), according to the plan presented at the Dec. 12, 2023 planning com-

mission meeting, and limit development downtown to the 240 units recommended by the Urban Land Institute in 2017.

This would minimize traffic impacts on Moraga Way and on emergency evacuation, and justify the school district to exercise its option to construct a new school at Wilder.

- Nick Waranoff

### Resist Housing Rezoning State Requirements

Orindans can no longer blissfully ignore the Sixth Cycle Housing Element, which requires rezoning for 1,359 new Orinda dwellings by 2031, regardless of our building ordinances, land availability, fire safety risks and quality of life (gridlock).

Most of us will also be surprised that our city planners have completed the siting.

The planning includes 421 to 698 downtown dwellings with 286 on Moraga Way south of Glorietta (three church properties at 99 sites and 187 sites behind Miramonte High School).

Keep in mind that Moraga also relies on Moraga Way and they similarly are required to rezone for significant numbers of new dwellings.

We can "bend the knee" or fight back to protect our community.

Perhaps the most vexing concern is "when we have a fire" in the heavily wooded areas of Moraga or Orinda, how

[SEE LETTERS page 8]



## POLICE BLOTTER

December 14 through January 15

### Calls for Service

- Assault, Simple: 1
- Battery, Misdemeanor: 1
- Burglary, Commercial: 2: Orinda Way, Undisclosed
- Burglary, Residential: 3: Dalewood Dr., Fallen Leaf Terr., Oak Ct.
- Fraud: 1
- Grand Theft: 4
- Hit & Run Misdemeanor: 2: Bryant Way, Davis Rd.
- Hospitalization: 1
- Identity Theft: 1
- Outside Assist: 1
- Petty Theft: 1
- Petty Theft, Vehicle Parts: 1: Village View Ct.

- Property Found: 3
- Shoplifting: 4
- Tow: 1
- Vandalism: 1
- Vandalism, Felony: 1
- Vehicle Theft: 2: Hidden Ln., Berkeley Ave.

### Arrests

- DUI, Misdemeanor: 1
- Probation Violation: 1
- Property, Receiving Stolen Goods: 1
- Recovered Stolen Vehicle: 3
- Warrant Arrest: 2

- Compiled by David Dierks  
Assistant Editor

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

The next deadline to receive Letters to the Editor is Feb. 8

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

FRIENDS NOMINATE LOCAL BACHELORETTE

# The Next Chapter in Life: Dating Apps and Maybe TV

By CHARLEEN EARLEY  
Editor-in-Chief  
editor@theorindanews.com

Looking for love in her golden years, Jacalyn Buettner, age 69, might very well be Orinda’s most eligible bachelorette, and now her close friends want to see her on the ABC TV reality show, *The Golden Bachelor*.

The inaugural TV show proved, with 13.9 million viewers last year, that love has no age limits. The 22 eligible women said they felt seen, excited, sexy, desirable and important.

Buettner, who avidly watched its premier season, said, “The ladies on the show communicated HOPE.”

Born in the small town of Delphos, Ohio, Buettner left the day she graduated high school because, she said, “I wanted to be like Mary Tyler Moore, a big city career girl.”

She landed in Washington, D.C. where she got a job working for congressman Delbert Latta at the historic Rayburn House Office Building on Capitol Hill.

Living in Orinda since 1993, known as Dr. Jackie to many, Buettner is a chiropractor in San Francisco. She was widowed in 1999 when her husband lost his battle to melanoma.

“Our boys were five and seven, and Jack was sick seven out of the nine years we were together, so I know this impacted me in my search [for love],” she said.

Many times, fear of having to take care of another man pumped the brakes on her search for a partner, but now she knows exactly what she’s looking for.

“Throughout my life I have found some men to be intimidated by strong, independent women, so I’ve always known the man attracted to me would have to be confident and intelligent – and his independence would complement me, more as equals,” said Buettner.

Her confidence is exactly why some of her close friends nominated her to be on *The Golden Bachelor*.

“Jackie is a catch for any man lucky enough to get her attention. She loves a very healthy lifestyle, both physically and emotionally. She is a lover of life, full of energy and enthusiasm and a heck of a lot of fun anywhere she goes,” said Debra Minieri of Rockaway, New Jersey, who met Buettner via a Zoom coaching program called Relaunch.

“I nominated Jackie because she would take the process seriously, be very entertaining and she deserves to have all the

forces of the universe working for her to find that love of her life,” Minieri added.

Valerie Shepherd, who also met Buettner through Relaunch, feels she would make the perfect candidate for many reasons:

“She’s walked on hot coals (literally). Her favorite saying, and she says it often, is ‘Yeah Baby.’ Her two favorite songs are epic and so forecasting why she should be on *The Golden Bachelor – Hooked on a Feeling* and *Higher Love*. She’s an adrenaline junky and is up for any crazy adventure – racing fast cars is a hobby,” said Shepherd. “And it’s not uncommon to find her attending events with her two boys (ages 29 and 31), such as Monster Truck Jam or Broadway plays, hiking and off-roading in the desert, wine tastings and attending Metallica concerts.”

Shepherd also said nominating Buettner took her less than five minutes by doing it online at goldenbachelornomination.castingcrane.com.

Joining two online dating apps, Bumble and Fitness Singles, Buettner feels she’s now in a good headspace to find love.

“I’ve been single for many years, but recently went online again in Oct. 2023. I joined Match.com three to four years ago and just didn’t enjoy the experience,” she said. “This time I feel more confident and truly ready to do whatever it takes to meet someone and also stay the course.”

With several dates under her belt, she realizes that even though a match looks good on paper, the sparks need to be there as well.

“I met a really nice man in Marin and we hiked a nature area,” she said. “He was into animal photography and we shared a great conversation. It was nice afterwards and while we concurred it was pleasant – there just wasn’t the right chemistry.”

Even when chemistry is present, other unexpected factors creep into the mix and have her throwing up her arms in confusion.

Like the time she met a man from Carmel. They emailed each other for several weeks on Bumble and finally did a video chat. Fifteen minutes into the chat, he suggested they meet in Santa Cruz. Up for an

adventure, she said yes. They had lunch, went for a walk, sat on the beach and talked for hours.

“We held hands and it was a very comfortable connection,” she recalled. “It was fun to kiss and make out as well. I had to get home since I was leaving for Florida and while I was gone he traveled to his second home.”

Then the unexpected happened.

“I had 10 women over for dinner one night and showed them his profile – very sexy and sassy looking. However, he did not like the fact that I showed all my friends his profile – I think this was a deal breaker for him as he said to me ‘bad, bad, bad.’ I didn’t get it because hundreds of women view his profile online!”

Buettner said she misses the affection shared in a relationship – holding hands, snuggling up to one another on the sofa, talking about how the day went, current events, kids, what’s on the bucket list – and after watching Gerry (pronounced Gary)

[SEE BUETTNER page 13]



JEFF HEYMAN

Orinda resident, **Jacalyn Buettner**, is 69 and searching for love via a couple of online dating apps. Her friends, however, have kicked it up a notch by nominating her to be a contestant on ABC’s *The Golden Bachelor*, because of her loving, vivacious zest for life and others.

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LIVE AT THE ORINDA!

# Live at the Orinda! Ute Lemper's One-Woman Show *Rendezvous with Marlene*

By ALISON BURNS  
Staff Writer  
alisonjburns@gmail.com

Theatergoers are in for a rare treat on Feb. 4, when the Orinda Theatre presents its second Live at the Orinda! musical evening with the incomparable Ute Lemper making a rare Bay Area appearance with her riveting one-woman show.

Written and performed by the New York-based German singer, *Rendezvous with Marlene* is Lemper's personal homage to one of the most beautiful women in the 20th century to grace the silver screen – the enigmatic, and often controversial, Marlene Dietrich.

"I really love to channel Marlene," said Lemper. "It is a deep role, with a big personality. Marlene had a sad spirit at the end, but all her life she was absolutely emancipated, fearless and outspoken, way ahead of her time. She leveled with the men and broke all rules and conventions. She was a woman of the future."

Based on a lengthy phone call more than 35 years ago, Lemper's solo performance takes the form of a dialogue between herself and Dietrich, exploring the older woman's career in a timeline that looks back on Dietrich's life until her story gradually combines with Lemper's own.

