



THE ORINDA NEWS

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March 2022

Senator Glazer's Bill SB 21 to Support Youth Mental Health

By CHARLEEN EARLEY
Editor-in-Chief

Special interest license plates help support causes and programs such as breast cancer awareness, veteran initiatives, environmental responses and more. A new cause might be added to the list – mental health for teens.

Orinda resident Sen. Steve Glazer, 7th District, is one of several to help raise mental health awareness with measure SB 21, which passed the Senate floor unanimously Jan. 26.

Simply passing a bill, however, does not put the plates on the California Department of Motor Vehicle's (DMV) list, but an intent-to-buy 7,500 plates, with no financial commitment, will bring it a step closer.

If approved and signed into law by the Governor in June, the bill would "require the State Department of Education to sponsor the mental health awareness license



Taken in 2011, the Wiseman family (L-R) **Graham, Nicole, Colin** and **Caroline** at the Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island, MI, was celebrating their grandparents' 55th anniversary. The Wiseman's lost their son Colin to suicide in 2013.

plate program through the DMV, and the DMV would make the plates available to purchase," as stated in a press release from Glazer's office.

Glazer pledged his support with his own

intent-to-purchase announcement about the plates: "It is important we all do our part and pledge to order and purchase these license plates once this bill is signed into law."

One organization involved in the effort is the non-profit BeingwellCA. Its cofounders include Graham and Caroline Wiseman, Gail Miller and Graham's sister, Tracy Wiseman. Graham and Caroline, of Lafayette, lost their 15-year-old son Colin in 2013 to suicide rooted in depression. Caroline, a Miramonte High graduate, grew up in Orinda.

Two months after losing their son, Acalanes High School parents Holly Nolan and Emma Bishopp, contacted the Wisemans to share their thoughts about mental health supports in the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD).

"One parent had a daughter with anxiety; the other battled leukemia and won. We combined our resources and researched what could be done better to prevent another loss and help those struggling," said Graham.

He noted they had three goals: "Establish [SEE GLAZER page 10]"

Assemblymember Bauer-Kahan: Progress on Various Pressing Issues

By ANDREA MADISON
Staff Writer

The first month of the new year proved to be a busy and productive one for Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan (D-Orinda), with one of her assembly bills making its way to the State Senate and the introduction of another, seeking to protect rights and access to reproductive choice.

Assembly Bill 1287, which prohibits higher prices, known as the "Pink Tax," on goods marketed to women, passed off the Assembly floor late January with a bipartisan vote of 59-0, according to a press release on Bauer-Kahan's website. Co-authors of the bill include assembly members and senators from the Bay Area and Southern California.

AB 1666, which prohibits legal action brought against anyone providing, helping or receiving abortion care within the State of California, seeks to protect state providers, individuals and organizations in the wake of uncertainty over the future of United States citizens' right to abortion. "Hopefully we will learn from each other,

as far as what we can do to protect women," Bauer-Kahan said when asked if it is her hope that the rest of the country follows California's example.

Bauer-Kahan serves as the Chair of the Select Committee on Women's Reproductive Health in the California State Assembly, which is the first committee of its kind in the United States.

Bauer-Kahan's latest bill, dealing with safe access to reproductive health services in the state, works alongside AB 1356, which adds protections for patients and providers against harassment from protesters. AB 1356 was signed into law by Gov. Newsom last September and sponsored by [SEE BAUER-KAHAN page 10]



COURTESY OF ASSEMBLYMEMBER BAUER-KAHAN'S OFFICE
Assemblymember **Rebecca Bauer-Kahan** joins the Legislative Women's Caucus on the steps of the State Capitol in Sacramento during a press conference in late January.

Orinda Schools Maintain Optimism Amid COVID Transmission

By ANDREA MADISON
Staff Writer

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, Orinda area schools are rolling with the punches and remaining optimistic.

As reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Feb. 3, COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in the U.S. are declining after peaking in the middle of January, but transmission of the virus within Contra Costa County remains high. The CDC reports that as of Feb. 10, 84.8% of Contra Costa residents five years of age or older are fully vaccinated, with an 11.2% positivity rate within the county population.

"Things definitely got worse for us, in a sense that there were more students out due to COVID-19 during the omicron surge,"

OUSD Superintendent Aida Glimme said on Feb. 9.

Orinda Union School District (OUSD) staff and student COVID-19 cases have been tracked via a publicly viewable dashboard, updated twice a week, since the beginning of the in-person school year

in August, with the longitudinal data showing positive cases fluctuating beneath five for most of the fall. Cases peaked at 81 the week of Jan. 3, coinciding with the return of students and staff after Christmas break.

As of Feb. 6, there have been 262 con- [SEE OUSD page 15]

IN THIS ISSUE

News	
Business Highlight	16
Crime/Police	5
Students/Schools	1, 6
Around Town	
Art Scene	11
Club/Meetings	13
Events	2, 9
Residents	3, 8, 10
Calendar	13
Community	9, 15
Classifieds	12
Financial News	16
Firewise	7
Letters to the Editor	4
Orinda News Briefs	5
Performing Arts	2
Pet of the Month	7
The Orinda Association	3
The Reel Less Traveled	12
Seasoned Shopper	14

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PERFORMING ARTS

Actor Marilu Henner Next to Perform at the Orinda Theatre



By CHARLEEN EARLEY
Editor-in-Chief

She won't be taking a taxi to the theater, but actor Marilu Henner will certainly be talking about her role in the 1978 hit TV sitcom series, *Taxi* during her one-woman show at the Orinda Theatre March 6 at 5 p.m. for the "Live at the Orinda" concert series.

Henner, not a Bay Area stranger, is excited to perform in Orinda for the first time. "I've never been there, but it looks beautiful," said Henner, 69.

Her show, called *Looking Back; Moving Forward*, encompasses her acting career, books she's written, health, relationships and much more.

During the pandemic, Henner stayed busy, with work on nine films and 28 [SEE HENNER page 15]

JEFF KATZ
Live at the Orinda Concert Series features **Marilu Henner**, who brings her one-woman show, "Looking Back, Moving Forward" to the Orinda Theatre, March 6 at 5 p.m.



Orinda Starlight Village Players – An Orinda Institution

By JILL GELSTER
Staff Writer

The Orinda Starlight Village Players (OrSVP) are celebrating their 39th year as Orinda's community theater. Former Moraga Orinda Fire Department board member John Anderson said, "The OrSVP are part of the tapestry that makes up Orinda."

OrSVP was started by longtime Orinda resident, Charlotte Meyer, in 1983 when the Orinda Community Center Park Amphitheater was built. OrSVP has performed there ever since, except during 2020 when they took to Zoom for performances. Last year, OrSVP, minimizing productions to reader's theater, performed without sets.

This season OrSVP plans to be back with three full productions (CDC willing). OrSVP Technical Director David Dierks will head the set building crew. Dierks

joined the group in 1993 when Artistic Director Geotty Chapple oversaw building. Dierks credits Chapple for teaching him everything he knows about set construction and enabling him to do home remodeling and wood working projects he would never have attempted prior to his experience at OrSVP.

Dierks wants to continue this tradition of teaching volunteers the skills he picked up with OrSVP.

"Because OrSVP volunteers are starting to age, I am hoping to be able to teach younger people who are interested in becoming more comfortable with tools and interested in joining this fun group," said Dierks. "It makes me nervous to think of folks in their 80s up a ladder."

If you are interested in helping with set building, call 925.528.9225 for more information.

[SEE STARLIGHT page 6]

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JILL GELSTER
Members of the Orinda Starlight Village Players started the 2019 season by framing the back of the theater. (L-R) John Chapin, Malcolm Cowler, Don Bialik, Bill Chessman, Betsy White and David Dierks.

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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA Board

All-Call Support for Our Best Hometown Parade

MARIANNE MOSER



The Orinda Association Board wishes everyone a happy Spring Equinox (March 20), a time for renewal, reflection, redemption and celebration. From “National Dadgum That’s Good Day” and Mardi Gras (March 1) to March Madness and National California Strawberry Day (March 13 and March 21 respectively), March is a month of abundance in our sweet semi-rural village of Orinda.

We are busily making plans for our famous Orinda 4th of July “Best Hometown Parade.” The parade will be Monday, July 4, at 10 a.m. sharp. Mark the date on your calendars and consider entering your group in the parade, or plan to attend with friends and family (safe distancing and other protocols will be announced on the OA website – www.orindaassociation.org).

While April is officially National Volunteer Month, we are raising the flag early and launching an all-call for volunteers for this ongoing city treasure. Please consider volunteering and/or donating!

The Orinda Association raises all funds [SEE MESSAGE page 7]



CINDY POWELL

Nelson Mandela said, “There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children.” That certainly seems true of these children enjoying the balloon decorations following The Orinda Association’s 4th of July parade a few years ago.

Two Orinda Residents Become Orinda Association Board Members

By SALLY HOGARTY
Executive Editor

The Orinda Association welcomes two new board members: business owner Grace Paik and local State Farm agent Kelly Sopak.

