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Orinda Ballet Returns with Nutcracker

PATRICIA TOMLINSON

Under the direction of owner and Artistic Director Patricia Tomlinson, the **Orinda Ballet Academy** announces their annual holiday ballet with a live audience, "A Sweet Dream Nutcracker," Dec. 10-12 at the Orinda Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way. The dancers are excited to be back at live performances. During COVID-19 restrictions, Orinda Ballet supplemented the dancers' performances with virtual recorded/streamed versions. The dancers continued to grow in their skills and are excited to be back in a more normal production setting. Masks are required, for both audience and performers, but the magic will be overflowing. Times and prices vary. For ticket information, visit www.orindaballetacademy.com or email patricia@orindaballetacademy.com.

Orinda Schools Come Together to Promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

By ANDREA MADISON
Staff Writer

Diversity, equity and inclusion are terms familiar to society in the wake of Black Lives Matter and other social movements aimed at dismantling bias and normalizing differences.

These goals also provide the basis for the formation and maintenance in Orinda schools of diversity, equity and inclusion groups that as stated in Miramonte High School's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Parents Group webpage (https://www.miramonteparents.com/diversity-and-inclusion-at-miramonte/), "actively seek to understand the complex and rich identities of self and others."

"[There are] definitely expressions of hate, unfortunately, in our community," Miramonte ED&I group member Latika Malkani said.

Malkani, who sees normalizing the experiences of others as critical, asked, "How are people supposed to be accepting of difference without that exposure?"

The need for that exposure and those positive experiences that change other peoples' perspectives and minds drew Malkani to join Miramonte's ED&I group.

The group, like the other diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) collectives found in Orinda's schools, tackles issues of hate and

[See DEI page 5]

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Tree of Lights Honors Loved Ones During the Holiday Season

SALLY HOGARTY
Executive Editor

Hospice East Bay Tree of Lights proudly celebrates their 35th annual Tree of Lights in 12 local communities including Orinda.

The Orinda celebration takes place Dec. 4 at 4:30 p.m. in front of the Bank of America in Village Square. The grand old oak tree in the middle of the square will once again be aglow with lights in memory of loved ones. While the school choir will not be performing this year, there will be music, poetry and the reading of the names of those memorialized on the tree.

Hospice East Bay's Tree of Lights

[See HOSPICE page 15]

SALLY HOGARTY

In past years, crowds of local residents have gathered in Village Square to watch the tree lighting. Unfortunately, this year will not include Santa Claus arriving by fire truck.

COMMUNITY

Citizen of the Year Awards Dinner a Stormy Night to Remember

By CINDY POWELL
Contributing Writer

Though it was a dark and stormy night Oct. 24 with an atmospheric river deluging the Bay Area, the Orinda Community Foundation (OCF) pulled off a wonderful event in the Community Center to celebrate several outstanding Orinda Citizens of the Year (COY), past and present.

Citizens included: Pete Hasselman (COY, 2019), Tom Trowbridge (COY, 2020) and Melanie Light (COY, 2021).

Because many friends and family would not have attended an indoor event, the plan was to move it to the back of the Community Center, opening out onto the patio. Though Room 5 would remain open for food service, the dining tables and podium were to be set outside.

But things changed as Plan B went into effect.

That afternoon, before the dinner, OCF sent a notice to attendees stating, "due to bad weather forecast" the event would be moved back indoors, and proof of a clear COVID-19 test or vaccine notice was required, along with masks.

Most of the city lost power hours before the event. Parking under the library was flooded, too deep to cross and no lighting. Attendees were dropped off in front of the Community Center and ran up the front steps in pouring rain (no power, no elevator service).

During the event, there were many stories of driving across lawns to get around flooding and a dependence on navigating back roads to get to the celebration. It was as if the assemblage were saying, "We've been in Orinda a long time and have seen this before."

The best part of all – the evening was run on generator power!

The city provided floodlights against the walls, and Steve Harwood added lights and a microphone for the speaker podium. Decorations were simple – balloons by Janet Pease (again), Hasselman's wonderful drawings and the Orinda Garden Club centerpieces.

As city, county and state proclamations and awards were handed out, the speeches were so touching that several guests have since requested they be published for others to view. Mayor Amy Worth reminded all that sometimes doing the right thing involves challenges and asked Ann Christofferson to stand.

The backstory is in the '70s when Orinda wanted to tear down the old school building and put in a shopping center. Christofferson raised money to turn it into the current Community Center. She garnered the COY award in 1970 and enjoyed the dinner Sunday evening where she received a round of applause.

Many of the attendees were past recipients of the COY award and attended to support and recognize fellow recipients.

The food, provided by Shelby's Restaurant, was outstanding. I'm usually an eggplant Parmesan critic, yet I snuck a second plate with Helen Hasselman! Everyone commented on the great food. How did Chef Arno pull this off without power?

The lack of electricity gave the event an excited feel, but the people in the room were the real energy, their purpose and stories, timeless.

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

JEFF HEYMAN

Award recipients and presenters (L–R) **Richard Westin, Tom Trowbridge, Melanie Light, Pete Hasselman, Candace Andersen, Sue Severson,** and **Amy Worth** were named Orinda Citizens of the Years 2019, 2020 and 2021 Saturday, Oct. 24 by city, county and state leaders at the Orinda Community Center auditorium. Due to the rainstorm, lack of electricity gave the event an exciting feel. Shelby's restaurant served a wonderful meal and the stories of how attendees had to drive over lawns and back routes to escape the flooding were great.

Journey of Love Senior Crab Fest Honors the Elderly December 5

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff writer

Candace Evans has a passion for helping the elderly. She attributes this to the fact that her grandparents and great grandparents raised her. Now she wants to honor them – and all the elderly – by sponsoring the "Journey of Love Senior Crab Fest," Dec. 5.

Proceeds for the event, held in the parking lot of the Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way, from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m., will go to organizations that support the older generation.

Evans is concerned about health risks seniors face, such as injuries, falls, chronic diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, multiple sclerosis, diabetes, arthritis, heart attacks, strokes and more.

"More and more people in this popula-

[See CRAB page 6]

COURTESY CANDACE EVANS

Journey of Love Senior Crab Fest honors the elderly Dec. 5, 3:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. in the Orinda Community Center parking lot, 28 Orinda Way. Two chefs will fly in for the event: **Chef Melba Rodrigues** (pictured above), owner of Chef Melba's Bistro in Hermosa Beach and Chef Monique Walker, an elder advocate from Baltimore, MD.

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A Message From the OA President
A Time for Giving

KATE WILEY

A few weeks ago, my very close friend of 25 years was killed in a tragic automobile accident. These moments in life are a big wake-up call – a reminder to live each day fully, laugh often, give thanks and say, "I love you."

Life is precious. Everyone's life holds value. Some days it seems impossible to be grateful, but my yoga teacher ends every practice with, "thank you for another day of living, thank you for another day of loving and thank you for another day of giving." That seems to cover it all for me.

During this season of giving, we focus more on others and how we can help. The past 22 months have been challenging with so many in need. Some of our neighbors in Contra Costa County need a warm coat for the winter, some need a ride to a doctor's appointment and some need connection and friendship.

You can volunteer your time, donate a gently used coat, make a call, send a card and offer to help a neighbor or friend. A small act of kindness, or an encouraging word, can impact a single life more than imaginable. And it's good for you, too!

You don't have to alter your life to change another's.

Can you imagine helping an Orinda senior resident two to three hours a month? Do you have a coat or two in your closet that could be passed along to someone in need? Does your donation really make a difference?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you can positively impact someone else's life. Bring joy to someone you know and show kindness to a stranger – even a smile covered by a mask will show through your eyes.

I would be remiss if I didn't express my most sincere thank you to our incredible volunteers with Seniors Around Town, the July 4th parade and the Orinda Classic Car Show. They selflessly and generously devote hours of time, talent and financial support to sustain these free community-wide programs and events that bring joy while benefitting others.

As we move through the holiday season and into 2022, be safe, be healthy and

[SEE GIVING page 7]

The Orinda Association Wishes All a Happy and Safe Holiday

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

The Orinda Association is run by an all-volunteer board. Meet the officers and board members, Santa's elves who deliver gifts to Orinda throughout the year:

CINDY POWELL

Orinda Association President, **Bill Waterman**, tours the July 4 Parade route making sure everything goes well.

Bill Waterman, President

An Orinda native, Bill attended Sleepy Hollow, Pine Grove and Miramonte High. He enjoyed sports, hiking and Boy Scouts as a youth and later motorcycle racing. He later ventured north to the University of Oregon, earning BS and JD degrees before working as a high school teacher and then a civil trial attorney in the East Bay for 30 years. The OA President works in the field of mediation and enjoys teaching law.

Sally Hogarty, Vice President

A 42-year resident of Lamorinda, Hogarty has been involved with *The Orinda News* for the past 28 years. Currently Executive Editor, she has been associated with many of the OA's programs and those of other non-profits in Orinda. Sally writes for several publications. including a weekly performing arts column for the *East Bay Times*. Her professional acting credits include more than 200 commercials and countless stage performances, including off-Broadway.

Bryan Silveira, Secretary

Living in Orinda for the past 10 years, Silveira has been on The Orinda Association Board since 2019. He has been an

[SEE OA page 16]

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
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www.OrindaAssociation.org

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EDITORIAL

Editorial

Help Keep Orinda Strong and Vibrant

These past two years have presented many challenges – working and schooling from home, isolation, illness and uncertainty. On the positive side, it has forced many of us to slow down our often hectic lifestyles and reconnect with family and friends. Sometimes that connection has been through Zoom or Google Meet, two entities I had been unfamiliar with prior to the pandemic but now strike me as "old friends."

While staying safe and sane has certainly been a challenge for individuals and families, it has also presented a monumental task for our local business community. Some closed during the height of the pandemic and others stretched the limits of innovation and creativity to stay afloat.

As the holidays approach, I encourage you to help keep our community vital by supporting local retail shops, service businesses and restaurants.

Whether you need shoes repaired, a new exercise routine, loving care for a pet, legal or financial advice, a new or gently-used article of clothing, hardware for those home projects, medical or dental services or a great Realtor, Orinda businesses can help.

And then there are our restaurants! Orinda is blessed with a variety of food establishments to satisfy whatever cravings you may have. These business owners walked quite a gauntlet during the pandemic as they pivoted from take-out only to outside dining to inside dining and back again as health mandates changed.