The exchange between the two actors began in the late eighties after Lemper received a Molière award for her Paris performance as Sally Bowles in the musical, *Cabaret*. When a sudden media frenzy arose around this young German newcomer, Lemper decided to drop Dietrich a postcard apologizing for all the attention comparing the two actors.

Those few lines on a postcard morphed into an amazing three-hour phone conversation that eventually evolved into an extraordinary telling of Dietrich's convoluted story. In her performance Lemper transforms into the older actor, thrilling audiences as she flawlessly reproduces Dietrich's familiar body of work, from her Berlin cabaret years to her legendary Burt

Bacharach collaborations.

Lemper explains how she manages to get so authentically into Dietrich's skin.

"I just need to understand the melancholy that she exhibited in that phone call with me ... her bitterness, but also her freedom of speech," said Lemper. "It was only many years later that I fully grasped the tragedy of her story, her sadness at the injustice of being called a 'Traitor of the Fatherland.' She fought for the Americans against Nazi Germany, entertaining the troops for 18 months at the front lines. Dietrich was honored with many medals, but at home, she was shunned until her death in 1992."

Michael Williams, producer of the Live at the Orinda! concert series, is thrilled the Orinda Theatre has managed to snare the unparalleled performer.

"This marks only the second time in 20 years that this internationally acclaimed singer and actor has performed here, so we're honored to present her," he said.

There was a rush to buy tickets as soon as Williams announced he'd managed to lure Lemper back to Orinda, but he says that although her show sold out two months in advance "we do have a waitlist for those who are interested."

Live at the Orinda! is a concert series



GUIDO HARARI

Olivier and Molière Award winner, Grammy nominated singer/actor, **Ute Lemper** makes a rare Bay Area appearance at the Orinda Theatre with her one-woman homage to Marlene Dietrich *Rendezvous with Marlene*.

featuring world-class performers from around the globe in specially curated musical evenings at the iconic Orinda Theatre. Located at 2 Orinda Theatre Square. For the waitlist, call 925.254.9060 or go to [orindamovies.com/events/](http://orindamovies.com/events/). ■

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Measure R at Work

## ◆ DOWNTOWN from page 2

with the mandate," added Biggs.

Ten Orindans took turns at the podium to uniformly express their opposition to rezoning the four sites, repeating many of the same objections in the staff report.

The feasibility of the CalTrans site (adjacent to Highway 24, Wilder Road exit) for housing development was raised, although the HCD rejected the inclusion of the site

as part of Orinda's current Housing Element cycle.

City staff noted CalTrans has a fairly onerous and complex process for using their land for anything but right-of-way and HCD rejected the CalTrans site out of concern about getting through that process in this eight-year cycle.

Geer noted that the CalTrans site is not eliminated for the long-term, but it's not viable for this Housing Element cycle. For more information, visit [planorinda.com](http://planorinda.com). ■

## ◆ LETTERS from page 6

many may die trying to escape the gridlock/pandemonium that will result?

Anyone familiar with the Paradise fire knows the results of limited egress during a wildfire. With a two-lane main escape route (Moraga Way) and dozens of feeder roads to impact it (Paradise had two lanes, plus a center lane) our situation may be worse when we need to evacuate.

Adding large numbers of homes in Moraga and along Moraga Way is dangerous. Safety risks must take precedence. We must petition the state/sue the state on safety grounds.

We are close to gridlock already at school times/commute hours. Contact your state representative! Continue to resist ... City Council!

- Randy Roberts

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THEORY THROUGH HORSES / FIRST FRIDAY FORUM



JEFF HEYMAN

Award winning horse, **Ozzie**, receives some much deserved, tender love and care from devoted Xenophon personnel **Mari Parino, Danielle Coburn** and **Linda Parsons**.

## Horsing Around: Local Riding Center Boosts Children's Health

By NICOLE LAMISON  
Staff Writer  
nlamison34@gmail.com

Saddle on up and head to Xenophon Therapeutic Riding Center, a place that provides equine-assisted activities to 60 disabled children every week.

The non-profit opened in 1993 and relo-

cated to Orinda in 1996. The center benefits those with a wide range of disabilities, including individuals with muscular dystrophy, Down syndrome, autism, visual impairments and cerebral palsy.

While Xenophon offers many different services, its main focus is therapeutic riding with Haflingers, quarter horses and Arabians.

The physical component of this therapy comes from the horse's natural gait, which provides a three-dimensional movement for the rider's hips, simulating walking. Therefore, when a child who uses a wheelchair is placed on a horse, they experience the neurological pathways of walking without bearing weight.

This is extremely beneficial for individu-  
[SEE XENOPHON page 16]

### Crab Feed

Join Xenophon Therapeutic Riding Center for their 4th Annual Drive-thru Crab Feed! Order online at Xenophontrc.org by Feb. 4. Pick-up is from 2 - 6 p.m. Friday, Feb. 9 at the barn, 60 Don Gabriel Way, Orinda.

## First Friday Forum Speaker Shines a Light on America's Dark History

By ALISON BURNS  
Staff Writer  
alisonjburns@gmail.com

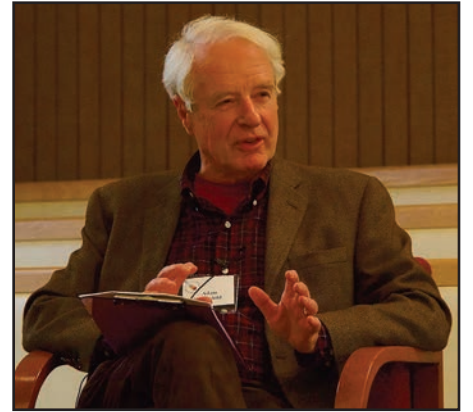
The second lecture in the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church's (LOPC) compelling six-part First Friday Forum speaker series, *Post WWI Challenges to American Democracy*, is Feb. 2, when award-winning author and UC Berkeley journalism lecturer, Adam Hochschild, shines a light on a dark chapter in America's past. It will also be streamed via Zoom.

By all accounts, the period between America's entry into the First World War and the Roaring Twenties was the worst of times, when "the foundations of American democracy" faltered under the multi-pronged threat of racial violence, war, labor unrest, xenophobia and a global pandemic - all of which may seem resoundingly familiar.

But far from referring to contemporary events, Hochschild will remind his audience - or perhaps introduce them to - a largely forgotten slice of early 20th century history.

*American Midnight: The Great War, a Violent Peace, and Democracy's Forgotten Crisis* is Hochschild's eleventh book and one that paints a vivid picture of repression and vigilantism in the turbulent era between America's entry into WWI and 1921. The president at the time, Democrat Woodrow Wilson, has often been accused of fanning the flames of discord.

In that time period, the U.S. government targeted anti-war advocates by passing new laws like the Espionage Act of 1917 and allegedly abused - sometimes fatally - conscientious objectors in military prisons, as well as cracked down on minorities, immi-



NANCY RUBIN

Speaking at the upcoming First Friday Forum, sponsored by the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC), **Adam Hochschild** paints a vivid picture of the repression and vigilantism that overtook America in the four years following the country's entry into WWI with his presentation *Post WWI Challenges to American Democracy*.

grants, socialists and labor union members. Civil liberties were blatantly disregarded and freedom of speech severely curtailed when over 70 newspapers and magazines were forced to close after they were banned.

One of *The New York Times*' "most anticipated books of Fall 2022," Hochschild's well-researched and readable analysis of this country's history reveals what one reviewer calls "the American problem" - defined as "the inability to embrace the other," often with tragic consequences.

Some may argue that, despite the fact this shocking era is more than a century in the past, little has changed in regard to repression, bigotry and injustice. Ultimately, the message conveyed by Hochschild's latest book is that we still need  
[SEE FORUM page 13]

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RESIDENTS

# Neighbors Rise Above Age Differences to Build Community

By AMY MOELLERING  
Staff Writer  
ajmoellering@gmail.com

At first glance, a lump of cookie dough and a middle school book report assignment may not seem like a recipe for neighborhood connection, but they were the perfect ingredients for friendship in Orinda's Glorietta neighborhood.