Originally from Chicago, Paik moved to



COURTESY OF GRACE PAIK

Grace Paik grew her creative solutions to keeping her children busy while dining in restaurants into a thriving small business.



COURTESY OF KELLY SOPAK

State Farm Agent Kelly Sopak also coaches the Carondelet Women’s Basketball team.

the Bay Area four years ago.

“In the last 20 years, we have moved 16 times due to my husband’s active-duty post in the Air Force,” said Paik. “We have lived all over the USA and abroad, including Korea, Japan, Germany, Illinois, Colorado, Washington DC, Alabama, Louisiana, South Carolina and California.”

Her husband, Seung Paik, retired as a [SEE OA BOARD page 15]

The Orinda Association

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

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

Visit our office at 26 Orinda Way
(Library Plaza)
Phone: 925.254.0800
www.OrindaAssociation.org

The Orinda Association
P.O. Box 97
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EDITORIAL

Letters to the Editor

There Otter Be a Mural

You know public discourse has sunk to new depths when the incredibly cute river otter becomes a “stalking horse” for other issues (see “naysayer” letters).

Despite pronouncements to the contrary, the charismatic otter moved back to Orinda years ago – maybe into its parent’s house. Otter observers created a Facebook page to celebrate.

BayNature.org explores the otter’s recovery in Bay Area streams.

But naysaying is also making a comeback.

Low in number but high in volume, a small clique is fixated on keeping San Pablo Creek and everything around it, trapped in a dilapidated version of 1964; decrying creek restoration and public art as a “waste of money,” they harass City staff with Public Records Act requests and file meritless lawsuits that cost City residents real money.

Oblivious to this fracas, children still play in creeks and nature still bats last. My daughter and friends were adventuring and picking up trash in San Pablo Creek when, to their great surprise and joy, they saw a cheery otter playing in the water amongst the trees. The otter seemed unconcerned that one writer recently referred to its watery den as a “drainage ditch.”

I think many parents would love to have their children spend a lazy day outdoors or downtown, seeing art, exploring a creek and experiencing the wonder of nature – including otters – instead of staying indoors on Minecraft. But then I love otters.

– Michael Bowen

Extreme Wages to Municipal Employees

Last month’s *Orinda News* reported that our City Manager, responsible for Orinda’s \$28 million dollar-a-year budget, received a 3% raise to an annual salary of \$250,000. Money well earned.

What was not reported was that MOFD’s firefighters were also given a raise: 13% over the next three years, on top of the 14% over the past three years (when inflation totaled only 8%).

This year’s MOFD budget for employee salaries and benefits totals \$28.9 million. About 82% of this (\$23.7 million) is attributed to MOFD’s 52 firefighters. They are earning, on average, \$456,000 a year. This is about twice Orinda’s median household income.

MOFD’s firefighters are great guys and gals. They provide a valuable service. But there is more to emergency services than putting out fires and providing emergency medical response. There is also, as we are becoming increasingly aware, fire prevention.

Because MOFD has put all of its money into paying huge salaries to the firefighters,

it has nothing left for a reasonable fire prevention plan, even though Orinda taxpayers “contribute” \$19 million to MOFD a year (over \$5 million a year more than Lafayette pays for the same three stations and nine firefighters). So we had to vote in another \$3 million for our new sales tax.

Who voted for these inappropriate wage increases? The three MOFD Board Members the firefighters’ union spent \$30,000 to get elected in 2018. Think about this when they come up for re-election later this year.

– Steve Cohn

DEI is Reverse Racism

A letter published in the Feb. edition took issue with my letter published in the Jan. edition in which I stated that the goal of DEI is to replace merit. The author of the Feb. letter suggested I was “confounding” DEI with affirmative action; that affirmative action is legal and that Kendi and DEI do not support reverse racism.

In fact, however, the way one achieves diversity, equity and inclusion is by racial balancing using affirmative action. Affirmative action has not been legal in California since the passage of Proposition 209 in 1996. An attempt in the most recent election to repeal it, was soundly defeated.

Kendi says, “The only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination. The only remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination.” (*How to be an AntiRacist*, page 19.) This discrimination is reverse racism straight out of critical race theory.

In short, DEI is based on reverse racism: it focuses on race and treats people of different races differently to achieve proportional representation without regard to merit.

Our schools are also improperly focusing on alleged barriers to success, instead of teaching behaviors that lead to success, such as studying long and hard. Our schools refer to wealth and income gaps – which largely disappear when you control for median age and region – whereas they should teach behaviors that avoid roadblocks to wealth and income, such as not having children out of wedlock or before you can afford to raise them.

- Nick Waranoff

Fire Hydrant Still Not Fixed

The homes and families in Sleepy Hollow remain placed at elevated risk of fire by the failure of EBMUD to provide water service to the sole fire hydrant on Tappan Terrace in Orinda, my family’s home for 30 years.

Since March 2020, 23 months ago, the fire hydrant has been connected by EBMUD to a tiny unsafe 2” rubber hose with inadequate pressure and flow – this, instead of the previous 8” steel pipe. That 8” pipe

Terri Bates Walker Joins Coldwell Banker Realty



COURTESY OF TERRI BATES

Terri Bates Walker, a former practicing real estate attorney with a passion for architecture and design, joined Coldwell Banker Realty in Northern California, in its Orinda office, last month. Formerly associated with Compass, she recently ranked in the top 1% of agents in Contra Costa County.

List of *The Orinda News* Advertisers

	Page		Page
Automotive		State Farm, Bryan Silveira	15
Mash Gas and Food	1	State Farm, Kelly Sopak	9
Orinda Motors	5	Real Estate	
Orinda Shell Auto Care	6	AG Realty	
Beauty and Fitness		The Gailas Team	3
CoreKinetics	2	Coldwell Banker	
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Community		Suzanne Toner Geoffrion	14
Orinda Parks & Rec	6	Shellie Kirby	16
St. Marks Church	9	Dudum Real Estate Group	
Financial and Insurance Services		Christina Linezo	9
Holmgren Associates	14	The Grubb Company	
Mechanics Bank	11	Rebecca Ciccio	7
Park Place Wealth Advisors	9	Alexis Thompson	14
Wells Fargo Wealth Advisors	16	Sotheby’s	
Garden/Landscaping		Ann Newton Cane	13
Ken’s Brush Removal & Tree Trimming	16	Village Associates	
Ken’s Redwood Fencing	11	Shannon Conner	10
McDonnell Nursery	10	Dexter Honens II	2
Oakland Hills Brush Clearing	7	Linda Friedman Team	15
Tree Sculpture	12	April Matthews	3
Medical and Dental		Murphy Team - Karen & Hilary Murphy	2
Dr. Brian Clark	6	Ann Sharf	10
Dr. Mary Smith DDS	16	Clark Thompson	12
Medicine Shoppe	8	Restaurants/Catering	
Nonprofit		Baan Thai	10
The Orinda Association	3, 10	Casa Orinda	12
Professional Service		Farmers’ Market	14
5A Rent-A-Space	2	Siam Orchid	13
Green Sheds	15	Zamboni’s Pizza Company	3
Jeff Heyman Photography	13	Retail	
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sprang a leak causing massive flooding and damaged several properties, which, likewise, EBMUD has failed to repair.

Fire season is still here; actually it never went away.

EBMUD has been cited by MOFD for this violation of the CA Fire Code, yet the fire hydrant remains out-of-service.

Eleven months ago, EBMUD manager Carlton Chan promised me the water supply would be promptly fixed, yet the fire hydrant still remains out-of-service, leaving Tappan Terrace – and the larger Sleepy Hollow neighborhood – without this critical

fire fighting safeguard.

I have appeared numerous times before
[SEE LETTERS page 8]

Correction

The *Orinda News* February issue incorrectly edited the Car Talk column by Xavier Estrada on page 15. The names Red Bull and Honda were incorrectly changed to one entity, “Red Bull Honda.” “Honda,” “Red Bull” and “Red Bull Honda” are separate entities. The corrected article can be seen at <https://bit.ly/36idFyn>.

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

Letters to the Editor for the April issue are due March 8.

For advertising rates, contact Jill Gelster at 925.528.9225 (jill@aspenconsult.net), Elana O’Loskey at 925.984.1751 (elanao@mac.com), or Trish Ward at 510.685.1437 (trish@theorindanews.com). The deadline for the April issue is **March 8**.

NEWS BRIEFS / POLICE

Around Town: Orinda News Briefs

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

Road Closures for Sewer Line Replacement on Camino Sobrante

Contra Costa County Sanitary District will close Camino Sobrante weekdays March 2-25 and March 28 - April 8 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. to replace aging sewer lines.

During the designated hours, access will be maintained to addresses within the closure for residents, emergency vehicles, school buses, garbage trucks and delivery services. A detour route will be established for others. According to Senior Community Affairs Representative Chris Carpenter, the road is 16-foot wide, and the sewer line is right in the middle.