I encourage you to think locally when you have out-of-town visitors, treating them to a meal in Orinda. For holiday gifts, you'll find something unique at one of the shops in the Theatre or Village Districts. And don't forget gift certificates. This is often my go-to item for that hard-to-buy-for person on my list.

By keeping your shopping dollars in Orinda, you will not only find wonderful items for family and friends (and don't forget yourself!), but you will help keep our community strong and vibrant.

– Sally Hogarty, Executive Editor

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

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Letters to the Editor

A Response to Dr. Halpern

As a Bay Area native and therapist working with transgender and gender diverse (TGD) youth, and a transgender adult myself, I felt compelled to respond to the November letter to the editor written by Dr. Rachelle Halpern on LGBTQ school curriculum.

I am impressed with Dr. Halpern's 50 years of experience in endocrinology and surprised by her rejection of the medical consensus of her field.

I encourage readers to examine these statements from the American Medical Association (https://tinyurl.com/ec5zs22y), the EndocrineSociety(https://tinyurl.com/9347beyf), and the American Psychological Association (https://tinyurl.com/4pcdxuca) regarding TGD children and adults.

Current treatment guidelines are based on years of well-designed studies, expert consensus and the perspective of transgender people themselves – which may indeed feel like a "new gender theory" compared to when Dr. Halpern started her career in medicine 50 years ago.

It is clear to see that the "established scientific principles" and "rationality" that form her opinions sharply depart from the reality of advances in the medical profession, psychology and updated understanding of gender identity.

Although Dr. Halpern positions herself as a concerned expert, her reasoning and means of persuasion echo many arguments levied against gay, lesbian, bisexual and queer (LGBQ) people in the not-so-distant past.

Does Dr. Halpern also believe that LGBQ identity goes against the "biological fact" of sexual reproduction, as she implies with transgender identities? Does the awareness of LGBQ identities cause children the similar "lifelong confusion" she warns happens when children know about transgender people like myself?

Does she believe the exponential increase in openly LGBQ-identified people in the last 50 years as similarly "driven by a fad?"

The real issue I find with Dr. Halpern's perspective is her assertion that she "sees the issue" of TGD youth "from the patient's perspective."

I invite Dr. Halpern and the readers to look deeper into the reality of TGD youth of today: the heart-breaking reports of school physical violence (https://tinyurl.com/2xzf6bka), sexual violence (https://tinyurl.com/8sc6zutu) and bullying against TGD youth in schools.

The evidence that respecting their identities (https://tinyurl.com/46uvae5m) and access to appropriate medical care (https://tinyurl.com/547ezcny) allows TGD youth to thrive and better our community.

When it comes to the topic of transgender identity and youth, I do advise readers to "proceed cautiously" with claims that inspire fear and avoid current scientific research. Perhaps we all could listen more closely and with respect to TGD youth. Indeed, the future of our community depends on it.

– Alex Lotz-Nigh

Orinda Library Mural Wasn't Approved by All

I was stunned to see the "approved" artwork for the library in the Friends of the Orinda Library (FOL) newsletter last week, as are many of my friends and neighbors. I have been a member of the Friends for years, though seeing this in the newsletter was my first indication that this was not only in the works but had been approved. [The artwork will be installed on the south wall of the library, above the parking garage entrance.]

When we were building the new library, the community was involved – whether they were part of the Friends or not – to view the proposal, to see the 3D architectural model, to look at the plans, and to weigh-in ... almost step-by-step.

The article, as it appears in the recent FOL newsletter, makes it appear as if this was a decision made by the Friends ... a group of over 400 Orindans, many of whom are as surprised as I am. This group was not informed and it should have been.

I was on the board for many years, and

[See LETTERS page 18]

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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 **January** issue are due **Dec. 8**.

For advertising rates, contact Mimi Bommarito 925.818.7068, Kathy Enzerink at 252.626.2109 (kathy@theorindanews.com), Jill Gelster at 925.528.9225 (jill@aspenconsult.net), Elana O'Loskey at 925.984.1751 (elanao@mac.com). The deadline for the **January** issue is **Dec. 8.**

POLICE

♦ DEI from page 1

intolerance using a multifaceted approach. In Miramonte's case, this includes book clubs, student education, student initiatives that support equity, a curriculum committee and student surveys, Malkani said.

She also emphasized the multi-part parent education efforts of the group, referencing the "really powerful" speaker series that reinforced the anti-racist, inclusive mission of Miramonte High School's ED&I group.

Miramonte's Associate Principal, Bruce Giron, and former Miramonte Principal Julie Parks led "Courageous Conversation" workshops aimed at furthering positive interracial dialogue.

Malkani mentioned that schools coordinate on a district level with book clubs, coming together on the parent education experience, with different schools taking turns hosting the clubs.

Some of the other diversity, equity and inclusion events also happened throughout the Acalanes Union High School District, Malkani noted. This included Acalanes, Las Lomas and Campolindo High Schools.

"Our leaders last year did a lot. They were really diligent, and put a lot of work into this. I have to say, I think it paid off," Malkani said of Miramonte's DEI focus.

Orinda's elementary schools have also joined the DEI movement. Sleepy Hollow Elementary School's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion group, formally established in Aug. 2020, spent the '20 -'21 school year making progress towards addressing bias in the school's community by adding books from diverse authors to their library and holding parent education events with the Anti-Defamation League. The school is also coordinating with other Orinda Unified School District (OUSD) elementary schools to enact a curriculum for Black History Month.

"Our mission is to address bias and promote diversity, equity and inclusion education and practices among Sleepy Hollow students, families and staff, thereby preparing students for lifelong learning in a diverse world," Sleepy Hollow DEI Parents' Group co-lead Bridgette Thomas said.

Nov. 2020 saw the City of Orinda and the OUSD's announcement of a Joint Proclamation & Pledge in Support of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Action. It detailed a "continued commitment to stand up against hate, build awareness and increase tolerance," as well as an agreement the proclamation and pledge would be displayed prominently throughout Orinda and the OUSD administrative offices and meeting spaces.

Orinda Union School District has its own Wellness, Inclusion, Student and Staff Equity (WISSE) committee that meets regularly, as noted on the district's website (www.orindaschools.org/dei).

OUSD also has an ongoing partnership with the City of Orinda, which has facilitated the formation of the IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Action) group, as well as what the district describes as, "continuing collaboration with school site Community Coalitions focused on this important work."

Miramonte ED&I group member Malkani emphasized the need to make students of color and families of color feel welcome within the Orinda community, remarking it is an ongoing effort.

She spoke of pro-diversity signage posted at Miramonte and other schools, developed last year and rolled out this year, intended to promote the ideas behind the DEI groups.

"The visual does matter," she said.

Malkani also commented on Orinda's demographics.

"It's just not diverse," she said. "And so people are not going to feel welcome here, who aren't part of that, unless there are actually active efforts."

She spoke of how the lack of diversity within the community can "feed upon itself," creating an unwelcome environment for new residents who may consider moving to Orinda.

"Again, it's all about normalizing. Normalizing difference, normalizing equity as a positive attribute," she said. "Without that, our students [in Orinda] don't feel welcome here."

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

LATIKA MALKANI

A yard sign in front of **Latika Malkani's** home is one of several signs Miramonte's Parent's Club DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) committee produced and placed on campus and on parent's home lawns. The signs reflect the core ideas and values behind Miramonte High School's DEI group.

POLICE BLOTTER

October 16 through November 14

Calls for Service

Abandoned Vehicle: 1 incident
Burglary, Commercial: 3 incidents: Big Rock Rd., Orinda Way, Laura Way
Burglary, Residential: 1 incident: Moraga Way
Death Non-Criminal: 1 incident
Failure to Obey Officer: 1 incident
Found Property: 6 incidents
Grand Theft: 2 incidents: Via Floreado, Ivy Dr.
Hit & Run Misdemeanor: 2 incidents: El Nido Ranch Rd., Orinda Way
Juvenile Disturbance: 2 incidents
Lost Property: 1 incident
Medical Hospital: 2 incidents
Outside Assist: 1 incident
Shoplift: 4 incidents: Camino Sobrante, Camino Pablo, Moraga Way (2)
Tow: 1 incident
Vandalism: 1 incident
Vehicle Theft: 3 incidents: Orinda Way, Bryant Way,

Arrest

DUI - Misdemeanor: 1 arrest

– Compiled by David Dierks
Assistant Editor

CALENDAR

On the Calendar in December

Orinda Library is open to the public. With few exceptions, masks are required by the County for anyone not vaccinated. 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.

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

1 **Orinda Library** invites the public to contribute nonperishable food items to their Contra Costa and Solano County Food Bank donation barrel located upstairs in the library rotunda now through December 30. Questions? Call 925-254-2184.

Art Gallery at the Orinda Library "Inspired by the Greats" Lamorinda Arts Council welcomes 36 members of the Lamorinda Arts Alliance to an in-person and virtual exhibit. Artist reception with jazz. Sat. Dec. 4, 3 to 5 p.m. See article p. 9.

Art Gallery at Wilder - Lamorinda Arts Council features Christian Ehrhorn's solo exhibit of oil paintings entitled "Orinda in the Abstract." Artist reception Sun., Dec. 5 from 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. View his work online the remainder of the month or request an in-person viewing. See article p. 8.

Hofssi Chocolates pop up store will be located at Reasonable Books in Lafayette, two doors away from Trader Joe's. Through Dec. 24. To order on line go to www.hofssi.com.

2 **Orinda Books Pat's Book Club** will meet to discuss *This Is Happiness* by Niall Williams. 11 a.m. The book is available at Orinda Books. Call 925.254.7606 or email info@orindabooks.com.

Saint Mary's College Guild, Christmas Party, Dec. 2,11 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., College Soda Activity Center. Performance by College Chorale directed by Dr. Julie Ford with SMC pianist Sharon Lee Kim. Festivities include raffling a valuable Money Tree. Tickets are $55 with all proceeds going to student financial aid scholarships. Send checks, payable to St. Mary's College Guild, to Cynthia Jane Kelly, 628 Augusta Dr., Moraga, 94556. Call 925-388-0437 for more information.

4 **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 Dec. 11, and 27. See article p. 8.

Friends of the Orinda Library Celebrate Three Events: 20th Anniversary, Mural Fundraiser and Book Sale, Library Plaza, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. See article p. 14.