Last fall, Orinda Intermediate School student Ayan Patwardhan (13) asked his mom, Sarita Vasa, if she could help him and his friends create sugar cookie characters for a school project. Not a baker, Vasa struggled with wondering how quickly she could figure it out online when she remembered the delicious sugar cookies their elderly neighbor Audrey Protiva had left on their doorstep. She decided to take a chance and ask for help.

Protiva, a retired ESL teacher, quilter and avid baker, was delighted to help and

turned the afternoon into a fun, educational experience.

"It was beautiful because her approach was like the Bob Ross of baking – calming and engaging," said Vasa.

Patwardhan, who developed a love of baking from a love of eating baked goods, didn't want to stop with cookies, so he returned with his friend Vaughn Broderick for a four-hour lesson in bread making.

"We learned a lot, to include how thick to roll the dough, how to make icing and the unpredictability of dough rising," said Patwardhan. "It's like having a grandma nearby who loves baking."

Protiva, who is already planning the next lesson involving sourdough starters, said she loves their energy and enthusiasm. "It's wonderful to connect with others who are eager to learn what you have to offer," she said.

In an age where many don't know [SEE NEIGHBORS page 16]



JEFF HEYMAN

In the last few months **Ayan Patwardhan**, along with some of his friends, has learned the art of baking from neighbor **Audrey Protiva**, who has benefited from Ayan's sister Sachi's tech skills. Together, these families have created community in their Orinda neighborhood that builds off the respective strengths of the young and the elderly. Left to right: **Sachi Patwardhan**, **Sarita Vasa**, **Ayan Patwardhan** and **Audrey Protiva**.

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### Local Author, Joyanne Elkinton Walker

JEFF HEYMAN

Orinda resident and Seniors Around Town rider, **Joyanne Elkinton Walker** (center), read from her new book, *Jeanne LeBreton: Tragedy and Courage from France to San Francisco in the Early 1900's* on Jan. 18 at Orinda Books. Walker recounts the story of her grandmother's journey from France to Panama, and ultimately San Francisco. After the sudden death of her husband, and with three children to raise, LeBreton opened a boarding house in Berkeley, started an import business in San Francisco and became very involved with the French colony. (L-R) **Melissa Titone**, Walker's niece, Joyanne Elkinton Walker and **Dr. Jeannine Herron**, Walker's sister.

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LUNAR NEW YEAR / OH, THE PLACES YOU'LL GO!

# Annual Cultural Lunar New Year Celebration at Orinda Library

By CHARLEEN EARLEY  
Editor-in-Chief  
editor@orindanews.com

It's time for the Lunar New Year celebration, an event and tradition generously sponsored by Roselyn and Weylin Eng of Orinda, where the lions from Tomizaki's Champions Kung Fu Institute chase away the bad spirits to start the New Year right.

Held Saturday, Feb. 10 at 2 p.m. in the Orinda Library Auditorium at 26 Orinda Way, this free event does not require reservations.

The Institute will also have a kung fu demonstration with three lions dancing, and while the dance itself is short, the lions and performers will be available for photos afterwards.

Partnering with the Orinda Library and its staff, the Engs started this event in 2003. It is funded through the Eng Family Endowment, which was established at the Orinda Library in 2001 when the new building was built.

"Our family loves to see families, especially young children, enjoy the Lunar New Year's activities at the libraries," said Roselyn Eng. "Our own grandkids have enjoyed growing up and attending some of the events and activities as well."

Eng added that each year library staff selects a performance and art activity that

reflects various Asian traditions to help celebrate the new year. Activities have included acrobats, storytellers, Chinese calligraphy, cooking classes and more, all to be enjoyed by multi-generational audiences.

The traditional lion dance is usually performed during Lunar New Year, but Eng said it's also performed at weddings, festivals and business grand openings as well.

"The lion represents good luck, strength and health," said Eng. "This is not the first time the library has hosted Chinese lion dancers – I believe there may have even been lion dancers for the opening of the new library building – but each time, it is always an enjoyable event for all."

"The lion and drummers mimic a lion's movements and bring fortune and good luck. For many Chinese Americans, the sounds of lion dancers, drummers and firecrackers are reminiscent of their childhood."

Eng explained that this is the Year of the Dragon, the fifth animal in the Chinese Zodiac.

The Eng family is honored to have brought cultural events to the Orinda Library for the past two decades.

"We have appreciated all of the library staff, community members and cultural performers who have supported the event through the years," said Eng. "We especially want to thank the excellent library



COURTESY OF ENG FAMILY

Past Rotary Presidents (L-R) **John Donnelly**, **Dick Burkhalter** and **Weylin Eng** stand with performers from Red Panda Acrobats in 2004, celebrating the Lunar New Year at the Orinda Library Auditorium. The event was organized by Orinda Librarian **Lynn Look** and the photo was taken by an attendee and given to the Eng family.

staff, who have partnered with us on this program from the beginning. Through the years, we have been fortunate to work with many librarians, including Ann DeFraga, Lynn Look and now Michael Beller."

For more information, call 925.254.2184 or visit <http://bit.ly/3H34hOI>. For special accommodations, please contact the library with 72 hours' notice. ■

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### Oh, The Places You'll Go!

COURTESY OF JONATHAN YOUNG

(L-R) **Jonathan Young**, **Chad Ammon** and **London Ammon-Young** enjoying the beach in Punta Mita, Mexico.

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BUSINESS BUZZ

# New Parent Coaching Business Brings Positive Parenting to Orinda

BY NATASHA KAYE  
Staff Writer

natashakaye@berkeley.edu

Parenting is one of the hardest jobs in the world, and Orinda local Patricia Camras is aware of how tricky the job can be.

With over a decade of experience teaching in local elementary schools like Del Rey and Sleepy Hollow, a master's degree in psychology and experience parenting her own children, Camras knows firsthand how deeply parenting styles influenced the children throughout her life.

"Without really looking at how you were parented, you're destined to repeat the same patterns, and some of them are not helpful at all," she said.

So Camras took the steps to become a professional parenting coach, receiving her certification from the Jai Institute for Parenting, and started her business, "The Positive Parenting Coach," last year, right here in Orinda.

Originally from Southern California, Camras moved to the Bay Area to attend UC Berkeley for undergraduate college.

She settled down in Orinda roughly 45 years ago and says proudly "she never went back," unless to visit her family of course. Now Camras' children are grown and have little ones of their own, but she says watching her grandkids grow up has helped her to reflect on her own experience raising her children.

"I used to lose my temper with my kids," Camras said. "As they were growing up, I could see that that didn't work. So instead of trying to control them and command them and cajole them, I took on a different role as a trusted adviser. I changed the relationship."

Camras described her style of parenting as "peaceful parenting." She said she's passionate about teaching parents and grandparents how to scale back on screaming, yelling and indulging in overprotective behaviors that can lead to rifts in parent-child relationships – something she experienced with her own children. But in order to create strong and healthy adults, Camras believes children should be treated with respect and empathy to foster communicative relationships that benefit everyone.

One of the ways Camras took steps to



JEFF HEYMAN

Patricia Camras has lived in Orinda for 45 years and has taught at three local elementary schools including Del Rey, Glorietta and Sleepy Hollow. Camras' new business, "The Positive Parenting Coach," helps parents and children build better relationships.

change her relationship with her own kids and grandkids is a technique she uses called "sportscasting." Instead of immediately reprimanding children for unwanted behaviors, sportscasting encourages parents to describe the action the children are doing so they feel heard before trying to change them. Camras said this shift encourages a more positive, communicative relationship where children feel supported.

She said she uses this technique with her own granddaughter when she can sense she's feeling a strong emotion. Instead of assuming her thoughts and jumping to a fix, she names what she thinks she's feeling and leaves the discussion out in the open, giving her granddaughter the space to affirm or deny what she's just said.

"Back in elementary school when I was working with third graders, we had warm fuzzies and cold pricklies. Giving each other warm fuzzies is noticing what somebody's doing well and then acknowledging it."

Today Camras incorporates less discussion of "warm fuzzies" than she did in her elementary school teaching days, though the sentiment remains true. At her core, Camras

believes positivity is her super power.

"I do have a real positive attitude and a positive outlook, and I share that with people as well as peace and relaxation. People can let go, they can have hope and so positivity is absolutely one of the things I bring to the table," she said.