"We need to close Camino Sobrante to keep sewage in the pipes to protect the environment," said Carpenter.

Completion of the project is scheduled this spring. For more information, call Carpenter at 925.229.7316.

DeSaulnier, Colleagues Introduce Bill to Protect, Support Children with Disabilities

Representative Mark DeSaulnier (11th Congressional District), partnering with colleagues in the House and Senate, introduced the Funding Early Childhood is the Right IDEA Act (H.R. 6532) last month. The bipartisan, bicameral bill to restore full funding for educational and early-intervention services for children with disabilities was co-sponsored by Representatives Rodney Davis (R-IL), Jared Huffman (D-CA) and U.S. Senator Maggie Hassan (D-NH).

"One of the most important things we can do to support children with disabilities and their families is ensure that every child has equal access to high quality early childhood and educational services that will set them

on the path for success in education and developmental outcomes," said DeSaulnier.

The need for early intervention and preschool special education services has increased over the past several decades, but federal investments have not kept pace with the number of students requiring these services, according to DeSaulnier. The Funding Early Childhood is the Right IDEA Act (H.R. 6532) would assist states in providing this support.

DeSaulnier is a member of the House Education and Labor Committee.

Senator Glazer Introduces SB 911 Supporting Local Journalism

If SB 911 passes as written, it will allocate \$50 million "to bolster the free press that is one of the pillars of American democracy." Introduced by local State Senator Steve Glazer, the legislation will provide and distribute state grants, over a five-year trial period, to individuals and organizations to help cover issues of importance to their communities.

Co-author Senator Ben Allen (D-Santa Monica), said, "Quality journalism tells the truth, no matter how uncomfortable or where it leads. America ignores the erosion of public journalism at its own peril."

According to Glazer, the closure of many local newspapers and the decline of most others over the past couple decades, "has created vast 'news deserts.'" SB 911, "encourages independent, local public service news coverage, helps independent local news organizations or individual reporters to cover the cost of reporting local public service issues and promotes the employment of journalists for local, public service coverage."

Senator Josh Newman, (D-Fullerton) also co-authored SB 911. An 11-member board, appointed by the legislature and the governor, would manage the program.



POLICE BLOTTER

January 15 through February 15

Calls for Service

- Burglary, Auto: 2 incidents: Theatre Sq., Fish Ranch Rd.
- Burglary, Commercial: 1 incident: Wilder Rd.
- Burglary, Residential: 1 incident: Overhill Rd.
- Children's Civil Commitment: 2 incidents
- Death Non-Criminal: 2 incidents
- Drugs - Under the Influence: 1 incident
- Found Property: 2 incidents
- Grand Theft Vehicle Parts: 1 incident: Diablo View Dr.

- Identity Theft: 1 incident
- Illegal Entry: 1 incident: Fish Ranch Rd.
- Shoplift: 1 incident: Orinda Way
- Tow: 4 incidents
- Vandalism: 2 incidents
- Vehicle Theft: 3 incidents: Haciendas Rd., El Toyonal, Orinda Way

Arrest

- Drugs - Under the Influence: 1 arrest
- Recovered Stolen Vehicle: 1 recovery
- Warrant Arrest: 5 arrests

— Compiled by David Dierks
Assistant Editor

Planning Commission Elects Ann Parnigoni Chair for 2022

During its Feb. 8 meeting, Orinda Planning Commission members elected Ann Parnigoni and Willy Mautner chair and vice-chair respectively for year 2022.

The seven-member, all-volunteer commission is appointed by the City Council for a three-year term. As Orinda residents, they serve the community to make decisions on land use applications and advise Council on land use policy matters.

Current commissioners are Robert Hubner (Exp. 2025), Brandyn Iverson (Exp. 2025), Marian Jelinek (Exp. 2024), Lina Lee (Exp. 2024), Mautner (Exp. 2025), Parnigoni (Exp. 2023) and John Lynn Smith (Exp. 2023).

Planning Commission meetings are held the second and fourth Tuesday each month at 7 p.m., currently via teleconference. Visit www.cityoforinda.org for the accurate schedule.

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



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SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

Groundbreaking Ceremony at Sleepy Hollow Elementary



JEFF HEYMAN

Aida Glimme, superintendent of Orinda Union School District (OUSD), along with OUSD Board members, District and Sleepy Hollow administration and the construction contractors broke ground in a ceremony Feb. 14 at Sleepy Hollow Elementary in Orinda. After a lengthy planning and design period, construction begins on the Sleepy Hollow Multi Purpose Room, a project funded by Bond Measures E and I. (L-R) **Stuart House**, director of facilities, **Jason Kaune**, boardmember, **Cara Hoxie**, boardmember, **Aida Glimme**, superintendent, **Hillary Weiner**, board vice president, **Liz Daoust**, boardmember, **Carol Brown**, board president, **Patsy Templeton**, Sleepy Hollow principal and **Regina Webber**, Sleepy Hollow CBO/director of business services.



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Young Author Publishes Memoir to Help Kids Through the Pandemic

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

As a 10-year-old, Stella Ciarlantini, spent two months writing about the pandemic and how it affected her. Among major disruptions and issues, she cited transitioning to distance learning, navigating the lockdown and being isolated from her friends as high on her list.

"I have always loved writing," said Ciarlantini. "Writing the book and recording my thoughts was a good way of processing events. I thought my book might help other people with that too."

Her self-published, 90-page book, *The Story of Stella: A Memoir*, started from a conversation with her fourth-grade teacher, Jamie Whaley, at Lafayette Elementary School.

Ciarlantini, who now attends Orinda Intermediate School, gives suggestions to kids dealing with anxiety and sadness during the pandemic.

"The most important thing to remember is that there is always light at the end of the tunnel. In the meantime, find your voice. You are powerful, you are smart and you matter," she said. "Find a creative outlet to express that, whether it's through writing, singing, swimming, running or playing a musical instrument. You can stand up for yourself and how you're feeling, and more than that, you can stand up for others who might not be able to do it for themselves."



HEATHER COUSINS

Standing in front of her collection of books, **Stella Ciarlantini**, a sixth grade student at Orinda Intermediate School, wrote and published a book chronicling her thoughts and feelings during the pandemic titled, *The Story of Stella: A Memoir*.

Stella's mother, Heather Cousins, has been a theater and drama teacher at Miramonte High School in Orinda for over 20 years.

"The first time I read it was when she finished it. It just brought tears to my eyes," she said.

Since then, schools have used her daughter's book in the classroom, and Bel and Bunna's Bookstore in Lafayette hosted Ciarlantini at a book signing and meet and greet.

Cousins offers advice to parents about how to help their children navigate the pandemic.

[SEE CIARLANTINI page 10]

◆ STARLIGHT from page 2

Auditions, by appointment only (email info@orsvp.org), for OrSVP's season are scheduled April 3 and 5. Actors will be asked to read from scripts. Prepared monologues will not be required. As of now, masks and proof of vaccination will be required. OrSVP, willing to train, is also actively searching for volunteers interested in stage managing, running lights and sound for performances.

The first production of the season will be Agatha Christie's *Towards Zero*, directed by Beth Hooper. Performances are set for June 3 through July 2, Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:30 p.m.; Thursday, June 30 at 8 p.m.; and a Sunday matinee June 26 at 4 p.m. Rehearsals start in April.

The second show will be *L. Frank Baum's The Marvelous Land of Oz*, adapted and directed by Malcolm Cowler. Performances are Friday and Saturday evenings

at 8:30 p.m. July 22 through Aug. 13, with shows on Sunday, Aug. 7 at 4 p.m. and Thursday, Aug. 11 at 8 p.m. Cowler is looking for actors of all ages (youth and adult) as well as a musical director and choreographer. Rehearsals will start in June.

The final production will be *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw, directed by Suzan Lorraine. Performances will take place Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:30 p.m. starting Sept. 9 and running through Oct. 1, with other shows on Sunday, Sept. 25, at 4 p.m. and Thursday, Sept. 29, at 8 p.m. Rehearsals will start in August.

OrSVP is completely volunteer run. Anyone interested in any aspect of theater who would like to help is encouraged to contact the group at www.orsvp.org, info@orsvp.org or 925.528.9225.

Jill Gelster can be reached at jill@aspenconsult.net



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FIREWISE / PET OF THE MONTH

New Insurance Model Engages Both Insurers and Homeowners

By MELANIE LIGHT
Staff Writer

As extreme weather becomes the new normal, the insurance industry has been thrown into chaos all over the country. No one is a winner. Insurers have outdated methods to calculate risk, which causes them to guesstimate rates and pull out of risky areas.

In California, the largest market in the country, homeowners who are non-renewed can be forced to use California's FAIR plan, the policy of last resort.

Over the past two years, Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara of the CDI (California Department of Insurance) has been working to find a path to a fair, but robust market.