East Bay Hospice Tree of Lights ceremony. Orinda Village by Bank of America, 4:30 p.m. See article p. 1.

Pianist Bobby Mitchell plays Schumann's "Concerto Without Orchestra" at Santa Maria Church, 7 p.m., 40 Santa Maria Way, Orinda. This free concert also includes Mitchell's composition, "Songs From Childhood." See article p. 19.

5 **Journey of Love Senior Crab Fest**, Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way, 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. Adult tickets $65, senior tickets $35 and children ages 10 and under are free. Vegan option $35. Go to www.candaceevans.net or call 805.451.6156. See article p. 2.

10 **Orinda Ballet Academy** presents "A Sweet Dream Nutcracker," through Dec. 12 at the Orinda Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way. For ticket information, visit www.orindaballetacademy.com or email patricia@orindaballetacademy.com. See box p. 1.

18 **Chiller Diller Theatre** presents Gremlins 5 p.m. Orinda Theatre. Visit www.orindamovies.com, or www.facebook.com/orindatheatre. See article p. 15.

27 **Orinda Theater** 80th birthday celebration 6:30 p.m. *Cinema Paradiso*, will be shown free to all donors. See article p.20

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

ELANA O'LOSKEY

Christian Ehrhorn will be present at the Art Gallery at Wilder artist reception Dec. 5.

♦ CRAB from page 2

tion demographic will be living alone, facing risks that can threaten their independence and quality of life," said Evans. "I want to make people aware of the problems the elderly face while emphasizing we can do something about it."

She added, "It is important we have agencies like our sponsors that can help older people with their problems."

Evans' company, Cleen Market, is the primary sponsor, along with The Orinda Association.

Vendors for the crab fest include America's Best Hydroponics Store, Boss-ish Health Shakes, Dr. Eboni OBGYN Health Coach and Cleen. Designated charities to receive the funds from the event are The Orinda Association, Choice in Aging and Cleen Garden.

Chefs for the evening include celebrity chef Melba Rodrigues, owner of Chef Melba's Bistro in Hermosa Beach and Monique Walker, an elder advocate from Baltimore.

"Both are flying in for this event to support and provide wonderful food," said Evans.

As a business owner, Evans said there are specific ways for this community to help and to prosper.

"Small businesses can be more successful when they better understand the market dynamics and spectrum of older adults as consumers and view them more as assets rather than as 'burdens to society,'" she said. "There is no doubt about the power of the older adult market."

Evans, who believes in advocacy, is a member of the Contra Costa County Advisory Council on Aging.

"Individuals like myself can play a huge part in advocating for programs, legislation and policies that are important to the older adult community," said Evans. "Also, we need to inform and educate the community as to what various county, non-profit and governmental organizations have to offer."

The Senior Crab Fest promises both Maryland and Louisiana Blue Crab, with many side dishes. Adding to the festivities is live music by The Purple One, with a tribute to Prince. Adult tickets cost $65, senior tickets $35 and children ages 10 and under are free. There is a vegan option for $35.

Evans, who advises the community to buy tickets early for senior and adults, added, "It is time to come together to give back to our older adult community."

For more information about the event, charities involved or to purchase tickets, visit www.candaceevans.net or call 805.451.6156.

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

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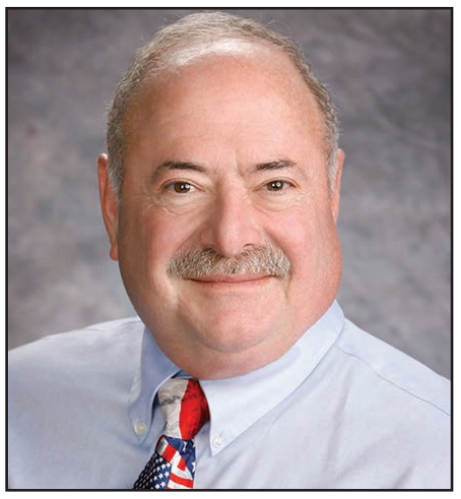
First Friday Forum Kicks off New Season of Amazing Speakers in 2022

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

With an impressive slate of speakers, First Friday Forum (FFF), sponsored by the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, begins the 2022 season Jan. 7 and run through June 3 at 10 a.m.

Popular repeat presenter Michael Baker titles his January talk, "Crisis on the Korean Peninsula and a Rational Way Forward."

For the foreseeable future, programs will be webinar events with the possibility of adding on-campus, in-person lectures, depending on the status of COVID-19 and resolution of any technology issues.



COURTESY DR. MICHAEL BAKER
As the United States continues to have a tenuous relationship with North Korea, First Friday Forum presents the timely topic, "Crisis on the Korean Peninsula and a Rational Way Forward" with **Dr. Michael Baker**.

The goal of the team in charge of the series is to provide lectures of importance and interest to help inform the community about our ever-changing world.

"We are happy we can reach out to the Lamorinda public, and beyond, in this way," said Mike Rusk, chair of FFF. "Our team works hard to provide a wide variety of topics with top-notch presenters. We are always welcome to suggestions as to topics or speakers."

After Baker, other lecturers already have intriguing titles set that hint at their subject matter. Marilyn Chase speaks Feb. 4 about "Everything She Touched: The Life of Ruth Asawa."

On Mar. 4, Juan Guajardo will explain "Mexican Culture in the Context of the Complex US-Mexico Relationship."

Larry Toy on Apr. 1 won't be fooling anybody with his lecture, "The 5% We Know and the 95% We Don't Know."

Amos Guiora's provocative "Armies of Enablers: Survivor: Stories of Complicity and Betrayal in Sexual Assaults" is set for May 6.

And lastly, Ryan Timpte presents on June 3 with "The Impact of the Pandemic on Children and Families."

Look for webinar links for each event beginning in January at www.lopc.org or in *The Orinda News.*

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

Pet of the Month

MARGARET GOVEDNIK
Meet my granddaughter Nora's beagle, **Doolin**. She put him down for a nap on her bed and then placed all her stuffed beagles around him for company. Can you find the real beagle in this photo?

COURTESY OF KRYSTA LAPCEVIC
Wagner Ranch Girl Scouts collected 273 adult and youth coats for the One Warm Coat organization in October. The donated coats were given to the Dorothy Day House in Berkeley and the St. Vincent de Paul Shelter in Alameda. Led by second-grade Troop 31561, all Wagner Ranch troops joined to help during the carpool collections. Shown (L–R) are **Beatrice Swaney, Finley Lapcevic** and **Vivienne Karmele.**

Clean, Used and New Coat Donations Accepted Through December 15

KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

Is your closet overflowing with winter coats the kids have outgrown? Are you hanging on to a nice coat even though you haven't worn it in years? Now is the time to declutter and donate clean, gently used warm coats to the One Warm Coat drive through Dec. 15.

In partnership with The Orinda Association, the Orinda Teen Advisory Council (OTAC) is taking the leadership role for collection and distribution this year. Coats may be placed in the designated bin outside the OA office at 26 Orinda Way, weekdays from 9 - 4 p.m.

Isabella Pier, a junior at Miramonte, chairs this OTAC project with fellow schoolmates Ava Dhaliwal, Maximus Metzgen, Zoe Petty, Courtney Scheingart, Katherine Scheingart and Louis Windhurst, along with middle school members Ava Pier and Freida Vierra.

Students from Acalanes, The Athenian School and Stanford Online High School round out the membership, which is part of the Orinda Parks and Recreation Department with Matt Delmartini as coordinator.

"This is a great idea to help communities who have a need," said Isabella Pier. "Obviously, Orinda kids outgrow their coats and we want to collect and distribute them. Let us not forget parents and their larger coats."

Coats will be donated to Shelter, Inc. in Concord.

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

♦ GIVING from page 3

consider gratitude for another day of living, another day of loving and another day of giving.

Donations for One Warm Coat can be dropped off at The Orinda Association, Library Plaza.

Kate Wiley can be reached at seniorsaroundtownorinda@gmail.com.

What's On Deck With Parks & Rec!

Community Park Public Feedback Event Coming Soon – Stay Tuned.

New Classes for Youth and Adults Begin each month. Please check our website for Class Listings.

Currently Accepting Facility Rental Requests Under Current Health Guidelines

Orinda Community Center is open Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Masks are Required Indoors.

Please Continue to Stay Safe by Following Health Recommendations

ORINDA PARKS & REC
Orinda Parks and Recreation Department
925-254-2445
www.OrindaParksandRec.org
OrindaParksandRec@CityofOrinda.org
28 Orinda Way – Orinda Community Center
Administrative Office Hours – 8:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.

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Seasoned Shopper

Winter Wonderland of Holiday Favorites

BARBARA KOBSAR

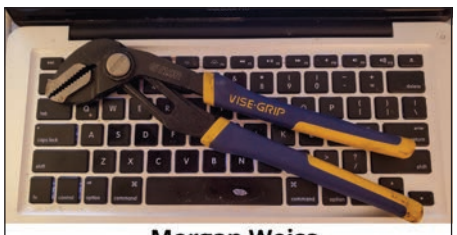
Here we go! Orinda's Farmers' Market moves into the winter season with bags full of fresh produce and inspiring ideas. The holidays bring out family favorites and plenty of comfort foods.

Favorites in my house include vegetables, white bean and cabbage soup, cabbage rolls and red cabbage and apple salad. Looks like cabbage must be in season!

The cabbage family is one of the largest and most economical groups of vegetables. All thrive in cool weather, and California takes pride in being one of its major producers. The cabbage or cole family includes broccoli, brussel sprouts, bok choy, cauliflower, kale, collards and kohlrabi. All are nutritionally rich in fiber and Vitamin C, contain no fat or cholesterol and are low in sodium and calories.

Green and red head cabbage are basically the same, except for color and price (green generally costs less than red). Large, loose wrapper leaves around each head are removed before shipping, but Farmers' Markets may display just-harvested heads with these very impressive looking outer leaves. Choose firm heads that are heavy for their size. Any outer leaves should be well colored with no signs of wilting or decay.

[See SHOPPER page 12]



BARBARA KOBSAR

Beautiful flowering kale in the garden loves rain and cool weather.

Wilder Gallery: Abstract Orinda

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

The Lamorinda Arts Council invites you to view a solo in-person show and virtual exhibit of abstract oil paintings by featured artist Christian Ehrhorn during December. Meet the artist at a reception in his honor Sunday, Dec. 5 from 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. where light refreshments will be served. This is the only time the Gallery will be open to the public. All COVID-19 precautions will be observed for safety. View his virtual exhibit through images at www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries.