Less than a year into opening her business, Camras' coaching is already making an impact with her clients. Local realtor Kat Sellis said it has transformed the once tumultuous relationship with her daughter.

"I learned to lead with curiosity when approaching a situation instead of leading with judgment. That was huge for me, because before [Camras' coaching] my relationship was completely broken, there was no communication," said Sellis. "But actually, today [my daughter] leaned over and gave me a hug and a kiss and I was like, Oh my god!"

Currently, Camras offers her services via Zoom. Clients can choose between a 12-week parenting group session package or individual parent coaching sessions, which can be scheduled through her website at thepositiveparentingcoach.com. ■

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◆ MESSAGE from page 3  
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SPORTS

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The Chris Lang memorial plaque is appropriately placed inside the “Matadome” at Miramonte High. Just above the slightly ajar, taped-up Xerox posting of the latest junior varsity tournament schedule, bearing Chris’s name: “The Third Annual 2023 Chris Lang Memorial Basketball Tournament, Dec. 27-29.”

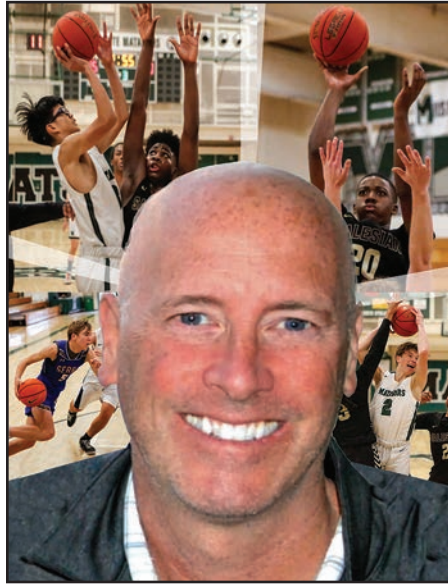
It’s just to the side of the school’s pledge to make the best global citizens possible through good sportsmanship. And in the eye-shot of his good friends still coaching basketball from the bench, comfortably to the left of all the home court fans from the community. And, of course, proudly facing the American flag.

All things important to “The Langer.” Chris was one of the first dads I met when I moved to Orinda. We were both picking up our kids from Glorietta and he made a point to introduce himself to the new guy. We had a good chuckle when we ran into each other again, minutes later, entertaining our kids inside the old Burger King kids’ play area.

I came to know him as a top-notch cornhole player, who could usually beat me decisively. Then he’d be sure to tell me how well he thought I’d played.

Most knew him as a community leader and outstanding basketball coach. And, of course, husband to Kirsten, and father to Spencer and Julia.

He was, what I would call, a wheel hub of a man - a center to which all things seem to connect, who drove all elements to a forward action. Whether in conversation,



MARK BELL  
Play until the last buzzer, make every second count. December’s Third Annual **Chris Lang** Memorial Basketball Tournament helped us all remember a great coach, a wonderful man and that life is truly a fleeting gift.

or on the court, he was that hub. Likability was just one of his superpowers that I’m sure made him such a great coach. And a great friend. Everyone just wanted to be on his team.

A tournament of different schools coming together each year seems such an appropriate way to remember Chris. In the last tournament, Miramonte had the lead against Salesian but couldn’t hang on to their first-half dominance and ended up finishing fourth overall. Respectable.

[SEE GAME ON page 17]

◆ BUETTNER from page 7

and the women on *The Golden Bachelor*, she had some takeaways about vulnerability.

“There’s an underlying fear of opening my heart again – the ladies on the show conveyed that it’s worth it to feel that love again and if not with Gerry, they created a forward momentum,” she said. “Who knows, by changing my thinking, my energy, opening my heart – becoming more open-minded, being courageous and practicing adventure, being more of an explorer on the online dating apps, taking the risk, having fun – I think it is possible to meet a man. One last takeaway was witnessing the pain of rejection – thinking you had the connection and you were ‘the one’ and then to be sent home.”

Minieri has faith in Buettner, should she

be chosen for an upcoming season.

“She could handle the pressures that come with making hard decisions,” she said. “She is a lover of life, and a really great friend, boss, mom and would-be lover!”

Her friend Alison Shunneson, of Denver, Colorado, also nominated Buettner for the show, and believes in love in the golden years.

“I think singles can find love and companionship at any age. Love is not dictated by how old you are, but rather by your willingness to make yourself vulnerable and your capacity for fun and adventure. Dr. Jackie has all of the requirements,” said Shunneson. “She is smart, honest, loyal, kind, adventurous and funny. She checks all of the boxes. I think she would have a blast on the show and I also believe that the bachelor would be lucky to have her!” ■

◆ FORUM from page 9

to be reminded of how “the contempt for the rule of law flowed directly through the intervening decades to poison our own.”

Throughout his career, Hochschild has never been afraid to defend human rights and stand up for social justice: as a college student he dared work on an anti-government newspaper in South Africa when the country was deeply mired in apartheid ideology; for a time during the landmark year of 1964, he could be found in Mississippi defending civil rights, and was unashamedly against America’s involvement in the Vietnam War.

In the 1970s, Hochschild also served as a co-founder, editor and writer for *Mother Jones*, the non-profit American progres-

sive magazine named in honor of Mary Harris Jones, self-proclaimed “hell-raiser” and America’s most famous 19th century female labor activist.

As to awards, Hochschild probably needs several shelves to house the numerous honors and trophies he’s garnered during his long career as author, journalist, historian and lecturer.

The First Friday Forum takes place at 1:30 p.m. on Feb. 2 in the Sanctuary of the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church at 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Contact [lopc.org/first-friday-forum/](http://lopc.org/first-friday-forum/) to sign up for in-person attendance or register to stream via Zoom. The First Friday Forum team has also put together an easily accessible archive which holds an impressive collection of previous presentations on a variety of past subjects. ■

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VISUAL ARTS

# Orinda Art Scene: Art Gallery at the Orinda Library and Wilder

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

business.orinda@gmail.com

The Lamorinda Arts Council presents the Bay Area Studio Artists (BASA) group show in the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library entitled, "The BASA Invitational: As We See It."

This show reflects the diverse work of longtime BASA artists Suzun Almquist, Jeanette Baird, Lassie Colebourn, Ellen Reintjes, Ruth Stanton, Sharon Tama, Joanne Taeuffer and Marcy Wheeler.

Five local artists were also invited: Flora Baumann, Nicole Reader, Cecelia

Wambaugh, April Ward and Lynn Whitson. Meet the artists at a reception on Saturday, Feb. 10 from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. with light refreshments.

Exhibit and organizer Sharon Tama said BASA artists see the world through their own eyes.

"They all seek painting ideas which move, challenge or connect," she added. "Their painting styles differ, but similarly reflect their individuality and temperament."

Wheeler, an art teacher and one of the founders of the group, decided to add the additional five artists to the exhibit for a reason.

"We chose them to add variety to the spices already in our stew," she said, "and because they are good artists who deserve to be seen. We are good at hanging wonderful shows with gorgeous art that has meaning."

This reminds me of the words by *New York Times* writer Deb Amlen. In her Aug. 4, 2017, article titled, *We Do Not See Things As They Are*, she writes, "The quote that is normally attributed to the writer Anaïs Nin, 'We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are' is also a

Talmudic idea about dream analysis: People can only dream about things they have encountered or thought about, and so their dreams consist not of reality – whatever that is – but is instead a version filtered through the lens of the dreamer's experiences."

BASA's "As We See It" theme describes the ability to communicate something unique and special by each artist, yet engaging to us, the viewers. Isn't that what creating art is all about?

Almquist's *Accordion Player*, a 24" x 24" acrylic on canvas, challenges us to feel the musician's nimble execution of a jaunty tune. Detailed information about the musician and location is at a minimum, but there is a great deal of information about the accordion and the musician's ability to joyfully rock it.

Wheeler's *Kansas GPS* 40" x 60" acrylic on canvas brings drama to the clouds because of the silvery edge that is further reflected in the pool in the foreground. The grass, leaves and branches of the trees are tossed about by high winds, adding more movement to the piece.