Lara's strategy is based on the fact that wildfire mitigation and home hardening of both individual homes and neighborhoods will help homes and neighborhoods survive a wildfire. Insurers are starting to look more closely at how homeowners and neighborhoods are managing their risk through mitigation. In addition to using satellite images and drones, they are starting to make in-person inspections.

Recently, Joel Laucher of consumer advocacy group United Policyholders, gave a presentation to the Orinda Firewise Council. View the presentation here: orindafirewisecouncil.org/insurance. He shared the new regulations the CDI is drafting:

No insurer shall use a rating plan or wildfire risk model that does not consider or take into account the following mandatory factors:

- Community-level mitigation efforts: The rating plan's, or any wildfire risk model's, output shall reflect the reduced wildfire risk resulting from community-level mitigation efforts.
- Property-level mitigation efforts: The rating plan or wildfire risk model output shall reflect the reduced wildfire risk resulting from property-level wildfire risk mitigation efforts undertaken with respect to an individual property being assessed for risk.

The measures fit perfectly into the Firewise USA model but are also agreed upon by numerous organizations and groups like the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS), United Policyholders, Cal Fire and 150 Fire Safe Councils

Pet of the Month



COURTESY OF CYNTHIA AND DENNIS WHISNANT

"Our cat, **Harry**, looks like a black panther. He is five-years-old and still loves to play like a kitten," said **Cynthia Whisnant**. "He walks around the house with authority, as if he owns the house. Harry is the most loving cat we've ever had, plus he loves to pose for any photo shoot."

in California.

To make your home more likely to survive a wildfire and to maintain access to insurance coverage you can afford, these are the key steps:

- Class A fire rate roof
- Ember resistant vents
- A 5-foot home ignition zone cleared around your home
- A 6-inch noncombustible clearance at

[SEE FIREWISE page 9]

◆ MESSAGE from page 3

to cover the parade costs. To have this year's parade, we need to raise the funds to pay for it, necessitating our early all-call volunteer/fundraising campaign. We will gratefully accept donations of all amounts to support the Parade. These much-needed funds will directly pay for entertainers and bands in the parade, insurance, equipment and other associated costs.

Finally, let's not forget that March is about *resilience*: those first crocuses and daffodils coming through the frost. This month also marks the two-year anniversary of COVID-19 restrictions, which our community – including our acclaimed school system and our hardy small business owners – continue to skillfully navigate.

Let's take a moment to celebrate hometown heroes during special days such as


Absolutely Incredible Kid Day (March 17) and National Mom and Pop Business Owners Day (March 29).

We look forward to hearing from you during a hopeful start to 2022! Visit www.orindaassociation.org/4th-of-july-parade, call us at 925.254.0800 or email us at 4thofjuly@orindaassociation.org.

Marianne Moser can be reached at 4thofjuly@orindaassociation.org.

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OBITUARY

Betty Burkhalter Lived a Full and Active Life with Family and Friends

By THE BURKHALTER FAMILY

Barbara Louise “Betty” Burkhalter, age 89, passed away peacefully Nov. 21, 2021, in Alamo.

Born April 20, 1932 in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, Betty graduated with a degree in nursing from Vancouver General Hospital in 1955 and promptly headed to the warmer climes of Hawaii. Betty loved her time in Hawaii, often working the 2 p.m. - 10 p.m. shift at the hospital so she could surf all morning. She moved to the Bay Area in 1958 when she accepted a nursing position at Kaiser in Oakland. In 1962, she married Richard “Dick” Burkhalter, who preceded her in death earlier in 2021. They were married 59 years.

In 1970, Betty and Dick moved their family to Orinda, where Betty became an active volunteer in the local schools and an avid tennis player at Orinda Country Club. Along with surfing and tennis, Betty also enjoyed swimming and was a dedicated sports fan, following local professional teams, the National Hockey League and favorite tennis stars.

In the 1990s, she began volunteering at the professional tennis tournament that became known as the SAP Open, where



Betty and Dick Burkhalter were active members of the Orinda community, contributing many volunteer hours to local organizations.

she got to meet the pros and watch quality tennis up close.

Betty and Dick traveled to nearly every continent and dozens of countries, but her favorite place was the family cabin outside of Shingletown, CA, where, from 1962 on, she and Dick spent every summer. Their children and grandchildren, as well as an

ever-expanding group of friends and neighbors, would join them on the cabin deck for dinner and good fellowship.

In her later years, Betty took up spin classes at the gym, gardened, attended her grandchildren’s events and savored her summers at the cabin. Betty also knitted personalized, sparkly Christmas stockings

for all the children in her immediate and extended families, and later, for the new arrivals of many friends and acquaintances in Orinda.

Betty was the loving mother of Bruce and Lynda, beloved mother-in-law of Dave and Barbara, dear sister-in-law of Suzy and proud grandmother of Hannah, Brian and Allison. She was also the aunt to her late brother Howard’s children, Charles, Jim, Bruce and Karen.

Betty lived a full life and will be lovingly remembered by family and friends as a wonderful mother, grandmother, wife, nurse, volunteer and sports fan. She will be dearly missed and forever in our hearts.

◆ LETTERS from page 4

the EBMUD board of directors, imploring them to put the fire hydrant back into service, yet my pleas fall on deaf ears; indeed EBMUD proffers excuses not based on fact.

Please support your Tappan Terrace neighbors on this matter by contacting me at EastBayMud@NickLawrence.com.

– Nick Lawrence

Private Roads and HOA’s

I read with interest, Mayor Fay’s concern for Wilder’s private roads being excluded from any program enabling private roads to gain “public” status and that the City must work on this as “one community.”

Mayor Fay is concerned that Wilder residents are paying for the maintenance of their roads, while at the same time, paying property taxes for road maintenance that they receive no direct benefit.

The City of Orinda has a history of exploiting financially certain homeowners and their roads.

When Orinda was incorporated, certain roads did not meet the City standards for road maintenance and thus, selected homeowners were forced by the City to form their own homeowner’s association to maintain the road that accessed their property and continue to make the road accessible to the general public.

This homeowner’s association that I am a member of is entitled “The Roads of Hacienda Homes” that maintains a number of Orinda roads that are used by Orinda residents and visitors as public streets, but in fact, the roads are private roads, both for maintenance and insurance purposes.

If Mayor Fay wants to achieve an equitable “one community” solution to both the Wilder private roads and the Roads of Hacienda Homes private roads, the Mayor should grant a City tax offset to the members of the respective homeowner’s associations fees, so that they are not financially exploited by paying taxes for services that they are not receiving.

– William G. Wong

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AUTHOR / FIRST FRIDAY FORUM

Author of *Queen Sugar* to Speak at Orinda Community Church

By SALLY HOGARTY
Executive Editor

Natalie Baszile, the author of *Queen Sugar*, which has been produced as a television series on the Oprah Winfrey Network, will speak at the Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, March 20 from 4 – 6 p.m.

Queen Sugar, Baszile's first novel, was named one of the *San Francisco Chronicle's* Best Books of 2014 and nominated for an NAACP Image Award. It follows an African American woman from Los Angeles who migrates to Louisiana to run the cane farm she inherited from her father. A recent widow, she travels with her 11-year-old daughter and discovers hope, heartache

and a whole new family in today's South.

Based in the Bay Area, Baszile's most recent work is *We Are Each Other's Harvest*, a celebration of Black farming in America.

"This is the first in what we hope will be an annual lecture to welcome in and support the community," said Pastor Elizabeth Robinson.

Limited in-person seating will be available, with reservations required. The lecture will also be live streamed. For more information, email office@orindachurch.org, or call 925.254.4906.



COURTESY OF NATALIE BASZILE

Bay Area writer **Natalie Baszile's** first novel became a television series on the Oprah Winfrey Network.

Dr. Ruiz-Guajardo Speaks about United States-Mexico Relations

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

What do Americans really know about the neighboring country to the south? To help us better understand this, Dr. Juan Carlos Ruiz-Guajardo will present "Mexican Culture in the Context of the

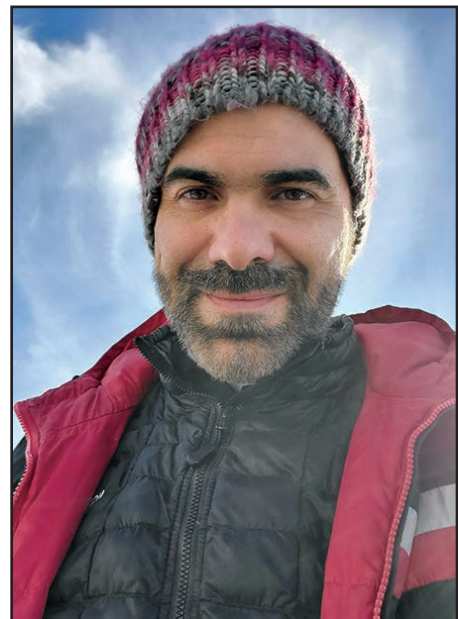
United States - Mexico Relationship" at First Friday Forum (FFF), slated for March 4 at 10 a.m.