Ehrhorn said, "I am drawn to the abstract expressionist style because of the subjective component that takes precedence over an objective and figurative approach to a subject. In other words, the mood that a particular landscape or cityscape evokes can be expressed with color, spontaneous form and textural choices all coming together in a dreamlike composition that represents the memory of a place rather than an accurate representation of the subject matter."

An Orinda resident, Ehrhorn will show seven oil paintings, each of which are abstract representations of Orinda and other local landscapes and downtown scenes.

Ehrhorn said his interest in this technique endures because his perspective is never static. He tries to employ a consistent style but also changes the way he represents what he's seeing by layering different parts of the landscapes that inspire him.

Ehrhorn explains, "Viewers of *Caldecott* [a 36" x 36" oil painting on canvas] might experience different sections of the painting coming in and out of focus as they look at different parts of the canvas. They might ask themselves, 'Are all the details symbolic?' or, 'Is that misty fog floating all over the canvas?'"

Ehrhorn's main mission with his paintings is to showcase the innumerable ways to experience a time and a place.

"I try to represent my vision and experiences in a way that no one has seen before," he said. "Accurate, recognizable and detailed representation of a subject is not important to me. I want you to look at one of my paintings and get lost in your own interpretation and sensory experience."

To view more of his work, visit www.christianehrhornfineart.com, The Wilder Art and Garden Center, 20 Orinda Fields Way. Visit in-person Dec. 5 or virtually the rest of the month. Viewings by appointment are also available with Curator Aniston Breslin by emailing anistonbreslin@berkeley.edu.

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

CHRISTIAN EHRHORN

When viewing *Caldecott*, a 36" x 36" oil painting on canvas, different sections of the painting come in and out of focus. **Christian Ehrhorn** invites viewers to let go of trying to find something recognizable in the painting and instead, enter the dreamscape presented.

VISUAL ARTS

Gallery: Lamorinda Arts Alliance "Inspired by the Greats"

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

The Lamorinda Arts Council presents a gallery filled with artwork from 36 members of the Lamorinda Arts Alliance (LAA) during December. Their in-person and virtual exhibit is on view in the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library. Meet the artists at a reception in their honor Saturday, Dec. 4 from 3 to 5 p.m. where light refreshments will be served.

Also enjoy jazz by the Nika Rejto Duo with Robin Lewis playing seven-string guitar and Rejto on flute and vocals. Expect to hear jazz tunes including Brazilian Samba, the American songbook and original music.

Ruth Stanton and Sharon Tama are organizing the event.

"Behind every great artist, there is almost always an artistic great who was a formative source of inspiration," said Stanton. "For Georgia O'Keeffe, it was Arthur Wesley Dow. For Claude Monet, it was Eugene-Louis Boudin."

The LAA's "Inspired by the Greats" theme provides local artists an opportunity to pay tribute to influencers they count as "great."

"An influencer could be an architect, artist, musician, photographer, sculptor, literary figure, teacher or friend," Stanton added.

COURTESY OF SUSAN ERICKSON

Susan Erickson's 40" x 36" mixed media on wood entitled *VW Remember Me?* displays colorful images and designs personal to the artist, arranged around the central star of the painting, a Volkswagen Bug.

Artist Tama looks to the styles great artists employ.

"The style of artists, their brushstroke, their use of color makes a big impression upon me and often guides the decisions I make in my own artwork," she said. "That's how I can be inspired by someone who is a creative force."

Beyond painting, the same applies to photography or other art forms.

"Photographer Annie Leibovitz's new book, *Wonderland*, shows how she uses color in stunning ways that I find intriguing," said Tama.

The 80 pieces of original art in the exhibit showcase many types of media, including printmaking, stoneware, welded steel, photography, collage, mixed media, oils, acrylics, watercolors and colored pencil.

Each artist displays a statement describing who inspired and influenced his or her work. All artwork in the gallery is for sale and can be purchased online through the Lamorinda Art Council's website.

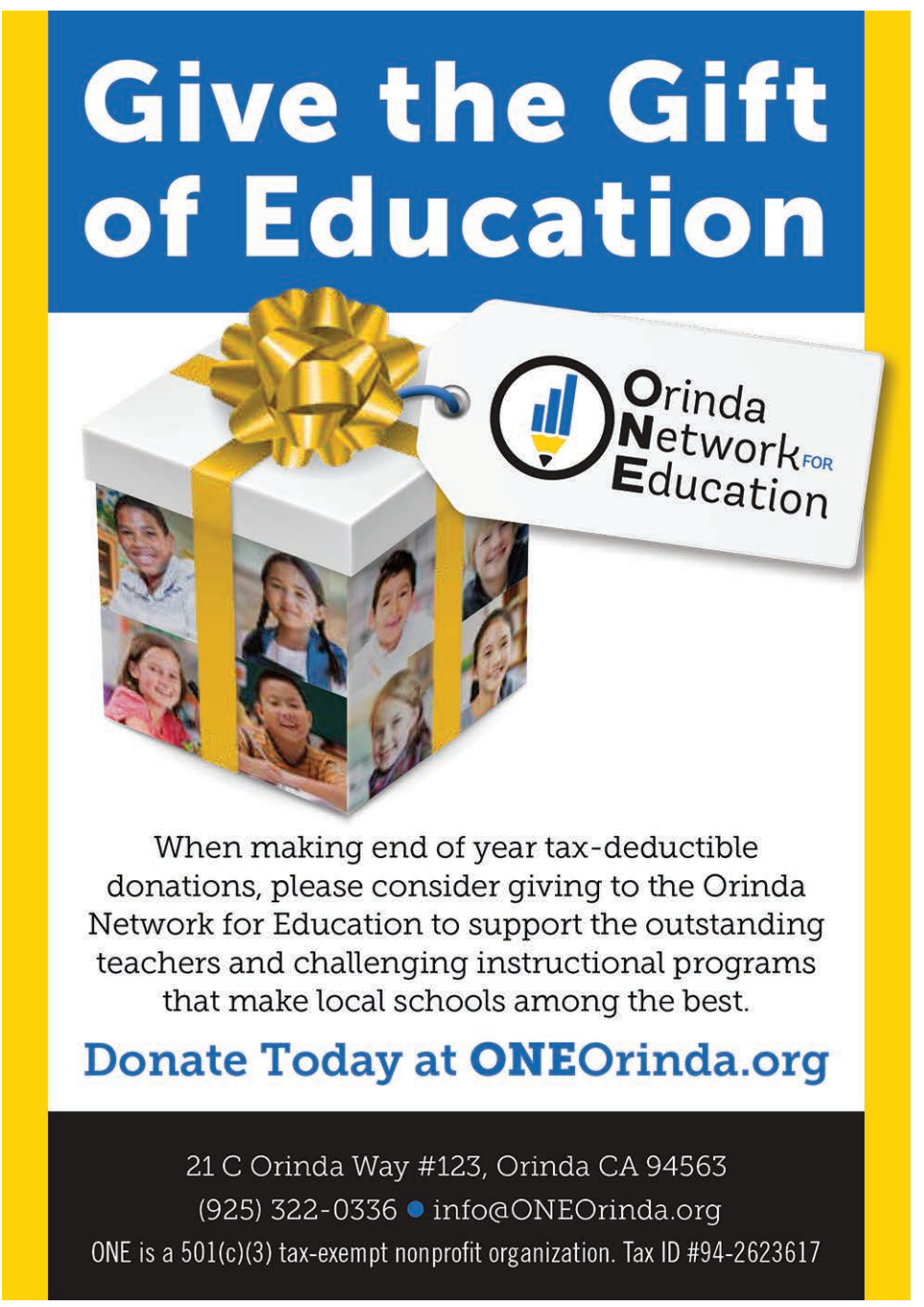
Participating artists include Donna Arganbright, Karen Baden Thapa, Joe Bologna, Alys Briggs, Donna Brown, Margie Caldwell-Gill, Helen Chu-Hirschberg, Suellen Cox, Kelley Dean-Crowley, Susan Erickson, Judith Feins, Sylvia Fones, Carla Gelbaum, Jennifer Granat, Marc Ellen Hamel, Marian Harris, Denise Hillman, Kim Homes, Victor and Natalya Kolyvayko, Melchia Kutches, Karen Leoni, Pam McCauley, Samantha McNally, Alix Mitgang, Irene Needoba, Chelsea Pickslay, Wenda Pyman, Anne Morrison Rabe, Adrienne Rogers, Judith Rohrer, Maria Santo Stefano, Stanton, Charlene Steen, Sharon Tama, Charlynn Throckmorton and Nancy Vachani.

LAA is an organization of local artists and friends who reside or work in the area. It provides coordination, education and service to promote and increase knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts, and to enhance the cultural development of Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda and surrounding communities.

The group seeks to foster a better understanding of art within the community and encourage the exchange of ideas for the mutual benefit of all members through its programs, exhibits and other activities. Learn more about LAA at www.laa4art.org.

The Lamorinda Arts Council curates monthly exhibits at this gallery. For more information, visit www.lamorindaarts.org. This exhibit runs Dec. 1 through 30 during normal library hours in the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library at 26 Orinda Way. Hours are Mon. – Thur., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Fri. – Sat., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., closed Sunday and closed Dec. 24, 25 and Dec. 31. Call 925.254.2184 for more information about the Library or visit www.ccclib.org or email the curators at gallery@lamorindaarts.org.

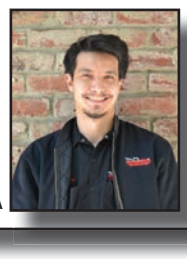
Elana O'Loskey can be reached at business.orinda@gmail.com.



CAR TIME

Where are All the New Cars? Is my used Car More Valuable Now?

XAVIER ESTRADA



Have you driven by a new car dealership recently? Have you noticed how empty the new car lots are? There's an explanation – a chip shortage. It's another fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic involving chip manufacturing for electronics – this time on a global scale.

Many industries felt and some are still feeling the repercussions. Whether video game companies are producing physical products or manufacturing phones, computers, etc., if it has a chip, odds are, the producer is affected.

Vehicles hit center stage in this context since the supply can't keep up with demand.