She challenges us to enter *Kansas GPS*, which is in transition from being comfortable to being wild and dramatic. Notice the calm, unmoving tufts of grass in the immediate foreground. Compare them to the windswept branches and leaves of the trees in mid-ground and the high drama of the sky at the horizon.

Stop by to view an entire gallery filled with BASA's striking compositions and bold use of color. The show runs from Saturday, Jan. 27 to Saturday, Mar. 2. Visit the gallery at 26 Orinda Way from Monday – Thursday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday – Saturday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Closed Sundays, and Monday Feb. 19, Presidents' Day. Call



COURTESY OF SUSAN ALMQUIST

Susan Almquist's 24" x 24" acrylic painting, *Accordion Player*, triggers a long forgotten memory of an upbeat tune with a special sound that can only be produced by a smiling accordion player.

925.254.2184 for more information or visit [ccclib.org/](http://ccclib.org/). View and purchase artwork at [lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries/](http://lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries/). For more information, call 925.359.9940 or email [galler@LamorindaArts.org](mailto:galler@LamorindaArts.org).

## Art Gallery at Wilder Grand Reopening with Artist Shiva Jafarzadeh

Join friends of the Lamorinda Arts Council to celebrate the grand reopening of the Art Gallery at Wilder on Sunday, Mar. 3 from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be provided. Artwork from featured solo artist Shiva Jafarzadeh's theme, "Paintings and Drawings of Romance and Feminine Poems" is available for viewing at the reception and during regular gallery hours.

Jafarzadeh is a longtime Lafayette resident who has authored several children's books. Her drawings and paintings focus on womanhood, motherhood, children and memories of growing up in Iran. Stop by to view "Knitting Love," which shows how her grandma celebrated "Nowruz," or the first day of spring in the Persian New Year at their orange farm. Grandma knits a fine silk scarf with shimmering orange blossoms to surround each of her grandchildren.

*Wet Kiss*, a 48" x 36" oil painting, is ekphrastic in that the artist translated the words of a romantic poem into a painting. Her 52" x 42" acrylic painting "Blue Ballerina" depicts Odette, the Queen of the Swans, inspired by Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*.

Visit the Art Gallery at Wilder, 20 Orinda Fields Lane from Monday – Friday from 3 to 5 p.m. For more information, visit [lamorindaarts.org/current-exhibits-wilder/](http://lamorindaarts.org/current-exhibits-wilder/), email [wildergallery@lamorindaarts.org](mailto:wildergallery@lamorindaarts.org) or call 925.359.9940. ■



COURTESY OF SHIVA JAFARZADEH

Shiva Jafarzadeh's 17" x 20" ink and marker drawing *Knitting Love* is an excerpt from her book *The Orange Blossom*. Jafarzadeh's grandma knew how to enfold her love in scarves she knitted and gifted to her granddaughters. One of her favorite themes was orange blossoms.



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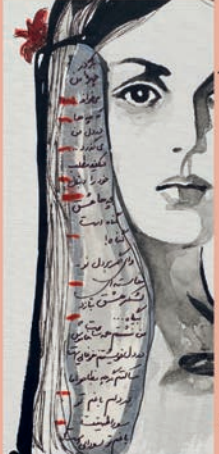
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Join us for drinks, snacks and sharing love stories at the re-grand opening of the Wilder Gallery in Orinda. Featuring a solo exhibition by Shiva J. (Jafarzadeh), showcasing **Visual Poems of Persia, Romance and Womanhood**. Shiva J., author of *The Orange Blossom* and owner of [www.ArtByShiva.org](http://www.ArtByShiva.org), is not only a global real estate broker, she's a mother, an illustrator and a long-standing member of the Orinda community since 2004, currently living in Lafayette.

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SEASONED SHOPPER / CALENDAR

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Love Your Heart

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February is Heart Month and reminds us to evaluate our health habits. Eating a healthy diet is a very important part of a healthy heart, and the strawberries, avocados, broccoli, carrots, walnuts, leafy greens, beets and whole-grain breads are just some of what you can find at the Orinda Farmers' Market to get you or keep you feeling your best.

Choosing nutrient-rich, low-calorie vegetables like bok choy can be a step in the right direction. Bok choy is rich in Vitamins A, D and K and is very versatile. The taste is reminiscent of cabbage, but milder and slightly sweet. The stalks are crunchy and the dark green leaves are soft.

All varieties of bok choy are non-heading members of the cabbage family, and size varies according to season and maturity. Shanghai bok choy and baby bok choy are favorites, with mild flavor and just the right size to cook whole. Regular bok choy is more mature and about the size of a bunch of thick-stalked celery with dark green, crinkly leaves.

Wash bok choy under cold running water just before using (dirt lingers between the leaves, so be sure to rinse well). Leave baby bok choy whole to steam or simmer for 4 to 5 minutes until stalks are tender when pierced with a knife. Season with fresh ginger and a little butter. The mild, tender leaves of baby bok choy are also delicious sautéed in butter, braised in broth or used as a substitute for spinach in salads.

Mature bok choy is commonly used in stir fries and soups, but is just as good tucked into an omelet. To stir fry one bunch of bok choy, cut the leaves from the stalks and slice stalks crosswise into 1/2 inch pieces. Stir fry stalks and a few cloves of minced garlic in 2 tablespoons peanut oil for 2 to 3 minutes. Add coarsely shredded leaves and continue to stir fry for 1 more minute or until leaves are just wilted. Serve hot.

To store bok choy, place unwashed in a plastic bag and seal or close loosely. Store in the refrigerator for 4 to 5 days.

**Farmers' Market Bok Choy Salad**

- 3 to 4 heads baby bok choy, cleaned and cut into 1/2 inch pieces
- 2 cups shredded red cabbage
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro or parsley
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar or lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon powdered ginger
- 1 to 2 tablespoons sesame seeds

Toss all of the vegetables and herbs in a large salad bowl. In a small jar with a lid, add olive oil, soy sauce, vinegar, sesame oil, sugar and ginger and shake well to combine. Pour sesame ginger dressing over [SEE SHOPPER page 19]

**On the Calendar in February**

**Rotary Club of Orinda** 21st Annual Crab Feed drive-thru March 5, at Casa Orinda. Orders due by Feb. 29. For more information, visit [orindarotaryfundraiser.com](http://orindarotaryfundraiser.com).

**Xenophon Therapeutic Riding Center** 4th Annual Drive-Thru Crab Feed! Order online by Feb. 4. Pick-up is from 2 - 6 p.m. Feb. 9, at the barn, 60 Don Gabriel Way, Orinda.

1 **Orinda Books** Pat's Book Group will read and discuss *The Latecomers* by Jean Hanff Korelitz, 11 a.m.

**Orinda Library** Paws to Read 4:15 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. Also Feb. 8.

**Miramonte High School** open house 5:30 p.m. and Black Excellence Month begins.

2 **Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary** presents Dr. Antonio Zadra, "Lessons About Sleep." 7 a.m. Veterans Memorial Center, 3780 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. [lamorindasunrise.org](http://lamorindasunrise.org). or [lamorindasunrise@gmail.com](mailto:lamorindasunrise@gmail.com).

**First Friday Forum** presents Adam Hochschild on *Post WWI Challenges to American Democracy*, 1:30 p.m. Simultaneously livestreamed and in-person at LOPC. See article p. 9.

3 **Orinda Farmers' Market**, 9 a.m. Orinda Way in front of Rite Aid and the Community Center Park. Visit [cccfm.org](http://cccfm.org) or 925.431.8361. Also Feb. 10, 17 and 24. See article this page.

4 **Live at the Orinda!** presents Ute Lemper performing *Rendezvous with Marlene*. For the waitlist, call 925.254.9060 or go to [orindamovies.com/events/](http://orindamovies.com/events/). See article p. 8.

5 **Miramonte High School** spring sports begins.

6 **Orinda Academy** Virtual Information Session from 7-8 p.m. Info at [orindaacademy.org](http://orindaacademy.org).

7 **Orinda Academy** lecture "Countering the Overwhelm: How to Help Your Kids Cope with the Times" by Shamita Dhar, therapist and co-owner of Coyote Coast Youth and Family Counseling Center. 7-8 p.m. Info at [orindaacademy.org](http://orindaacademy.org).