Ruiz-Guajardo serves in the office of the Consulate General of Mexico in Sacramento as the cultural and educational attaché. His duties include promoting the image of Mexico and showcasing the rich and ethnic heritage and practices of MesoAmerica. He is helping to plan a celebration of 500 years of Mexican history.

Ruiz-Guajardo also works to develop a strong network to protect vulnerable communities and to facilitate effective conversations concerning migrants and human rights organizations. A racial healing circle practitioner because of his passion for diversity, equity and social justice, he actively participates in dialogues regarding race and reconciliation. Ruiz-Guajardo is also a professor at UC Davis and holds a MS in applied ecology and a doctorate in evolutionary ecology.

Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church sponsors this program. Registration is needed for this forum and can be found at lopc.org/first-friday-forum.

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



COURTESY OF DR. GUAJARDO

First Friday Forum Speaker **Dr. Ruiz-Guajardo** will talk about "Mexican Culture in the Context of the United States-Mexico Relationship," March 4 at 10 a.m.

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

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◆ FIREWISE from page 7

- the base of the exterior of your home
- Get rid of combustible materials under decks
- Limb up branches on trees and bushes; get rid of dead brush and debris
- The last five feet of any fencing attached to a home must be of noncombustible materials
- If another combustible structure is within 25 feet of the dwelling, facing walls of dwelling must include tem-

pered glass and noncombustible, fire rated cladding.

Start with baby steps: clear the first five feet around your home, eliminate juniper and debris from your property and limb up your trees. If you are not in a Firewise group, you can still follow its program at <https://bit.ly/366DMrO>. Once you get started you might want to start a group of your own!

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



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CONTINUATIONS

◆ CIARLANTINI from page 6

“I have seen the arts save kids’ lives over the years, but as a theater teacher, I am concerned that sports are pushed so much, that these kids don’t even know what talent lies within them,” she said. “Our children have immense undiscovered abilities. Creative outlets such as acting, writing and music can help get them through dark times, as it has with my daughter.”

Writing definitely remains in this sixth grader’s future.

“I have another book in process,” said

Ciarlantini. “A realistic fiction. It follows the story of an eighth-grade girl, Ava, who is a singer. It takes place in Connecticut. I imagine it won’t be available for purchase until the fall.”

Ciarlantini’s website can be found at www.stellaciarlantini.org and view her KTVU Ch. 2 News interview at <https://bit.ly/3JkXZbL>. Visit her Amazon page www.amzn.to/3gEz9at and follow her on Instagram @stellaciarlantini.

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

◆ GLAZER from page 1

wellness centers on all campuses, staff them with district employees and create a re-entry plan for students on the California Department of Education’s Home & Hospital Instruction Program.”

Graham clarified, “The Home & Hospital program is for students who can’t physically attend school due to many reasons. For example, it could be a broken leg, sickness or disease, the needs of an elite athlete or child actor, etc. Eighty-five percent of the kids who are out of school and getting a teacher home visit per week are now out for mental health issues.”

“We helped convince AUHSD to spend \$1.2 million to staff and open wellness centers on all five campuses,” said Graham.

Clearly, the founders accomplished their goals.

President and Co-Founder of BeingwellCA, Miller said when one of her three daughters was diagnosed with a severe mental illness at age 12, it put her entire family into a tailspin.

“It was a daunting task learning how to navigate the mental healthcare system,” said Miller of Antioch. “But what was even more overwhelming was learning how to keep my child safe and supported at school.”

She researched and attended workshops and counseling sessions.

“Little did I know that would begin my path as an advocate. The license plate began as a dream to provide mental health resources to students, parents and faculty,” she said. “Teaming up with Graham, Caroline and Tracy Wiseman to form BeingwellCA has helped make that dream come true. I never want any parent to walk in our shoes.”

Funds raised for these license plates would go to the California Department of Education, earmarked for youth mental health.

Glazer encouraged everyone to help: “We have all seen how COVID-19 has had devastating effects on individuals’ mental health throughout the state, but it has most especially harmed our students. Too many are falling through the cracks, especially as they have had to navigate all the emotional complexities the pandemic has created.” Glazer concluded, “Therefore, it is of utmost importance to help provide additional resources for schools and greater awareness, so students know they aren’t alone.”

For more information and/or to pledge support, visit www.beingwellca.org.

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

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◆ BAUER-KAHAN from page 1

Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California. The bill will increase fines for harassment at reproductive health clinics and ban the aggressive filming and the posting of personal information of those working at or visiting the clinics.

In addition to her work on equality and access to reproductive healthcare, Bauer-Kahan also places importance on local schools, with a vow to “continue to work on ensuring that access to education is meaningful and well-funded.”

Elected to the 16th Assembly District in 2018, Orinda resident Bauer-Kahan is the current Chair of the California State Assembly of Water, Parks and Wildlife, and aims to continue progress toward protecting the environment.

“My wonderful community is very focused on climate change and the environment,” she said, noting the importance of issues such as wildfire prevention. “Clean water and preservation of our open space are two issues that I have worked on and are really important to me.”

Bauer-Kahan has also worked alongside the Justice for Miles Hall Foundation to create AB 988, which designates the three-digit telephone number 9-8-8 as an alterna-

tive to traditional 911 calls during urgent mental health crises. Walnut Creek native, Miles Hall, was 23 years old when he suffered a mental health crisis and tragically, was shot and killed by responding Walnut Creek police in 2019.

The new hotline is projected to go live July, 2022, with plans for full implementation in California by 2027. It will offer state citizens and visitors 24/7 access to suicide prevention and behavioral health assistance.

Dialing 988, Bauer-Kahan said, will free up law enforcement to keep communities safe.

Emphasizing community needs ahead of politics, Bauer-Kahan has experience with working across political party lines. She spoke of instances in which, even in cases of polarizing issues, respectful conversations took place. Disagreements do happen sometimes, she said, but they enable her to learn from her Republican colleagues.

“I wish, especially the younger generation, could see us work in Sacramento,” Bauer-Kahan said.

“More often than not, you can find common ground.”

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

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VISUAL ARTS

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ELANA O'LOSKEY



Art Gallery at the Orinda Library: 19th High School Visual Arts Competition Lights up the Town

The 19th Annual High School Visual Arts Competition (HSVAC) is both live in the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library this month and virtual on the Lamorinda Arts Council (Council) website from April, 2022 to April, 2023.

Join students at their awards ceremony on Thursday, March 10 from 7 – 8:30 p.m. Event Co-Chair Pat Jensen said, “HSVAC

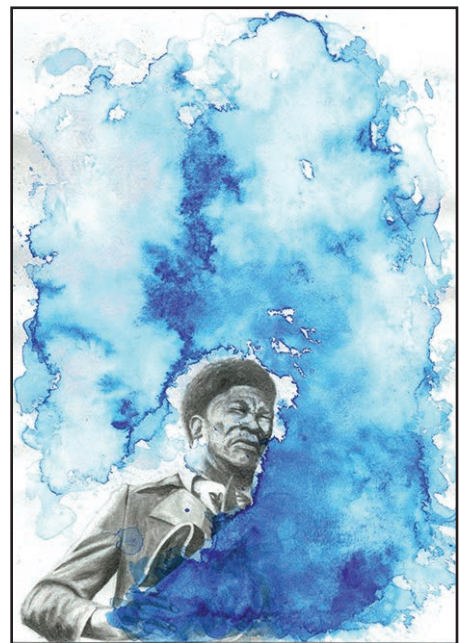
ignites and rewards artistic expression for local high school students in a variety of categories. The competition provides students with an opportunity to exhibit their work and see what other students are doing.”

The exhibit showcases original art in four categories: 2D, 3D, Photography and the Lamorinda Arts Alliance Digital Art category. All work is by high school students who live in or attend public or private schools in Orinda, Lafayette, or Moraga, including all schools in the Acalanes Union High School District. This includes Acalanes, Campolindo, Las Lomas and Bentley High Schools plus the Acalanes Center for Independent Study. The competition features cash awards, merit citations and an in-person art exhibit in the gallery as well as an online public exhibit of entries on the Council website.

“We thank the many volunteers who are helping us honor the young artists in our community and celebrate their talents,” said Event Co-Chair Olga Lerner.

Professionals with experience in practicing, teaching or representing the categories judge the competition. Their criteria are creativity, originality, content and degree of expertise in the chosen medium. Cash awards, totaling \$3,000, will be awarded for best in show, first to third place and up to three honorable mentions in each of the four award categories.

For details concerning this exciting event, visit www.lamorindaarts.org/vac/. These student artists spent time during



COURTESY OF LAMORINDA ARTS COUNCIL

Benjamin Cardozo was a senior at Miramonte High School when he made the 2D piece, *The Kings Blues*, to capture the emotions of B.B. King while playing the blues.