Some manufacturers must leave freshly built vehicles in the lot after assembly to collect dust because they're missing a chip. Not all manufacturers have managed to adjust and circumvent these hardships. As a result, most dealerships have more used vehicles for sale than new ones.

In turn, the used car market, for the most part, has increased in value, and a combination of a couple other variables have contributed to this.

As we approach deadlines banning internal combustion engines and manufacturers push towards electric vehicles (EV) and hydrogen powertrains, people have become more aware of older vehicles that hold a certain value.

For example, specific sports cars from the 2000s started to go up in value even before the chip shortage. Various older trucks, luxury vehicles and even some renowned commuter cars have also gone up in value. An old saying hypes their value: "They don't make 'em like they used to." The current market further highlights that, increasing their value even more.

The second variable is one tailored to the current vehicle market. Typically, when you purchase a new vehicle, it will automatically depreciate as soon as you drive off the lot and continue to do so, with some vehicle brands depreciating at a higher rate than others.

But suppose you purchased a new car a year or two ago? Odds are, instead of continuing to depreciate, it may have actually stabilized or appreciated. Of course, this all depends on the make, model and condition of the vehicle.

As this shortage of chips continues, dealers – of both used and new vehicles – are targeting used means of transportation even more than before to keep the market going.

Xavier Estrada can be reached at service@orindaclassiccarcenter.com.

PIXABAY

Due to a chip shortage, many dealerships have more used vehicles for sale than new ones.

Club Meetings in December

With the lifting of state-level restrictions 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 (AAU2W-OML). for information go to 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. 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. Meetings: Dec. 3: Andrea Garreffa, "A Guatemalan farmer saved my life." Dec.10: Saving the Florida panther one sperm at a time! Dec. 17: Kathy Bowles, Park Theater Trust.

Montelindo Garden Club, membership open to all, Email montelindogarden@aol.com to learn if the meeting is via Zoom and to request a link.

The Orinda Association. Tuesday, Dec. 9, 6 p.m., Zoom meeting. 925.254.0800 or www.orindaassociation.org.

Orinda Chamber of Commerce Board Meeting Dec. 15, 8 p.m. – via zoom. Contact Kristen Southworth at president@orindachamber.org for zoom link.

Orinda Garden Club, PO Box 34, Orinda, www.orindagc.org, 925.257.0668.

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, Membership Chair, 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 meeting Dec. 2 Orinda Community Center, 3:45 p.m. Email Recreation Coordinator Matt Delmartini at mdelmartini@cityoforinda.org.

Orinda Woman's Club. Currently meeting virtually Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. Email Jean Barnhart at jeanr.barnhart@gmail.com or go to www.orindawomansclub.org.

[See CLUBS page 19]

Holiday Wreaths, Trees Adorn City Streetscapes and Buildings

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

Having celebrated "Wreaths Around Town" since 2011, members of the Orinda Garden Club will continue the tradition when they hang 55 decorated wreaths throughout the village Saturday, Dec. 4.

In addition, lighted real Christmas trees will welcome travelers entering Orinda from the eastbound Hwy. 24 exit according to event co-chairs Shelley Gilligan and Margene Stahle.

The decorations help beautify the community and celebrate the holidays, will come down Jan. 8 with the assistance of Orinda Boy Scout Troop 237. Scouts will disassemble the trees and wreaths for appropriate recycling.

"Our club has enjoyed bringing this holiday tradition to Orinda," said Caroline La Voie, public relations officer. "We look forward to its continuation for many, many years to come."

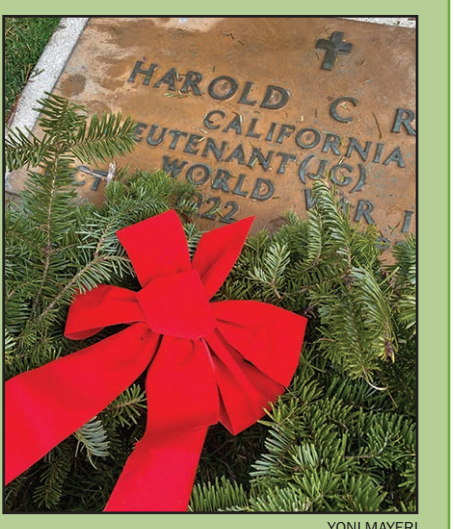
The Orinda Garden Club, founded in 1937, is "committed to gardening, conservation, civic involvement and educational programs," as stated on its website, www.orindagc.org. A 501(c)(3) organization, the Club is devoted to the art of gardening, giving and growing.

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

COURTESY OF THE ORINDA GARDEN CLUB

Members of the **Orinda Garden Club** will place fresh holiday wreaths throughout the village plus two larger wreaths at the Community Center, Saturday, Dec. 4. The decorations will remain until Jan. 8.

Daughters of the American Revolution Place Wreaths on 290 Graves



YONI MAYERI

For the second year in a row, Acalanes DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) Chapter will place wreaths on 290 veteran graves at Lafayette Cemetery, 3285 Mt. Diablo Blvd., for Wreaths Across America Day, Saturday, Dec. 18. The ceremony begins at noon, followed by wreath placements.

The free event is open to everyone in the community, and all are encouraged to learn about Wreaths Across America's yearlong mission to remember the fallen, honor those who served and their families and teach the next generation about the value of freedom.

There are 290 veterans buried in the historic Lafayette Cemetery. Local members of DAR are raising funds to place a wreath on each veteran's headstone. To sponsor a wreath, visit http://www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org/CA0565.

Orinda resident and Regent of the Acalanes DAR Chapter, Mary Carrillo said this event is special to her.

"My 18-year-old nephew, Army PFC Steven J. Walberg-Riotto, was killed in Baghdad in 2007, and my son Luke Carrillo (Miramonte Class of 2012) consequently joined the Marines," she said. "Remembrance wreaths are a beautiful tribute to local veterans and a wonderful way of honoring those who sacrificed so much for our nation."

For more information, contact Terry Lucido at 650.804.2564, tlachenb@aol.com, or visit Acalanes DAR at www.Acalanes.CaliforniaDAR.org. Please visit http://www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org/CA0565 for safety regulation updates.

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♦ SHOPPER from page 8

The crinkled pale to dark green leaves of Savoy cabbage grow in a loose, full head and are more tender and milder tasting than other head cabbage. The pink, purple or white hearts of salad savoy or ornamental kale, make beautiful garnishes but are just as versatile in salads.

I like to step over to the Napa cabbage display to choose a leafy head made up of elongated, pale green leaves offering a mellow taste, tender leaves and a slight peppery undertone. Large or baby bok choy leaves resemble thick, white-stemmed Swiss chard and work ideally for stir frying or steaming.

Here's the Red Cabbage and Apple Salad recipe – easy and delicious for family or guests:

1 head red cabbage, thinly sliced
3 Granny Smith apples, cored and cut into ½ chunks
½ cup dried cranberries
3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
1 tablespoon honey mustard
3 tablespoon olive oil

Toss cabbage, apples and cranberries together in a large bowl. Whisk vinegar and mustard together. Drizzle olive oil into the vinegar mixture while whisking. Pour dressing over cabbage mixture and toss. Enjoy! Serves 6.

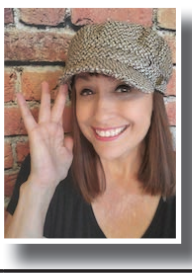
The Orinda Farmers Market is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Orinda Way in Orinda Village. The market is closed Christmas Day, Saturday, Dec. 25. More information is available at www.cccfm.org, Facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket and Instagram at OrindaFarmersMarket, or call the market hotline at 925.431.8361.

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

Funny Side Up

Divide and Conquer: One Woman's Quest to End Party Fouls at the Checkout Line

Charleen Earley



I admit, my issue at checkout lines is beginning to get a bit out of control. The last two years I've noticed myself turning into "The Soup Nazi" (from *Seinfeld*) while in line, and if you've never been in front of me at Lucky or Safeway (pre-pandemic), just wait; your turn is coming. All I have to say is … if you don't place a food divider stick between your food and mine, it won't be pretty.

Be prepared to go home with items you didn't know you needed.

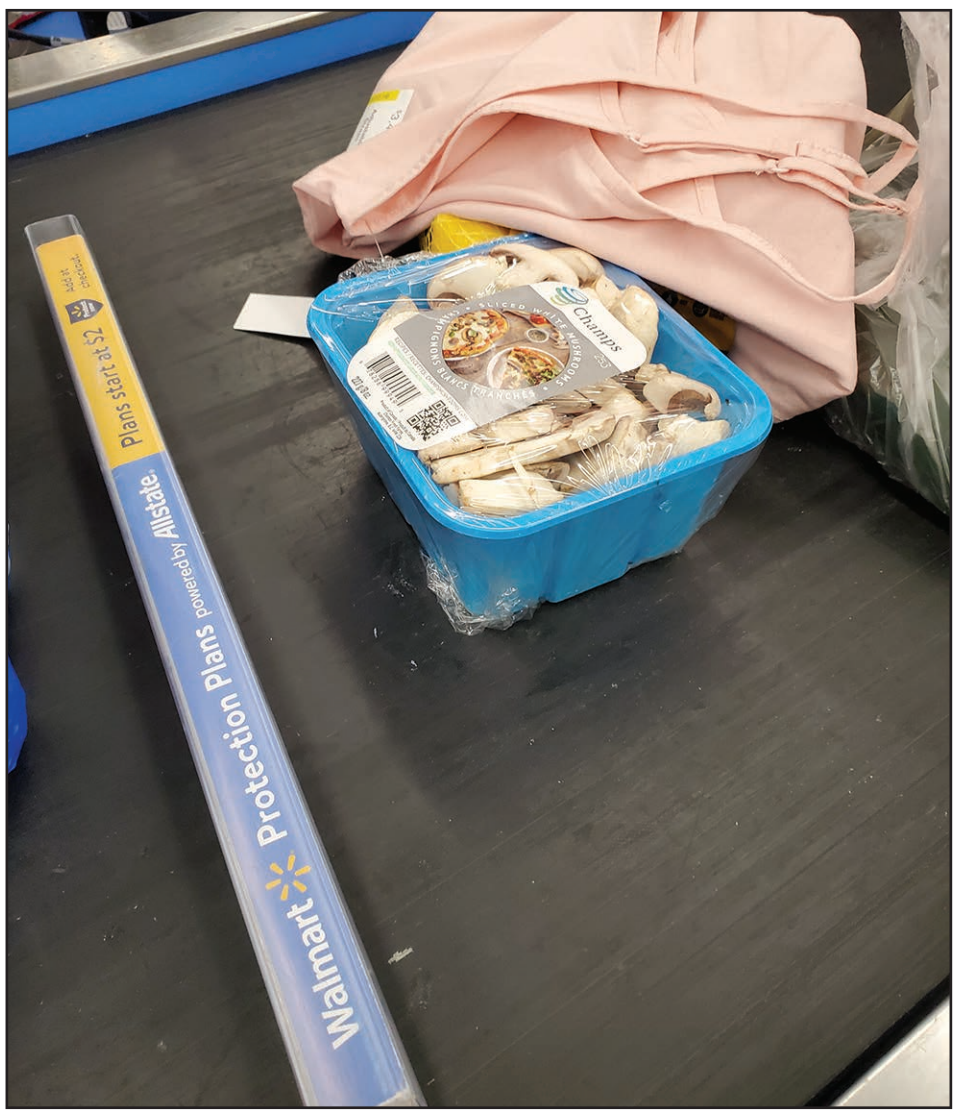
I might be way off here, but I thought it was common courtesy to place one divider stick at the end of *your* groceries, while I place one at the end of *mine*. Like placing a period at the end of a sentence to avoid run-on sentences – or in this case, run-on groceries, right? Sorry, as a prose-generator, I tend to think in grammar.