9 **Miramonte High School** Performers for Progress 7 p.m., A student-driven performing arts and community service program. The program empowers teens to drive community impact through artistic expression. Also Feb. 10.



COURTESY OF UCSF BENIOFF CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital fundraiser Feb. 10.

10 **Lunar New Year** celebration with the lions from Tomizaki's Champions Kung Fu Institute. 2 p.m. in the Orinda Library Auditorium. See article p. 11.

**Orinda Library Art Gallery** artists reception, 2:30 p.m. See article p. 14.

**Have a Heart for the Hospital**, an evening benefiting UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital, Oakland, 5:30 p.m. University Club Level, UC Memorial Stadium, Berkeley. For more details go to [hillbranch.org](http://hillbranch.org).

**Orinda Theatre** presents *Love Letters* at 7 p.m. at the [orindamovies.com/events/](http://orindamovies.com/events/) for tickets. See article p. 1.

13 **American Association of University Women** (AAUW)-OML Branch general meeting [SEE CALENDAR page 16]



JEFF HEYMAN

Growing up in Orinda, **Sarah Burnick** is close to home as the new on-site manager of the Orinda Farmers' Market. She looks forward to being a part of the dynamic market community.

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◆ NEIGHBORS from page 10

their neighbors beyond the wave of a hand as they pull out of the driveway, this intergenerational friendship shows the potential of what a neighborhood can be.

Protiva and her husband Ed have lived in Orinda for 53 years, raising their three children in the same schools Ayan and his 16-year-old sister, Sachi, now attend.

“As far as neighborhood demographics go, we are the eldest,” said Protiva. “Many of our friends have moved to Rossmoor, and while that’s wonderful for its many activities, we love living near young families; we take two-mile walks by Glorietta Elementary to soak up the sounds of children playing.”

Vasa recalls how, when she and her husband Anil relocated from Oakland five years ago, they were concerned that the location of the neighborhood on a steep hill would make it difficult to meet people. It took the pandemic’s lockdown for her to

realize the area’s warmth and friendliness as neighbors dropped off lemons and gifts on their doorstep.

Not only has Protiva shared her extensive knowledge on baking and the area, but she has also benefited from the family’s technical prowess. “I was recently working on my annual calendar and panicked because I couldn’t transfer my photos from my phone to my computer,” she said. Sachi came to the rescue.

“I love her house,” said Sachi. “She has the most gorgeous quilts and she’s so kind – she even remembered my birthday.”

“Orinda is in a particular place right now where we have a lot of age diversity; new families moving in among people who have lived here a long time,” said Vasa. “There is this ripe opportunity to build multi-generational friendships that are richer than just socializing with your demographic. I really want to encourage people to think more broadly and not dismiss the 80-year-old neighbor.”

“If it’s tapped into, then something lovely grows,” added Protiva. ■

◆ CALENDAR from page 15

- speaker is Dr. Po Chi Wu on *Promise and Peril of Generative Artificial Intelligence*. Serbian Orthodox Church Community Hall, 1700 School Street, Moraga. See article p. 5.
- 15 **Orinda Theatre Free Movie Night** presents *The Manchurian Candidate*, 6:30 p.m.
- 16 **Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary** presents Joy Alaidorous, “Polioplus” 7 a.m. Veterans Memorial Center, 3780 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. lamorindasunrise.org. or lamorindasunrise@gmail.com.
- Montelindo Garden Club** presents “Continuing Tradition of Botanical Art,” with Lee

McCaffree, botanical artist. Lafayette Library Community Hall. Free. montelindogarden.com/2024-meetings.html.

- 17 **Orinda Books** presents Perry Garfinkle discussing *Becoming Gandhi*, 3 p.m.
- 21 **Orinda Parks and Rec Senior Trip** to Slow Burn Glass 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. \$115 per person. Reg. required. 925.254.2445. Visit OrindaParksandRec.org or contact OrindaParksandRec@CityofOrinda.org.
- 23 **Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary** presents District Governor Claire Roberts “District Update” 7 a.m. Veterans Memorial Center, 3780 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. lamorindasunrise.org. or lamorindasunrise@gmail.com.
- 27 **Orinda Theatre** presents *Singing in the Rain* with pre-movie lecture 1 p.m. \$10.

Send calendar items to Jill Gelster at [calendar@aspenconsult.net](mailto:calendar@aspenconsult.net).

◆ XENOPHON from page 9

als with spinal injuries, as they can emulate the hip motion from riding, allowing them to slowly begin to walk while bearing weight. Without a backrest, riders have to engage their core to stay upright and use their arms to handle the horse’s reins. This strengthens the riders’ muscles to help them perform daily skills.

In addition to physical benefits, therapeutic riding provides a social benefit. Horses are non-judgmental partners that provide people with a sense of peace. For children with autism, a horse’s calm nature does not create stimulus. They are willing to develop relationships with the horses that can bridge over to human connections.

For children with speech impediments, the need to speak clearly to command the horse helps them practice being understood. Riding also helps with focus, as one can’t get distracted while on the back of a 1,000-pound, gentle giant.

Although the effects are different for every child, there is one shared benefit from the therapy – confidence. Growing up, many children gain confidence through sports. The participants of Xenophon gain confidence through riding.

When riding instructor, Jen Wineman, starts with a new student, she evaluates their

needs, collaborates with the participant and their family to establish goals and ensures the participant is comfortable. She wants the rider to feel challenged and successful simultaneously.

Participants truly enjoy their time at Xenophon. They develop a bond with their

*“Zoé feels comfortable and she loves her therapist ... for her self-esteem, it’s been great,” said her mom Sarah Berman.*

horses and therapists through interactive game play – a far cry from a visit to a doctor’s office or hospital room.

Sarah Berman’s daughter Zoé has myotonic dystrophy and has been riding at Xenophon for 13 years.

“She feels confident on the horse,” said Berman. “Zoé feels comfortable and she loves her therapist ... for her self-esteem, it’s been great.”

As Executive Director Mari Parino describes, “They don’t even realize they’re doing therapy ... they’re out there having fun.”

At 18, students age out of the therapeutic riding program. However, graduates are welcomed back to Camp Alumni to strengthen their riding skills and reunite with their equine friends.

Xenophon also provides “Operation Hooves on the Ground” to Veterans living with PTSD or traumatic brain injury, with eight to 12 participants per week. This program is geared toward learning horse-handling and training skills and involves mostly groundwork.

The center also offers Connected Horse, a program for people with dementia that invites caregivers and care receivers to interact with the horses, cultivating a space where individuals can live and enjoy the present moment.

Visit Xenophon, located at 60 Don Gabriel Way, or at [Xenophontrc.org](http://Xenophontrc.org) or call 925.377.0871. ■

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SERVICE ABOVE SELF / PET OF THE MONTH

SERVICE ABOVE SELF

Serving Others Beyond Orinda



CLAY DEANHARDT  
claydeanhardtrotary@gmail.com

Although I'm a month late, I hope one of your New Year's resolutions involves service. It's the kind of resolution that improves at least two lives at the same time. So this month I want to highlight an opportunity outside of Orinda to change two lives at once this year.

One of Rotary's Five Avenues of Service is Youth Service. It's also a core Orinda value. If you ever want to see a bunch of hands go up at an Orinda event, just ask who in the crowd has volunteered at a school, as a coach or manager of youth sports or at one of any number of youth organizations in town. The opportunity to raise our children in such a supportive, youth-oriented community is what brought many of us here.

But there are also great Bay Area programs serving children outside of Orinda where the need for help is perhaps greater.

To that end, the program I'm highlighting this month – and encouraging you to consider for your service this year – is Children Rising, an Oakland non-profit that works with the Oakland Unified School District to bring tutoring services and mentors to Oakland schools and students who often do not have access to the same opportunities ours in Orinda generally do.

Unfortunately, the tutoring organized by Children Rising is desperately needed at the schools they serve, particularly after so many students lost so much class time during formative educational years because of the pandemic.

According to the National Center for Educational Studies (nces.ed.gov), 44% of public school students started the 2023-

2024 school year behind grade level in at least one subject – primarily language arts and math. Unsurprisingly, the NCES national data shows that number is closer to 60% in schools and districts like Oakland's that serve lower-income communities and large communities of color.