COURTESY OF BILL CARMEL

Artist **John Barry** demonstrating trAction painting at the Lafayette Art and Wine Festival. Defined as a combination of performance and process art, Barry dips his rollerblades in paint, then adds lines and marks on the canvas. View him on YouTube at www.youtu.be/DnOhloFNWDM.

COVID-19 expressing themselves through a variety of amazing art forms. The Council invites you to stop by and take a look.

To learn more about the Council, visit www.lamorindaarts.org. This exhibit runs March 1 through 31 in the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library at 26 Orinda Way. Hours are Monday – Thursday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday – Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., closed Sunday.

The library and gallery are closed Wednesday, March 30. For more library information, call 925.254.2184 or visit www.ccclib.org. Email the curators with questions at galler@lamorindaarts.org or call the Lamorinda Arts Council at 925.359.9940.

Art Gallery at Wilder: Bill Carmel's Veil Tapestry and Festival Wheelies

The Lamorinda Arts Council (Council) invites you to join Bill Carmel at an artist

reception in his honor at the Wilder Art Gallery Sunday, March 6 from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

The San Ramon resident is the featured artist for the month of March. He is showing three large abstract paintings composed as public art projects and recent work of three large prints on vinyl. For the remainder of

[SEE ART SCENE page 12]



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FILM

◆ ART SCENE from page 11

March, unless the City of Orinda changes its COVID-19 precautions, you can view his exhibit at the Council’s virtual gallery at www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries. Private viewings can be arranged by contacting Curator Aniston Breslin at wildergallery@lamorindaarts.org.

Carmel’s public art projects are part of an ongoing relationship with other artists and community partners engaged in making collaborative artwork. The piece entitled *Veil Tapestry* is a work that asks members of our community to paint sacred words on a large traveling canvas.

The pieces he titled *Festival Wheelies* were done with Danville artist John Barry, creator of the trAction painting process. The work was painted during the 2019 Art

and Wine Festival in Lafayette.

In trAction painting, paint is dribbled onto wheels of vehicles driven by the artists and laid down as colorful tracks. Plus, it’s fun. For the festival, wheels of toy cars were dipped in acrylic paint and driven over the canvas, building up colorful layers and patterns over time.

Carmel created a mural entitled *The Ballad of Rocky the Squirrel and Andy the Hummer* for Maggie Boscoe’s Artify Orinda project in 2020. You can see it on the side of the Mash Gas station building the next time you are in the neighborhood. He is also part of the curation team for the Art Gallery in the Orinda Library.


An art educator, Carmel said he is creating a workbook that uses art to teach other academic subjects.

“It is inspired by Common Core Standards and uses art lessons to bring creativity and critical thinking into the study of other academic subjects,” said Carmel. “Not only does Common Core curriculum emphasize critical thinking skills and creative strategies, but it promotes social emotional learning.”

The Wilder Art and Garden Center is located at 20 Orinda Fields Way. The exhibit runs March 1 through 31 and is in-person on the reception date, but virtual the rest of the month.


Viewings by appointment with Curator Aniston Breslin can be arranged by request at wildergallery@lamorindaarts.org. For more information call the Lamorinda Arts Council at 925.359.9940.

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



THE REEL LESS TRAVELED

VICTORIANS AND VERDICTS



TOM WESTLAKE

There is no other theater quite like the Orinda Theatre. The Bay Area has its share of grand movie palaces such as the Castro and the Grand Lake. The two architectural marvels which originally showed movies, the Fox and the Paramount in Oakland, also come to mind. But it is the Orinda Theatre that stands apart, partly due to its location, but more because it’s not afraid to show its neon grandeur.

To this point, not enough praise can be heaped upon Derek Zemrak and his crew who have managed to bring much of the Lamorinda community together not only to save this theater, but to enable it to thrive.

The neon continues to burn brightly and the lights in the foyer chase away the darkness while providing an illuminating invitation to art lovers of every stripe to enter. The interior carpets and murals continue this welcoming trend.

But if you think Zemrak was content with just staying open, you haven’t been paying attention.

Therefore, it is with great delight I inform you that the Orinda Theatre has undergone a welcome refurbishment with the installation of new curtains and screens in the two smaller venues. Now you will be witness to a new vitality when you go to the movies, which leads me right to the two special programs these improvements will make all the more enjoyable.

Let’s start with the Chiller Diller Theatre. Lord Blood-Rah is pleased to present *First Men in the Moon* (1964). Though his contribution is relatively minor compared to some of his other films, this movie is mostly known for its effects work by stop-motion animation master Ray Harryhausen.

Based on a book by H.G. Wells, the plot tells the “real” story about who got to the moon first. (Hint: It wasn’t us.) It will screen on Saturday, March 19 at 9:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.orindamovies.com. Also, make sure to check out the Orinda Theatre’s Facebook page for additional special programs and concerts.

The International Film Showcase will also contribute to lighting up one of the new screens with its March selection *The Judgement*. Based on a non-fiction book about a murder case, it follows a determined journalist who is unconvinced that the sentence passed down was just. In this story, real life often mirrors fiction in that

[SEE REEL page 14]

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CLUBS / CALENDAR

Club Meetings in March

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

American Association of University Women-Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch (AAUW-OML) general meeting March 15 9:30 a.m. at the Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, presenting Bonnie Spindler, a real estate agent with 30 years experience in advocating and educating about historic properties. Free and open to the public. More information at <https://oml-ca.aauw.net>.

Community Gentle Yoga, via Zoom, Mondays

and Thursdays 9-10 a.m. Contact Gaby Mozee at gcmozee@gmail.com.

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

Friends of the Orinda Creeks. Fourth Wednesday, 3 p.m., 925.408.1840. www.orindacreeks.org. or info@orindacreeks.org.

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

Lamorinda Meditation Community. Mondays and Thursdays, 10:30 - 11:25 a.m., through

Zoom. All levels and philosophies welcome. Contact Gaby Mozee at: gcmozee@gmail.com.

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

Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary. Weekly meetings conducted in hybrid format – in person & Zoom, and are recorded for after-the-fact playback. General public can access at no charge. 7 – 8:15 a.m. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82609498205>.

Meetings are held at the Veterans Memorial Center, 3780 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. For information: www.lamorindasunrise.com or lamorindasunrise@gmail.com. Mar 4 – Budd MacKenzie gives update on Trust in Education Foundation, established by him in 2009 to build schools in Afghanistan; Mar. 11 – Annie Murphy Paul, science speaker/writer for *Scientific American*, TED presenter, author of *Origins of the Cult of Personality and The Extended Mind*; Mar. 18 – Pearce Godwin talks about how radicalization polarization threatens our nation’s future; Mar. 25 – Bobbie Landers and

Kent Long share details of ongoing campaign to restore the Joaquin Moraga Adobe, built in 1841 and the oldest house in Contra Costa County.

Montelindo Garden Club, membership open to all. For more information, visit www.montelindogarden.com.

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

Orinda Chamber of Commerce Mar. 2 Executive Board Meeting, Mar. 9, Membership Meeting 4 p.m., Mar. 16 Board Meeting 8 p.m., via Zoom. Contact Kristen Southworth at president@orindachamber.org for Zoom link.

Orinda Garden Club, www.orindagc.org, [SEE CLUBS page 14]

On the Calendar in March

1 **Christian Science Church** Prayer Garden open to all for Quiet Meditation. Pray, read, meditate. All are welcome anytime during daylight hours. 24 Orinda Way.

International Film Showcase Dutch film, *The Judgement* at the Orinda Theatre for a week. Dates to be determined. For tickets, visit: www.OrindaMovies.com. See article p. 12.

Orinda Library is open to the public. All events are currently online only. They can be viewed at: <https://ccclib.bibliocommons.com/events>. Open hours are Mon. through Thu., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Fri. and Sat., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; closed Sun. 26 Orinda Way, Call 925.254.2184 for more information or visit <http://ccclib.org>.

Art Gallery at the Orinda Library - 19th High School Visual Arts Competition. Artwork from area high school students is on display during March and online until 2023. Juried awards ceremony Mar. 10, 7 p.m. See article p. 11.

Art Gallery at Wilder - *Veil Tapestry* and *Festival Wheelies* done with rollerblades by Bill Carmel during March. Join him at his artist reception on Mar. 6, 2:30. See article p. 11.

Boys Team Charity Orinda, a volunteer service charity, through Mar. 7, submit a prospective membership application online at bcorinda.org; for information email Maya McBride at mayamcbride@hotmail.com.

2 **Orinda Rotary State of the City** address by Mayor Fay 12:30 - 1:30. For more information and Zoom link, please email claydeanhardtrotary@gmail.com.

3 **Orinda Books Pat’s Book Club** will meet to discuss *The Cold Millions* by Jess Walter.

Inspired by tales from Walter’s grandfather about hoboing. 11 a.m. The book is available at Orinda Books. Call 925.254.7606 or email info@orindabooks.com.

4 **First Friday Forum** presents *Mexican Culture in the Context of the United States - Mexico Relationship* with Dr. Juan Carlos Ruiz-Guajardo. 10 a.m. See article p. 9.