See, I don't think it's my responsibility to separate both mine *and* yours. STOP the madness people!

How simple can this simple act be? Well, apparently, it's not that simple for three out of five people who simply don't do it, can't do it or flat out refuse to do it. And yes, I'm counting.

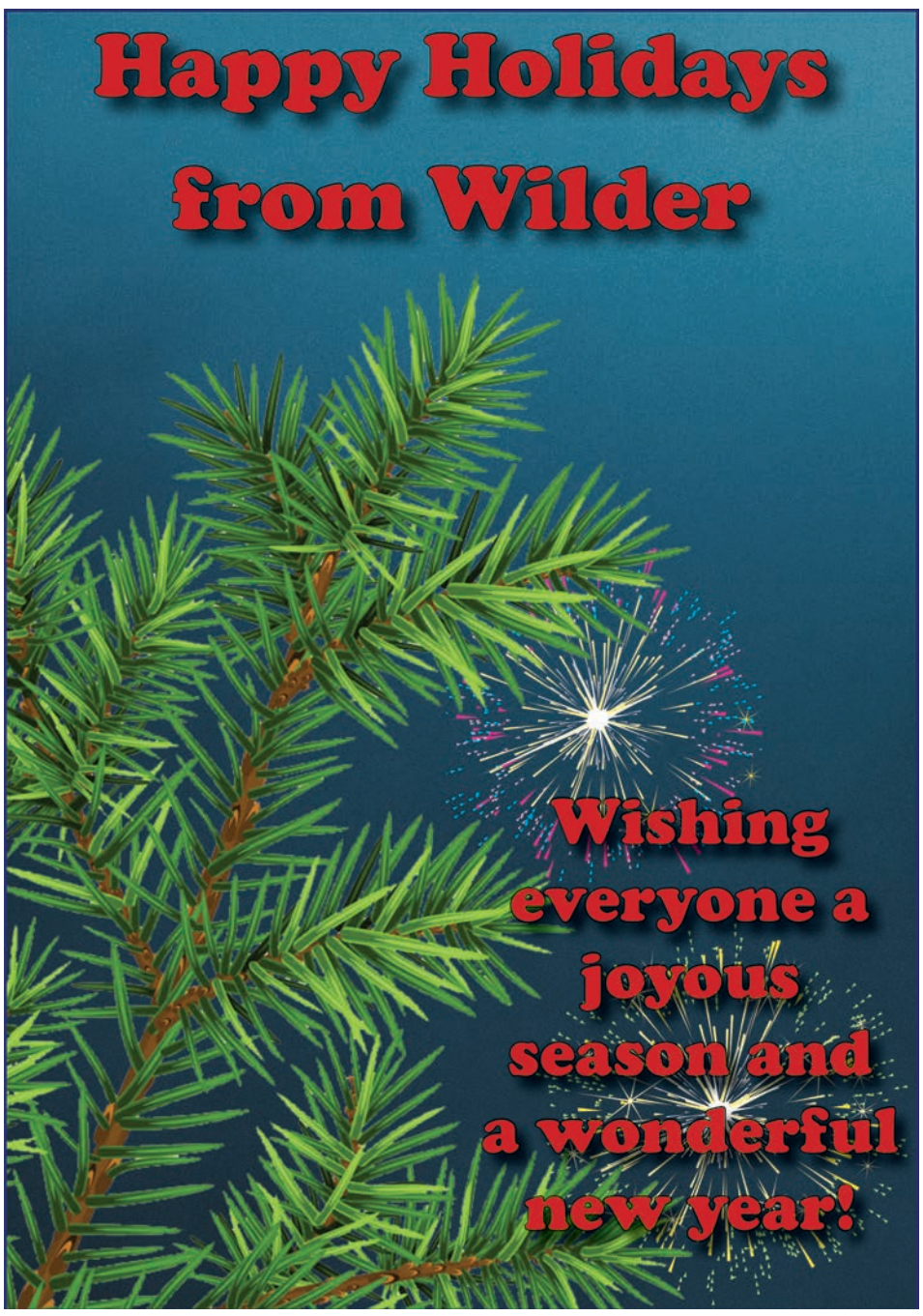
Maybe they're running out of oomph after lifting heavy cartons of sugar flavored Tropicana Berry Punch, Svenhard's bear

[See FUNNY SIDE page 15]



CHARLEEN EARLEY

Charleen Earley writes, "First of all, I might be way off here, but I thought it was common courtesy to place one divider stick at the end of yourgroceries, while I place one at the end of mine. Like placing a period at the end of a sentence, so you don't have run-on groceries, right?"



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VISUAL ARTS

Michelle Lewis: A Life Lived Side by Side with Art

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

Orinda's Michelle Lewis was part of an exhibit entitled "Eight Women Artists" at the Piedmont Center for the Arts in October. Her 16" x 20" piece*, Sacred Loons,* was part of the presentation. The women are part of a group called Art Tag, also part of the Northern California Women's Caucus for the Arts.

The other seven participating artists in the show were Laura Abrams, Deborah Green, Laura McNall, Juliet Mevi, Jacqui Rubenstein, Ariella Seidenberg and Caskey Weston – who collectively displayed over 50 works of art.

Lewis' first exposure to art was in the Fine Arts Dance program at York University in Toronto. She focused on modern dance and dance therapy. "There is a freedom one feels using one's body in space that is exhilarating. To choreograph works through this medium was most fulfilling. Spatial awareness is something all artists must contemplate when creating their art," she said.

She financed her way through school as a nature photographer. Her mother was a widow with four children, so Lewis had to be creative about funding her education. Selling photographs was one way she did that. Light, angles, proportion, foreground and background: all these elements were essential to her work as a photographer, as is for painters.

In her mid-twenties, she studied weaving in rural Ontario and continued to study weaving in Mexico and Berkeley. She spent 23 years weaving scarves, pillows, clothing, wall hangings and prayer shawls.

"Weaving was a challenging but meditative art form for me. I welcomed the quiet, rhythmic and mathematical challenges creating patterns on my loom. Textures and patterns all play an essential part of any artist's 'toolbox,'" she said.

Lewis was exposed to First Nation art at an isolated Canadian reservation where she met wonderful artists who changed her interest in art. It was an awakening for her, and ever since, she has been a teacher in underserved communities.

It wasn't until 2009 that she began painting after seeing the movie *Julie and Julia*.

"I walked out of the film and said to myself I was going to do something out of my comfort zone. So I picked up a paint brush for the first time. I took several classes at Berkeley City College and, privately and briefly, studied with Susan Matthews, a talented artist, in 2010," she said.

Because of the pandemic she was unable to go home to Canada where she usually spends several weeks. Missing being able to see and hear the loons on the lake, she painted loons three times.

"I guess I'm drawn to loons," she said, chuckling over the double meaning of her noun.

COURTESY OF MICHELLE LEWIS

Michelle Lewis' 16" x 20" piece, *Sacred Loons,* was part of an exhibit entitled "Eight Women Artists" at the Piedmont Center for the Arts in October.

She finds the loon to be a hauntingly beautiful bird.

"I have always been awed by its intricate black and white markings, its red eye, call (wail) and grace," said Lewis. "One of my fondest memories about going home is knowing that I will be graced by its presence as it dives and glides peacefully on the lake."

In contrast to her individual creations, she recently participated in work on murals. "From Incarceration to Liberation," originated from a mural design class at Berkeley City College. It is now on permanent display at S.F. State University in the Student Union Building.

"I loved being a part of something, quite frankly, much bigger than myself, because I was collaborating with other artists and working on this commissioned piece for Project Rebound. The college wanted to honor, by way of creating this mural, an ongoing program which offers higher education for formerly incarcerated adults," she said.

That mural provided Lewis a different level of connecting with other artists on a creative platform. Together, they had to find ways to integrate ideas and designs.

She worked on several murals in San Francisco, including an anti-eviction mural on 17th and Valencia Streets and one at the Dolores Huerta Elementary School. She helped repaint other murals needing fixing in the Mission District.

"Before I retired, I wanted to leave a mural for the school where I taught Art. A 7' x 11' mural was created by fourth and fifth grade students at Glenview Elementary School," she said. "However, to date, no one knows where that mural, painted on canvas, was placed during reconstruction. Hopefully, one day it will be found and hung at the new school."

COURTESY OF MICHELLE LEWIS

A teacher for 30 years and a self-employed artist for the past 13 years, Orinda resident **Michelle Lewis** said she financed her way through school as a nature photographer.

Lewis encourages all artists to embrace other art forms to influence and expand their aesthetics. A teacher for 30 years and a self-employed artist for the past 13 years, her creative work combines her talents from

[SEE LEWIS page 15]

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LIBRARY

Friends of Orinda Library Celebrates Anniversary, Fundraiser, Book Sale

COURTESY JANE KIM

Jane Kim, founder of InkDwell studio, commenting on the project said, "Orinda hills are full of wonder. The city's boundaries encompass a diversity of ecosystems such as riparian, chaparral and oak woodlands. I can't think of a better location for a mural cataloging natural heritage than a public library. Thank you, Orinda Garden Club and Friends of the Library, for working with our studio to bring this project to life!"