Remember what I said about service improving two lives at the same time? I've volunteered for Children Rising and tutored students in math remotely over Zoom for the last two years.

It's an incredibly rewarding experience because you work with the same student (or students if you can do more than one session) over the entire school year. You get to know them, see their progress, and be part of their excitement when they master another skill or see their test scores improve.

My tutee works with me on Thursdays and another tutor (also a Rotarian) on Tuesdays. Last year ended on a high note for us when our student's teacher stopped the Children Rising coordinator in the hall to tell her that our student is doing much, much better on his math tests, crediting the extra work he is doing in Children Rising. What a day!

If you want to make a concrete difference in a child's life and experience that feeling of lifting you both higher when you put service above self, Children Rising (children-rising.org) always needs more in-person and online tutoring volunteers.

It takes only one hour a week to make a difference in a child's life, and I encourage you to give it a try. ■

◆ GAME ON from page 13

But winning was not the only goal of a Chris Lang tournament. He'd probably point out new acquaintances were made. Teams learned from how they worked together. Parents got to see their kids play. And perhaps, like in life, someone might have learned to make the most of his time on the court before the clock runs out.

For those who did not know Christopher Gordon Lang, you missed a good one. He

passed away suddenly from a heart attack on May 2, 2021. For those of you who did know him, please, I urge you to come watch a home Matadors basketball game. Because I'd swear the flooring Chris played such a big part in getting redone for the team makes the kids' sneakers screech differently. I think they now squeak his name. You have to hear it for yourself. It's not the "Erch-chirp, chirp" you're accustomed to hearing basketball shoes make. It's a clear "Erch-chris! Chris!"

I'd swear I hear it. ■

Pet of the Month



DAVID FONSECA

Molly shares her south Orinda home with her sisters Penny and Gracie. The three were trap-neuter-and-release feral cats who became pets. Molly is the more outgoing and sociable of the trio and is known throughout her neighborhood as the friendly cat who stops by all her neighbors' homes to say "hi" regularly.



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**What's On Deck With Parks & Rec!**

**Resin Retreat, an introductory course to epoxy resin! February 8, 6 - 8 p.m., \$89 residents. Reg. required.**

**Senior Trip, Glass Blowing Workshop @ Slow Burn Glass, February 21, 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. \$115 per person. Reg. required.**

**Intro to the Zentangle Method, no artistic experience necessary. February 27, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m., \$70 residents. Reg. required.**

**Go to [www.orindaparksandrec.org](http://www.orindaparksandrec.org) or call 925-254-2445 for questions and registration.**



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EVERYDAY ORINDA

◆ EDITORIAL from page 6

- patches from Driving Seniors.”
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We could not continue to provide such varied, thorough coverage without the help of our sponsor, The Orinda Association (OA). Through their support, we remain a non-profit newspaper, dedicated solely to providing news and features that serve our community.

That said, even with a great sponsor, surviving (and thriving!) in local print journalism is tough - and expensive.

Each month, we mail the paper free of charge to every resident and business in Orinda, as well as make it available online around the world via our website. Our expenses include paying writers, editors,

photographers and graphic designers, as well as printing, postage and website maintenance costs. Our wonderful advertisers offset some, but not all, of these expenses.

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Orinda is full of generous and community-minded people. Yet *The Orinda News* is the only non-profit organization that touches every Orindan.

*The Orinda News* team and I are proud to serve this role in our community. ■

Everyday 😊 Orinda

Barbecue Sauce: Origin of an Infamous Jingle

MIMI BOMMARITO  
editor@theorindanews.com



Orindans are an impressive group — residents with meritorious achievement in such fields as research, tech, academia, finance, philanthropy, art, law, sports (and here I must stop to catch my breath, realizing this list could go on all day).

Then there’s the rather “undefined” category for Guy Bommarito, my beloved spouse. It cannot accurately be called advertising, as his original creation has taken on a life of its own. Nor can it be labeled “entertainment,” as his unintentional contribution to society is oft referred to in unflattering terms like “ear worm.”

Here’s the fun fact about my husband: Guy wrote the infamous “I want my baby back - baby back - baby back” jingle for Chili’s baby back ribs — or, if you’re already singing along in your head — “Chilllll-eeeeeeez baby back ribs.” The year was 1995 and Guy was the executive creative director at GSD&M Advertising in Austin, Texas.

**The First Irony**

Friends and associates mistakenly assume we are rolling in residuals from this boondoggle, since, like the immortal cells of Henrietta Lacks, this prolific jingle refuses to die. The latest iteration, released Nov. 2023, features Boyz II Men. People are still making money here, just not us, and although we are working to address that, any free legal advice is welcomed.

If only it becomes a court case, I could

snag 15 seconds of fame on TMZ when called to the witness stand to testify: “Yes, your honor, on the night of the twelfth — my husband telephoned me from the office to sing the very first draft of Exhibit A.”

I recall this generally forgettable conversation, because the viral effect of the jingle was strangely instantaneous. When Mike Myers as “The Fat Bastard” sang it in *The Spy Who Shagged Me*, we were completely baffled, but thrilled. Perhaps, just a smidge, I am overanxious to examine my small role in its birth.

**The Second Irony**

Despite our best efforts, sometimes what we become known for is not at all what we think it will be. As long as it’s not criminal activity, that’s okay. It’s a control issue. We craft one plan, the universe crafts another.

When the Baby Back Ribs television and radio spots were first produced, the team at GSD&M was knocking out a work assignment, like any other, for Chili’s, one of the agency’s biggest clients. The account was in jeopardy, so obviously they were hoping to please them, but no one had a clue the tune would stick inside brains like gum on a tennis shoe.

**The Third Irony**

The jingle continued to be so popular that in 2002, the boy band NSYNC was hired to perform it in a series of television and radio spots. Had our daughters been a little

[SEE EVERYDAY page 19]

**YOUTH INK 2024 WRITING CONTEST**

The Orinda Junior Women’s Club is pleased to announce Youth Ink 2024, the annual creative writing contest open to middle school students who live in or attend school in Orinda. This contest supports literary arts in the community.

The Youth Ink 2024 prompt is Roots. Entrants do not have to adhere to the prompt, and imagination and creativity are encouraged. This contest gives young adolescents the opportunity to experience literary arts and enjoy the creative writing process.

Cash prizes are awarded: \$250 for first place, \$125 for second place, \$75 for third place and gift certificates for 10 honorable mentions.

Youth Ink 2024 submissions are accepted via email until Monday, Feb. 19, in order to be considered for an award.

Full entry details will be on the Youth Ink 2024 submission forms, available through Orinda Intermediate School, the Orinda Public Library and online at [www.orindajuniors.org](http://www.orindajuniors.org).



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CONTINUATIONS

◆ **MEASURE R** from page 1

initial estimates of \$2,853,300 by roughly \$1 million in Fiscal year 2022-23.”

The balance also includes fund interest of \$60,212 and expenditures during the fiscal year totaling \$2,567,277.

Of the \$2.57 million in expenditures from Fund 106, the largest amount, \$1,693,898, reflects costs related to specific Public Works/Capital Improvement Plan projects. The majority of this amount reflects Annual Pavement 2022 work completed during the fiscal year.

The next largest category of expenditures totaled \$468,609 for staff and consultant support. Doug Alessio, Orinda assistant city manager and administrative services director, said Fund 106 covers the cost of a communications agency, a grant-writing firm and other specialty services. Fund 106 also covers 100% of the salary for Wildfire Outreach Coordinator James Duff and 80% of the salary for Management Analyst Micki Cronin.

Alessio provided descriptions of the Public Works and Parks expenditures from Fund 106.

Parks Hazard Reduction expenditures of \$168,350 covered costs to reduce fire fuel in city parks.

Public Works Hazard reduction costs of \$138,532 funded the operation of the city’s Chipper Truck. Disposal Services costs reflect green waste disposal related to Chipper Truck services. And Public Works and Parks Tree Services costs relate to fire

fuel-reduction on city streets, medians and at parks and other city properties.

**SSTOC to ask City Council to Authorize Community Survey**

During the Jan. 10 meeting, the SSTOC addressed its recommendation that the city council authorize staff to undertake a professional community survey regarding wildfire prevention and resilience.