5 **Orinda Farmers’ Market**, 9 a.m. Orinda Way in front of Rite Aid and the Community Park. www.cccfm.org or market hotline at 925.431.8361. Also Mar. 12, 19 and 26. See article p. 14.

6 **Orinda Theatre** presents *Live a the Orinda!* with Marilu Henner. Beginning at 5 p.m. See article p. 2.


10 **Miramonte High School** spring play *Pajama Game* 7 p.m. Miramonte Theater. Also March 11, and 12; March 13 at 4 p.m. Tickets at showtix4u.com.

19 **Chiller Diller Theatre** presents *First Men in the Moon* 9:30 p.m. Orinda Theatre. Visit www.orindamovies.com, or www.facebook.com/orindatheatre. See article p. 12.

23 **Miramonte High School Smart Start Driver Awareness Class** 6:30 p.m. contact bcanty@auhsdschools.org for more information.

24 **Miramonte High School Performers For Progress** 7 p.m. Also Mar. 26. A student run cabaret night of various acts which began in 2010. All proceeds go to a charitable organization of the student producers’ choice. Tickets at showtix4u.com.

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



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◆ CLUBS from page 13

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

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

Orinda Junior Women's Club. First Tuesday, 7 p.m., www.orindajuniors.org. Contact Erika Rosenberg at 415.867.3065.

Orinda Masonic Lodge #122 F&AM. 9

Altarinda Road, Orinda Masonic Center. 925.254.5211.

Orinda Rotary. Virtual meeting Wednesdays, 12:15 p.m., cmroeder@comcast.net or www.orindarotary.org for Zoom link.

Orinda Satellite Rotary Club. Second Wednesday. Call Sylvia at 510.224.8548.

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

Orinda Teen Advisory Council for information, email Recreation Coordinator Matt Delmartini at mdlmartini@cityoforinda.org.

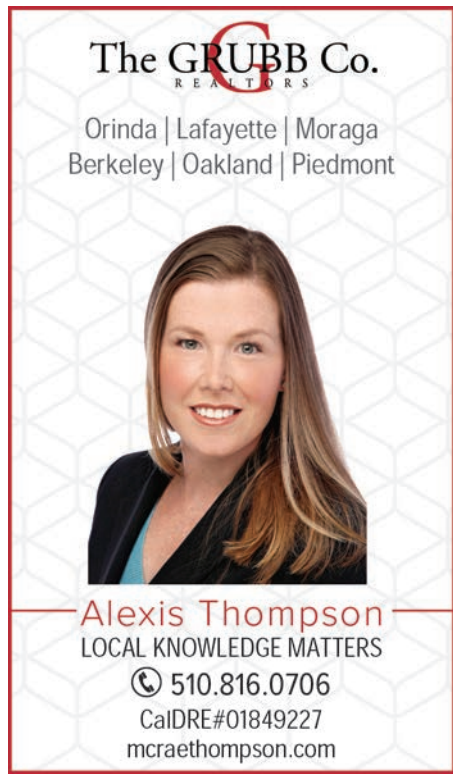
Orinda Woman's Club. Meetings Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. Garden Room of Orinda Library. Email Jean Barnhart, jeanr.barnhart@gmail.com to confirm location.

Orinda Youth Sports Winter Basketball runs through March 12. Orinda Community Center. Email Recreation Coordinator Matt Delmartini at mdlmartini@cityoforinda.org.

Road Runners. Runners meet 5:45 a.m. Tuesday at Papilion (67 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette), Wednesday at Gepettos (87 Orinda Way), Thursday at SiSI (910 Country. Club Drive, Moraga) and Friday at Starbucks (470 Moraga Road, Rheem). Contact John Fazel, runmtns@prodigy.net.

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

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



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BARBARA KOBSAR

Did you know March is National Nutrition Month? Attention is focused on the importance of making informed food choices and developing healthy eating and physical activity habits. The theme this year is "Celebrate a World of Flavors," and Orinda Farmers' Market offers some great options. Prepared crepes, tamales, pupusas, dumplings and soups are ready to enjoy with the option to shop for farm fresh ingredients to create your own dishes.

Coriander was one of the initial spice plants to reach America from its native Mediterranean region. It is one of only a few to be used both as a fresh herb and dried seed. It's known for full-bodied flavors in addition to containing antioxidants, essential oils, vitamins and dietary fiber.

The flat, lacy, bright green leaves of the coriander plant (cilantro) are picked before the small, pinkish flowers form to become coriander seeds. At harvest, the ripe seeds have developed their distinctive coriander aroma and subtle flavors of citrus and parsley appreciated in sweet and savory dishes and as an essential ingredient in curry powder.

Cilantro is a love it or hate it type of herb. Some see cilantro as a soapy tasting herb to be left in the garden. These individuals have a variation in a group of odorant receptor genes that lets them perceive the soapy-flavored aldehydes in cilantro leaves. So it does happen!

But for the rest of us, let's enjoy the fresh bunches of cilantro in everything from soups, sauces, salads, marinades, sausage and guacamole. Try making an herbal tea by adding 1 teaspoon of coriander seeds to 1 cup of water; boil for 2 to 3 minutes and let steep for 5 to 6 minutes.

Choose bunches of cilantro with an overall green color with no signs of yellowing, wilting or bruising. Fresh cilantro is highly perishable. Cover with a damp paper towel, place in a plastic bag and refrigerate for 2 to 3 days if necessary. Wash just before using. Extra cilantro may be frozen but loses its crispness and some flavor. Toss unfrozen into soups and sauces and adjust the amount accordingly – up to twice the amount called for in the original recipe.

Look for Jeanne's Broth at the Orinda market every Saturday. One of Vern Phan and son Vaughn's favorites to offer is a bowl of Khao Soi filled with flat rice noodles, shredded chicken breast, broth, fermented soybean, red cabbage, bean sprouts and green onion topped with fresh cilantro. Delicious!

The Orinda Farmers' Market is open every Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Orinda



BARBARA KOBSAR
Jeanne's Broth, at the Orinda Farmers' Market, is where Vern Phan and son Vaughn offer a bowl of Khao Soi; a delicious dish with rice noodles, shredded chicken breast, fermented soybean, red cabbage, bean sprouts, green onion and cilantro.

Way in Orinda Village. For more information, visit www.cccfm.org, facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket and Instagram at OrindaFarmersMarket or call the market hotline at 925.431.8361.

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

◆ REEL from page 12

the quest for what actually happened and who actually committed this ghastly crime is met with obstacles of every sort.

Frustrations run high and, doubtless, you will be swept up in the emotional maelstrom, which is exactly what this sort of film aims to do. Art should, sometimes, be challenging, something Showcase organizers Efi Lubliner and Jo Alice Canterbury hope you accept. A date is not set yet, but check www.internationalshowcase.org for show times and trailers.

So now all that's left is for everyone to get to the Orinda Theatre to check out the new enhancements. Those wonderful images made of sound and light will shine all the brighter now, and that's where the "reel" magic lies.

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



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CONTINUATIONS

◆ OUSD from page 1

firmed positive student COVID-19 cases reported to the OUSD Health Team since the school year began. Twenty-eight staff cases have been recorded within the district in the same time frame. The district dashboard cautions that positive cases do not necessarily indicate transmission on campus.

Numbers for the week of Feb. 7 include 25 confirmed student cases and two confirmed staff cases.

According to OUSD's COVID-19 information and resource page (www.orindaschools.org/covid19information), staff and students must conduct daily symptom screenings and, in the event of exposure to the virus, may be asked to quarantine from school or work, depending on the type of exposure.

Since January, the district has been utilizing the group-based tracing method as outlined by the updated California Department of Public Health (CDPH) guidance. Students who have shared an indoor airspace with an infectious COVID-positive individual for more than a cumulative total of 15 minutes within a 24-hour period are to be notified of their exposure.

These new guidelines stand in contrast to contact tracing individual "close contacts" who were within six-feet of a COVID-positive person.

District schools continue to provide filtered air ventilation within its instructional spaces and, in response to the January surge in cases, conduct lunch and snack times outdoors, according to the OUSD

website.

Glimme spoke of a significant increase of students who were out in isolation, with most students reporting mild symptoms, but required to isolate nonetheless. Following the CDPH guidelines of isolating for five days, students that have tested positive for COVID-19 are allowed to return to school on day six post-isolation, with a negative test result.

The school district has not suffered from a significant staffing shortage due to the surge. "We were spared during the pandemic," Glimme said, with most omicron COVID-19 cases among classified staff, such as classroom aides. The district was able to adequately cover absences from its pool of substitutes.

Glimme highlighted that OUSD utilizes COVID-19 testing for students and staff and provides tests to the community three times a week at no charge.

Wagner Ranch Elementary School Principal Jim Manheimer expressed optimism regarding the ongoing pandemic within the school environment, noting some challenges with the need for substitutes, but "not bad."