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

On Saturday, Dec. 4, the Friends of the Orinda Library (the Friends) will rock Library Plaza with three simultaneous events: celebration of the 20-year anniversary of building the library, debut of a mural and fundraiser to commemorate the event and a long-awaited book sale. Join them from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. for family fun at the same time as the Orinda Farmers' Market.

Over the last 20 years, the Friends have hosted popular programs such as the first Contra Costa County "Reading to Dogs Program," which began in 2006.

More than 1,000,000 books have been donated to the Friends since the Library opened. All are sorted and sold either in the Library bookshop or online. Money earned funds library programs.

Orinda resident Mary Kate Rittman brought the idea of using InkDwell Studio (InkDwell) to create a mural on the Library to the Friends last year.

"Orinda needed something joyful and uplifting to be part of the City's Connect Orinda efforts," she said.

Rittman had served on the board of the Rhode Island School of Design where she met Jane Kim, a graduate of the school and founder of the Bay Area company, InkDwell (www.inkdwell.com).

The Friends were looking for a special way to commemorate the Library's 20th year, and they found it. They commissioned a mural installation on the entire south wall of the Library above the parking garage entrance.

Every inch of the mural references the flora and fauna of Orinda's ecosystem. The design was created by Kim and her team at InkDwell. The Friends donated the mural to the City as a gift of public art and will provide 30 years of maintenance.

President of the Friends, Nancy Ross-Madnick, said it took a while to find the best representation for the mural.

"Over several months our board of directors reviewed various designs and worked with Jane Kim to produce the beautiful and unique mural we presented to the Orinda City Council, Oct. 19," said Ross-Madnick. "We received unanimous approval."

The mural cost $100,000 and is expected to take about six weeks to complete. The Friends will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony at that time, probably spring of 2022.

The Friends' Treasurer Linda Landau said the funds collected by the Friends to purchase books and other items for the Library will be kept separate from the funds collected for the mural.

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

The official mural fundraising kick-off begins at the Dec. 4 anniversary celebration and book sale. Visit https://bit.ly/3nsWsIE to contribute to the mural campaign, or mail contributions to Friends of the Orinda Library, P.O. Box 152, Orinda, CA 94563, and note "Mural" in the memo section of your check.

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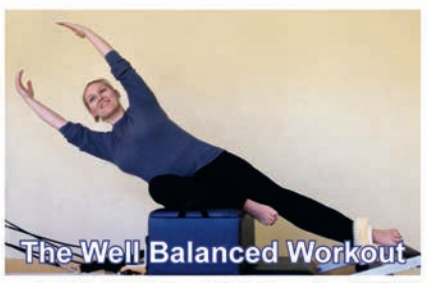

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Register for CERT Winter Class

The Lamorinda Community Emergency Response Team or CERT, is now accepting enrollment for their Winter class series. The CERT program offers valuable insight into the first few critical hours following an emergency related event and how individuals can become empowered to better prepare to sustain themselves, their families and their communities.

Classes will be held once a week on Wednesdays from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Orinda Library beginning on January 12 and running until March 9. The CERT classes teach disaster preparedness, radio communications, basic first aid, light search and rescue and fire suppression among other critical skills. If a disaster strikes, residents might be on their own for hours or days and the basic skills taught in CERT can help keep people and neighborhoods safe until help arrives. Given the devastation wildfires and earthquakes can cause, CERT is a good way to help prepare for when disaster strikes.

To enroll in the next class, go to www.lamorindacert.org/training/classes/.

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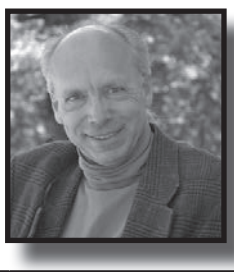

As the days grow shorter, so does this column. The International Film Showcase will sit out the month of December so as not to compete with the major Christmas releases. There is still, however, the Chiller Diller Theatre to anticipate. Also, a special event happening shortly after Christmas will go beyond the standard fare at the Orinda Theatre.

The third Saturday of every month has been set aside for the Chiller Diller Theatre. It is then that Lord Blood-Rah and gang present a wide variety of memorable horror and science fiction movies.

For the month of December, *Gremlins* will be the film *du jour*. Released in 1984, the movie proved if you push the envelope just a little bit you can come up with a truly original piece of art. *Gremlins* takes an unlikely, little-used concept, subverts it, dials it up to 11, and then dumps it into our laps wholly without warning.

This is one of those films, which, even after multiple viewings, always offers something new. The devil is in the details and there are just so many details that one can't decide whether to laugh or gawk in wonder.

Another marvel is that no computers were harmed in the making of this movie. Most of everything you'll see is a practical effect. No reacting to a green screen. Here actor and creature are in the same space at the same time. If acting is reacting, then there is some darn fine acting, both by the humans and the Gremlins.

To say more would be revealing too much, do make your way to the Orinda Theatre Dec. 18 at 5 p.m. and prepare yourself. For further info, visit www.orindamovies.com, or the Theatre's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/orindatheatre.

While you're there, it would be a good idea to keep the website bookmarked. There will be an important event still in the early planning stages you will not want to miss on Dec. 27. Owner/Manager Derek Zemrak will be thanking those who contributed to the theater's GoFundMe account which helped keep the Orinda Theatre open these past 18 months. It will also mark the 80th anniversary of that august edifice's opening back in 1941. For more information, see the article on page 20.

And now comes the time when I would like to wish one and all the very best this season has to offer, and to remind you, once again, to always veer towards that wonderful light - filled with images and sound – for that's where the reel magic lies.

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

♦ LEWIS from page 13

modern dance to photography, teaching to weaving and painting to collaborative murals.

To learn more about Lewis' artwork, visit www.michellelewisart.com.

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

♦ FUNNY SIDE from page 12

claws, bags of Lay's potato chips and a twelve-pack of Coors Lite. I'm not judging their food choices, just their food-separator practices (okay, maybe both).

Or, maybe they're too busy thinking about themselves to concern themselves with the person – cute, kind and adorable as she can be – behind them.

I do understand this is not a big deal to most. No one has died, this won't affect our local economy and it won't trigger a nuclear war.

And maybe this falls within post-menopausal range, but this is driving me crazy, to the point of secretly visualizing myself bopping the person on the head with the food-separator stick and yelling, "PUT YOUR STICK DOWN!"

While I'm not a proponent of violence or inappropriate behavior (well, maybe a *little* inappropriate behavior), I AM an advocate of common courtesy.

In the beginning, I would kindly but begrudgingly put *the culprit's* stick down, in addition to my own – I guess getting an extra work-out. When I grew weary of this, I decided to simply place my groceries down without using the stick while leaving a good 10-inch airspace between my kale and the person's Marlboros. Most of the time, the person in front would notice and tell the clerk where his or her groceries ended.

When I felt this wasn't affecting global change, but merely encouraging selfish behaviors (on their part), I decided to go a step further and place my items smack dab up to theirs so the clerk would have no idea who was buying what.

I started getting a kick out of it, even sporting a sly smirk on my face, when I realized this had to be the beginning of a psychological problem. On my part, not theirs.

Eventually, with my groceries smack dab up to those from the person in front of me, the clerk would start swiping my stuff. Sometimes, three items in, the customer noticed and told the clerk those items belonged to someone else.

The clerk would have to delete my items. When this happened the other day, I waved my divider in the air and said in my best motherly voice with great authority, "That's what the dividers are for!" I got a stink-eye in return, but that's when my best idea EVER hit me.

I finally resorted to launching an "oh-this-is-so-on-now" campaign I've dubbed "Divide and Conquer." And I sincerely hope it doesn't happen to you!

I've decided to do my regular grocery shopping with a twist.

I will shop for some extra items I don't really need or want and place them between the non-divider-user's groceries and mine. I will, however, go the extra step and place the divider down, but I will place the revenge-stick behind those extra goodies I picked up on aisles two, five and nine.

I just wish I could be a fly on the wall to see the expression on the customer's face when he or she gets home and unloads the groceries and finds a box of tampons, log-lighter wand, duct tape and caviar.

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

♦ HOSPICE from page 1

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

CLASSIFIEDS

♦ OA from page 3

insurance professional for more than 30 years and currently represents Orinda as a local State Farm Insurance agent. Silveira is an active participant in the Orinda Unified School District Bond Oversight Committee and coaches local youth sports.

Cindy Powell, Treasurer

An OA board member since 2004, Powell served as treasurer, secretary and president and is currently back serving as treasurer. She has been a Fourth of July organizer for several years and is currently working for Seniors Around Town and the Volunteer Center several mornings a week in the OA office. Powell has been a member of Orinda Junior Women's Club since 1990.

Carlos Baltodano, Board Member

A 28-year resident of Orinda, Baltodano is the immediate past president of The Orinda Association and serves on the board of the Orinda Community Foundation. He was on the City's Planning Commission for six years and served as chair. Baltodano was director of Contra Costa County's Building Department for 10 years and initiated the expansion of services to the Lamorinda area. He is presently chair of the Board of Trustees for the East Oakland Youth Development Center.

Jacalyn Buettner, Board Member

A 29-year resident of Orinda, "Dr. Jackie" raised sons AJ and Dan, both Miramonte grads and Troop 57 Eagle Scouts. An award-winning chiropractor and entrepreneur, she has practiced at 450 Sutter in San Francisco since 1989. She has volunteered for numerous causes over the years, her favorite being "Flying Doctors of America," where she provided chiropractic care to refugees and underserved communities in a variety of countries around the world.

SALLY HOGARTY

Carlos Baltodano and **Chris Laszcz-Davis** Volunteer during the 2019 July 4 Parade.

Chris Laszcz-Davis, Board Member

A 32-year resident of Orinda, Laszcz-Davis and her husband Steve raised two children, Lauren and Grant, and supported schools and sports in which their offspring participated. Chris worked for the Department of Energy in Washington DC, spent 22 years as a corporate VP for a global company and is currently president of The Environmental Quality Organization. She is a Governor-appointed member of the California State Standards Board, chairs the tri-community Lamorinda Presents Forum and is past-president of Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Club.