Such a survey would be used to benchmark community members’ knowledge, attitudes, needs and barriers to implementing defensible space and home hardening retrofits to protect lives, property and the city.

The committee discussed the benefits and drawbacks of various approaches to such a survey. One option the committee recommended was to feature a hybrid online/opt-in approach that would use a professional firm’s statistical voter registration samples, plus a mix of digital outreach such as email, social media, text messaging and other city channels.

The SSTOC’s annual report subcommittee will use this information to prepare their annual report, which could be available for the SSTOC to review as early as the committee’s Feb. 14 meeting.

For additional details, see Orinda’s Annual Comprehensive Financial Statements for Fiscal Year 2023, ending June 30, 2023: <https://www.cityoforinda.org/DocumentCenter/View/4389/Orinda-ACFR-FY23-Final>. ■

◆ **EVERYDAY** from page 18

older, their dad would have achieved god-like status for his many hours spent working in the sound studio alongside Justin Timberlake.

Guy and the creative team traveled to a little island in the Bahamas, the same one featured in the end footage of the *Giligan’s Island* theme, to film Baby Back Ribs “Castaway” spots with all four band members.

But this interaction with pop culture stardom did not so much as raise an eyebrow with family. Our parents were too old to know of or care about NSYNC, and our little girls, the oldest of which was in kindergarten, were too young. Had the boy band been *The Wiggles* – different story. That was our standard Exhausted Mom Joke if you were parenting tots in the early

00’s: “That Wiggle in the purple shirt? He’s kind of hot.”

There’s much more to this tale. Guy is drafting the full account, involving recognizable players such as Bill and Hillary Clinton, Harry and Linda Bloodworth-Thomason, The Houston Rockets and more. Stay tuned. ■

◆ **SHOPPER** from page 15

the salad and toss again. Top with sesame seeds. Serves 4.

The Orinda Farmers’ 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](http://www.cccfm.org), [facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket](https://facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket) and [Instagram @OrindaFarmersMarket](https://instagram.com/OrindaFarmersMarket) or call the market hotline at 925.322.6228. ■

Fund 106 Measure R - Add-On Sales Tax (1 cent)		Fiscal Year 2022-2023	
Sales Tax Revenue	\$ 3,803,247	Fund Balance Beginning of Year \$3,347,112	Fund Balance End of Year \$4,643,294
Interest Revenue	\$ 60,212		
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 3,863,459</b>		
Staff/ Consultant Support	\$ 468,609	Expenditure by Project - CIP	
Legal	\$ 4,953		
Finance-Hdl Sales Tax Audit	\$ 3,051		
Fleet, IT & Insurance Allocation	\$ 24,710		
Public Works-Hazard Reduction	\$ 138,532		
Public Works-Tree Services	\$ 21,920		
Public Works-Disposal Service	\$ 22,668		
Public Works-CIP	\$ 1,683,898		
Public Works-Professional Services	\$ 13,251		
Parks - Hazard Reduction	\$ 168,350		
Parks - Tree Service	\$ 17,335		
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 2,567,277</b>		Orchard Storm Drain Repair \$ 921
			Ivy Storm Repair \$ 919
		Annual Pavement 2022 \$ 1,671,293	
		Brockwood ROW Mitigation \$ 10,645	
		Redflag Signage \$ 120	
		<b>Total Project Expenditures \$1,683,898</b>	

INFOGRAPHIC BY LISA BURLINI

These financials for Orinda Measure R (Fund 106) for Fiscal Year 2023 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023) were extracted by city staff from Orinda’s Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, dated December 19, 2023. The figures shown were audited by Maze and Associates Accountancy Corporation.

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EBT Welcome

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

# Kath Balamuth – The Artist Who Created the Iconic Orinda Logo

By KATHY CORDOVA  
Executive Editor  
cordova@theorindanews.com

Kath Balamuth loved drawing and painting as a child, but never felt she was “good enough” to pursue a career as a fine artist. She spent decades “nibbling around the edges of the art world” as a graphic designer, calligraphy instructor and owner of an art supply store before deciding to seriously pursue her passion for art at the age of 59. Today at a vibrant 77, she is going strong with a showing of her paintings at the Moraga Art Gallery as part of the “Stories on Canvas” exhibit.

**How long have you lived in Orinda and what brought you here?**

My husband Barry, our daughter Kelly and I moved to Orinda from our Oakland starter house in the Diamond District in 1976. We moved here for the schools, the weather, the small town atmosphere and the community, which I’d become familiar with in my youth when my parents bought a lot in Orinda and we joined the Sleepy Hollow Swim and Tennis Club.

**Tell us about your family.**

My husband (and high school sweetheart), Barry Balamuth, was a personal injury attorney. We were married for 52 years before I lost him to a long series of health problems in 2019. I have two daughters; my oldest, Kelly Balamuth, is an attorney practicing estate planning in Lamorinda. My other daughter, Brett Anne, is almost 19 years younger than Kelly. She was born three days before we took Kelly off to her freshman year at UC Davis. Brett Anne now works for a company specializing in wildfire defense.

**You designed the iconic Orinda logo. How did that come about?**

I received my degree from UC Berkeley in design. The City of Orinda and my arts supply store, Artability, were both started in 1985. The first Orinda city council asked for submissions for the new city logo. Looking for some good publicity for our new store, my partner, Marilyn Hajjar – also an artist and graphic designer – and I both submitted designs. And my design, inspired by the hills I see from the back of my house, ended up winning. I chose the Bauhaus type to repeat the historic, iconic look of the Orinda Theatre.

**Your work has been described as “endowing everyday objects as shoes, boots**



Kath Balamuth enjoys a visit from her 15-year-old Labradoodle, EZ (pronounced Easy), in her Orinda art studio. JEFF HEYMAN

**and unhatched eggs in a bird’s nest – with transcendent meaning.” Is that an accurate description of your work?**

I love the process of doing art, but I always have a difficult time coming up with ‘what to paint?’ So I decided it didn’t matter. I could take an everyday object – like shoes – and tell a story with my images. The same can be said about anything in our lives. Things tell stories. It’s about sharing my view of things using line, shape, space, color, value, contrast and composition, in an effort to tell a story, while making something that people will want to look at and hopefully live with.

**As a child and young adult, you loved to draw and paint, but never felt you were good enough to make it a career. What changed and enabled you to pursue your art?**

What changed was taking art and art history classes at Diablo Valley College (DVC). After having several careers, it was time to do what I had always wanted to do: make art! I also think maturity was something I needed before I could accept that I could do this.

**Was your family encouraging of your pursuit of art?**

My parents weren’t really encouraging or discouraging. My husband always supported my many pursuits. Without his supporting me during the Artability days, I would have been living in the back of the store. Art doesn’t really make sense if you want to make money. But the world needs art.

**Tell us about your “Mom as Muse of the Masters” series of paintings.**

At the time I was working on figures, and who better to paint than one’s mother? For me, copying famous artists has always

been a useful way to understand their processes and techniques. I picked one painting each from seven 20th-century artists that were painted during my mother’s lifetime, and one more from the 17th century, because I wanted to copy Girl with the Pearl Earring. My choices were Vermeer, Picasso, Thomas Hart Benton, Chagall, Diebenkorn, Alex Katz, Alice Neel and de Kooning.

Then I went through old photos of my mom and chose images from different times in her life. First I painted eight 6” x 6” panels attempting to copy each artist’s style. Then I used the photos as a resource to paint different-sized paintings of my mom in those styles.

**What did your mom think of it?**

I think she felt honored. She became one of my fans when she realized I was doing what I loved. I took her out to the DVC library, where my art group was exhibiting, to see the very large painting I did of her in the style of Chuck Close. I donated the painting to the library because it needs a big space to be appreciated.

**What advice would you give to other budding artists, especially those who don’t think they’re good enough?**

You don’t have to have talent to be an artist. Of course it helps, but passion and patience are more important. Take as many classes as you can, in as many mediums as you can. Don’t plan to make money or be famous. Just express your unique voice. Everyone has one. And practice, practice, practice!

*The “Stories on Canvas” exhibit, featuring Balamuth’s work, can be seen at the Moraga Art Gallery, located at 432 Center Street, Moraga, through mid-March. ■*

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