"We feel good that it feels like omicron is waning," said Manheimer. The students have been "super compliant" about wearing their masks indoors, he said, noting that the wearing of masks outside is optional.

"We feel good that we will experience school even more fully in the coming weeks and months," he added.

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

◆ HENNER from page 2

performances of her one-woman show so far.

"People seem to really love the stories and the songs that are connected to the stories," she said. "People feel like 'wow, I knew you did this, but I didn't know you did that.' So, everybody, I think, is surprised to learn some things about my life."

She added, "And people feel like a part of their lives have been touched too, because I'm just a girl from the neighborhood in Chicago and talk about stories of growing up, the wonderful people I've worked with and the crazy memory thing."

The crazy memory thing is called Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory (HSAM), and fewer than 70 people in the world have it.

Individuals diagnosed with HSAM can recall details of daily experiences which have occurred over previous decades with considerable accuracy.

"During the show, I have fun with the audience where I pull a date out and tell them what day of the week it was, what I was doing on that day and what song was popular at the time!"

Henner grew up surrounded by entertainment.

"Because my family had a dancing school in the backyard, I grew up singing and dancing my whole life and I started doing community theater," said Henner, currently in New Orleans working on a live action Disney film called "Haunted Mansion" with castmates Danny DeVito, LaKeith Stanfield, Tiffany Haddish, Owen Wilson and Rosario

Dawson.

Henner talks about how community theater helped pave her way to success.

"When I was 15, I did a show with someone I really bonded with – he was 10 years older than I and in the advertising business," she said. "Then he called me two years later and said, 'Henner I've written a show that may never get off the ground. We're going to perform it in the converted trolley barn, and I wrote it about the kids I went to high school with. It's called *Grease*.'"

Henner went on to do *Grease* for the National Company and moved out to Los Angeles where she started doing movies. A month later, she heard from a certain casting director.

"Joel Thurm! He liked me, so he brought me in for 'Taxi' even though I was really wrong for their original description of Elaine," said Henner.

A five-time Golden Globe nominee, Henner has starred in 73 films, seven Broadway shows and two hit sitcoms. Henner's talents run deep as an actor, producer, radio host, singer, podcaster and a *New York Times* best selling author of 10 books. But there's one thing Henner said she can't do.

"You don't want me on your team in Pictionary; unless it's about hair and makeup," she said. "I know the things I do well and love to do and I know the things I don't do well!"

For more information and tickets, visit www.orindamovies.com.

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

◆ OA BOARD from page 3

U.S. Colonel in the Air Force.

Grace and Seung have three children: Samuel, who graduates from Cal Poly this June; Elanor, who attends University of Southern California; and Micah, a homeschooled high school junior with a demanding golf schedule. The aspiring professional golfer also has his own sports podcast called "Paikman Chicago." Another important family member is the family's Havanese poodle Lulu.

During her free time, Paik plays the violin and hikes around the beautiful Bay Area. Her other interests are interior design, coffee and investing in the lives of people in her community – something her involvement with The Orinda Association will allow her to expand upon.

Longtime Orinda resident Sopak hails from Washington State and is a graduate of the University of Nevada (Reno). For the past 28 years, he has been a State Farm Insurance Agent with his office in Orinda (www.kellysopak.com).

A sports enthusiast, Sopak has head coach responsibilities for the girls' basketball team at Carondelet High School in

Concord. Prior to Carondelet, he performed the same duties at Miramonte High for 11 years. During that time, he led the team to the most wins in school history.

Sopak and his wife of 24 years, Beverley, have two daughters; 22-year-old Lauren, currently in the Saint Mary's College Professional M.B.A. program and the director of basketball operations for the women's basketball team, and 20-year-old Leah, a sophomore at St. Martin's University in Lacey, Washington, and a scholarship basketball player. The Sopaks also have two dogs, both Pomeranians, named Carmella and Kobe.

"As a small business owner and youth coach, I don't get much free time, but my hobbies include spending time with family, traveling (tropical), golf and classic cars," said Sopak. "I've always respected and appreciated the many efforts and endeavors of The Orinda Association. I am beyond excited to be a working member of the OA and looking forward to working with such a talented and hardworking group."

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

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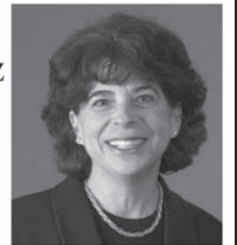
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BUSINESS

Orinda's Interior Designer is a "Bell Epoch"

By MIMI BOMMARITO
Staff Writer

Vanessa Bell never slows down. With her entire adolescence having been devoted to dancing with the San Francisco Ballet, her interior design career, with its fast tempo and artistic staging, perfectly suits this sought-after Orindan.

Despite the many wrenches the pandemic hurls at the economy, business at Vanessa Bell Design flourishes. As she and husband Mark adjust to the empty-nester lifestyle, a demanding schedule also keeps her lonesomeness for daughter Brinly, a college sophomore in Santa Barbara, and Mason, a college senior in Santa Clara, at a reasonable level.

Vanessa Bell's longstanding reputation for interior design, lighting and decor is well established in the East Bay and beyond, stretching all the way to Hawaii.

Although Mark is an ad man (the two met while working at a San Francisco advertis-

ing agency – she as a producer and he, an art director – she politely refuses his offers to create ads for her business.

In 2007, the Bells purchased Berkeley's Omega Too, now known as Omega Lighting & Design (OL&D).

Vanessa began helping clients with their decorative lighting needs. She quickly built a solid and successful reputation, which, over the past 15 years, quickly expanded to decorating and, ultimately, entire home renovations.

The forced introspection of lockdown in 2020 allowed her time to reorganize her priorities and restructure her professional path. Although Vanessa remains affiliated with Omega Lighting & Design, where she and her husband frequently collaborate on lighting projects together, she decided time had come to focus full-time on her Vanessa Bell Design business.

"Working together at OL&D, we made a good team," said Mark Bell, who continues to run the bustling business at the lighting retail and repair shop in Berkeley. "But working as two individual businesses, we now make a great team."

In the expanded design capacity, Vanessa enjoys incorporating her interior architectural studies from the University of California, Berkeley.

When helping clients navigate a renovation, she is often hired to help create and fine-tune the vision for the contractor.

Her signature "keep what makes a home unique" approach, versus tearing a structure down to the studs and completely rebuilding, has proven quite popular. Not only

is it often less expensive and less disruptive, but she feels more of the home's true personality emerges in the transformation. She has a keen eye for envisioning how, in many instances, a few changes can create design magic.

"If we were both movies," said Mark Bell, "Vanessa is *Breakfast at Tiffany's* with her style and sophistication."

With Mark's original lighting fixtures, often fashioned from unique estate sale items and his antique lighting fixtures repurposing, Mark said, "As for me, I guess I'm more *Young Frankenstein*."

Omega Lighting & Design is located at 2204 San Pablo Ave. in Berkeley, 510.843.3636. Vanessa Bell can be reached at 510.508.3636 or vanessa@omegalightingdesign.com.

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



Orinda resident **Vanessa Bell**, interior designer and owner of Vanessa Bell Design, said she loves designing so much, that if she ever won the Lotto, she would design for free.

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FINANCIAL NEWS

HIGHER MORTGAGE RATES LOOM OVER ORINDA

DAVID BORN, CFA, CFP



We knew it would happen some day: mortgage rates have inched up.

According to Freddie Mac, the average 30-year mortgage rate climbed steadily from an all-time low of 2.68% in December 2020 to 3.45% in January of this year.

While these are still historically low rates, it has made potential buyers and sellers wonder what may be in store for the housing market if rates continue to rise. The knee-jerk response to that query is higher rates have a downward impact on prices because potential buyers can't afford to borrow as much.

For example, let's say a buyer can afford a \$5,000 monthly payment. When interest rates were 2.68% this buyer could have borrowed about \$1.25 million. But if interest rates rise to 4.5% then they can only borrow about \$1 million for the same \$5,000 monthly payment.

All of this is not to say that home prices will or will not fall, just that rising interest rates are a headwind for future price appreciation.

It's easy for market participants to get fixated on the downward pressure to demand, even though buyers in the example above pay the same amount over the life of their

mortgage in both scenarios.

The forces of interest rates and prices have offsetting financial implications for buyers that use traditional financing. Said another way, buyers don't need to stress about whatever estimated value Zillow may show next year if buying a home to live in for a long time.

Potential sellers – especially those considering reducing their overall real estate holdings – are one group that might benefit from avoiding any disappointing future prices. The future of both interest rates and home prices is far from a foregone conclusion, and prospective sellers often resist the idea of selling after large price gains anyway in a phenomenon known as recency bias.

Buyers and sellers should both recognize that interest rates are only one force impacting real estate prices. Other forces, such as local company IPOs, the economy and tax policy can be just as hard to forecast as interest rates.

Better for home buyers and sellers to focus on the nuances of their unique finances, lifestyle and risk tolerance to guide them.

David Born can be reached at dborn@pfmpartner.com.

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