Diane Lautz, Board member

Lautz has resided in Orinda for 37 years, along with husband of 45 years, Jim, and Miramonte graduate sons Eric and Grant. Lautz has five degrees, including a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Masters in Health Administration. She spent her career as an OR nurse, OR Manager, Director of Surgery, Director of Nursing Practice and Assistant Medical Administrator. After retiring, she started a business as a professional organizer.

Latika Malkani, Board Member

An 18-year, South Orinda/Del Rey resident, Malkani identifies fire preparation and emergency preparedness as priority goals along with better vegetation management and maintenance on City properties, public education, access to a chipper program and assisting residents with fire insurance renewal. "I want to help formulate and recommend strategic plans — for not only the next three years, but for the next 20 years," she said.

Marianne Moser, Board Member

A first-year resident of Orinda, Moser has a passion for land stewardship, community building and historical preservation. She fell in love with the area while a student at Cal where she studied city planning and architecture and is thrilled to now live on Claremont Avenue, "on the Orinda side," where her son started kindergarten at Wagner Ranch Elementary. She has a professional background in real estate development and investment, financial planning and administration.

Kate Wiley, Board Member

An Orinda resident for 36 years, Wiley left a career in sales and training to devote more time to family and community. Before joining the OA in 2002, she volunteered in Orinda schools, parent clubs and a local service organization. She opened the Orinda Volunteer Center, chaired programs and events including the Fourth of July Parade and served as president and secretary on the OA board. Wiley co-created, with the City of Orinda, the Seniors Around Town Program, now in its 16th year of continuous operation.

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

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Saving Face: My Aurea Aria

MIMI BOMMARITO

Lo, I bring you Tidings of Great Joy, this Christmas Season. Orinda has a Licensed Esthetic angel – Aurea Fonseca-Geen – whose customized facials are truly otherworldly.

I haven't enjoyed a full-on, professional facial since before I had kids, over 25 years ago. Which is not to say we are a facial-less household. In all fairness, my daughters' facials were to treat acne, but I remained a tad resentful. What is it about motherhood that quietly seeps inside our soul, causing us to put our children's needs before our own? Diaper ads? Hormones? Perhaps it's the ultimate mother, Mother Nature's way of ensuring humanity perpetuates.

We could all stand to shed some of that "Welcome to My Universe" attitude we're famous for in our youth. Not only was I guilty of it myself; it's a vital part of our development — where dreams and ambitions ignite. Self-sacrifice, once so foreign, suddenly seems so very natural once parents cradle their tiny newborn. Perhaps it starts with skipping a shower or two. Why spend money on a manicure to change dirty diapers? If I have time to eat at all, (and I'm ravenously hungry, by the way) I will wolf down something quick and immediately filling, rather than taking time to prepare something healthy and rejuvenating.

Ignoring ourselves becomes habit. As the children grow, the self-sacrifice becomes as natural as breathing and continues to morph and magnify. We block those $30 tickets to Water World and their $15 nachos from our collective memories for this reason.

Soon, we segue into the stretch where the children covet costly items, typically dovetailing with Santa's untimely demise. But of course we will still cave and give them some of those ridiculous costly items, because we love them. But, at our house anyway, it meant someone else must do without, and, you guessed correctly: it wasn't one of the little people.

I learned how to color my own hair and became a seasoned TJ Maxxinista. And I'm cool with all of these First World Problems. In an ideal setting, we tackle them with gratitude and good humor, knowing the days with young children are precious and fleeting.

But then, when we look away for two seconds, those kiddos have grown up. And, if we're really lucky, they secure good jobs and slide (rather unhappily) off the family dole. One fine day, middle-aged adults, often women, find themselves with extra time and funds to spend on themselves for a change. But it just feels wrong. Awkward. Selfish. We have been conditioned. Orthodontia over ourselves.

We all need to let go of the old routines and embrace this new phase. It is not selfish to pay more attention to self-care, a pot/kettle moment for me too. As we grow older, we are more likely to suffer health issues. Heck, there is a global pandemic raging all around us. Aging can introduce a baffling and possibly depressing phase as well, once the house is quiet and we are unsure how to fill in the blanks. Some of us are managing kids and fragile parents simultaneously.

Here is one wonderful way to invest in yourself: Orinda's own Aurea Fonseca-Geen, esthetician.

Aurea recently opened a private, peaceful enclave in the Orinda Hair Studio salon at 1 Orinda Way, next to Yu Bistro and Lamorinda Martial Arts. Although this local address is somewhat new, she is firmly established in the realm of professional skincare, having worked as the lead esthetician at the Lafayette Park Hotel Spa for many years.

Close in age and spirit, Aurea and I share the conviction that as a woman ages gracefully, less makeup actually looks better. We both still enjoy wearing mascara and some eyeliner — well, I wouldn't say I "enjoy" it, but old habits are hard to break. Since adolescence, this Southern girl was convinced she looked better with a face full of paint. But as I aged, applying my cosmetics made me feel like Crayola on an old purse. My hasty, amateur techniques that hadn't changed much from high school spawned the potential to frighten a toddler.

Aurea to the rescue. The solution to this dilemma is to ensure that skin looks so radiant and healthy one can skip all the blush and foundation (But never the sunscreen!). "My goal is to have my clients love the skin they're in," Aurea explained, "so they have more confidence and won't feel like they have to cover anything up with makeup."

I was invited to Aurea's studio in October for one of her 80-minute facials. I cannot find enough superlatives to describe my euphoria. What is unique about this particular facial is that it also includes therapeutic massage. In between the applications of various soothing masks and rejuvenating serums, which needed time to absorb, I basked in foot, hand, neck, shoulder and scalp massage. This procedure combines the best of both worlds. I thought of a dear, far away friend who is currently battle-weary from cancer, and how I wished she could enjoy this soul and body therapy. Along those lines, I also realized how long it had been since I had allowed myself something this therapeutic.

Aurea is a 30-year resident of Orinda, with clients coming from near and far to

[SEE EVERYDAY page 18]

MIMI BOMMARITO

Licensed clinical esthetician, **Aurea Fonseca-Geen,** offers a full range of treatments to naturally rejuvenate skin. She also has several lines of proven skin care products in her private skin care enclave in the Orinda Hair Studio at 1 Orinda Way.

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Rise to Read Miramonte Book Drive

JEFF HEYMAN

Hadley Orr – holding a bin while her mom **Alissa Lillie** donates a book – is a sophomore at Miramonte, who started a Rise to Read club on campus. The students' mission is to distribute books to underserved communities to help promote childhood literacy. Inspired by a family friends' daughter at San Ramon Valley High School, who started a branch on her campus years ago, the black collection bin was placed Nov. 11 in front of The Orinda Association office, 26 Orinda Way. Orindans and students in the club are collecting and donating the books to Kristi Yamaguchi's foundation called, Always Dream. They are collecting gently used and new books for grades K-5 until Dec. 10.

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Photo's courtesy of Alejandro Gomez

♦ LETTERS from page 4

for a number of them, I was responsible for the annual meeting of the Friends (I think this is part of the bylaws).

I cannot remember when the last of such meetings occurred, but it was years before the COVID-19 lockdown. With the lockdown, if such a proposal were in the works, it would have been considerate to email the Friends' membership about this proposal, so that they could weigh-in. My sense is that there would be no rousing approval.

Meanwhile, only recently has some attention been made to the disrepair and lack of cleanliness of the library facility. And the tiles that fell off years ago? They have yet to be matched, replaced and properly affixed to the building.

I am deeply disappointed.

– Carol Brown

Fire Safety Requires Research

When it comes to fire prevention, it is wiser to follow research.

I have yet to see a single reference to research either in the (national) Firewise website or in our fire department's site. Without data, all these fire prevention recommendations are, at best, hopeful, optimistic opinions (or observations that are not statistically significant).

Yet our city and fire code make policy and charge fines based on these opinions.

As a physicist, I am alarmed. Some of these recommendations seem to aid firestorms instead of slowing them down. I think this community deserves better. We strongly believe in science (as evidenced by our 90% vaccination rate).

We need recommendations that follow science, particularly when it comes to life or death. We should only have fire code requirements that are proven to decrease the likelihood or severity of a fire.

There are a lot of known facts that are not really so. Most lists of forbidden plants lack any backing. Many recommendations are quoted from other organizations or experts that also don't refer to research.

Remember even experts can have misconceptions. Experts supported 'bloodletting' for hundreds of years. When it comes to fire prevention, evidence-based recommendations and 'do no harm' should be the rule.

Know your audience. In Orinda, quoting the research will get quicker buy in.

– Juana Rudati PhD

Letters to the Editor should be no longer than 250 words and sent to The Orinda News, P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563, or email editor@theorindanews.com. Letters for the January issue are due Dec. 8.

♦ EVERYDAY from page 17

receive her customized facials. She also sells a plethora of daily skincare products for purchase, but is a self-proclaimed "low-pressure saleswomen," stating her main goal is for her clients to feel relaxed, younger and beautiful with fresh, glowing skin. To have a low-key expert guide me in product selection beats my overwhelmed, all-consuming stupor in the aisles of Sephora or CVS any day.

Aurea offers a full range of skincare services, from micro-needling to reduce wrinkles, hyperpigmentation, scarring and uneven skin, to waxing and hair removal to micro peels and micro channeling, the newest technology to non-surgically improve aging skin. She is an expert with male skincare as well as acne-prone teens. "Skincare is a passion for me," she shared. "I get to change someone's day, and that is special."

Aurea is also a practitioner of *Gua Sha*, an ancient Chinese form of gentle healing massage for face, neck and body. Gua Sha focuses on draining the lymphatic system of toxins, which make skin look dull, saggy and listless and can also negatively impact our health. In addition to making skin look firmer, more radiant and boosting elasticity, incorporating *Gua Sha* into a facial is extremely grounding. "The slow pace is deeply relaxing," Aurea explained. "The process instantly activates the parasympathetic nervous state. When we feel grounded in our bodies and calm in our mind, we are better equipped to handle obstacles and emotional issues," she added.

Ladies AND gentlemen, pick up the phone or visit her website: allaboutskincare.net. But if you're not ready to plunge into the self-care pool just yet, next time you hear, "So, uh, whuddaya want for Christmas/Birthday/Mothers/Fathers Day?" request a facial from Aurea Fonseca-Geen. All manner of gift certificates are available.

Skin Care by Aurea Fonseca-Geen, Licensed Clinical Esthetician, is located at 1 Orinda Way, Suite 5. Phone 925-262-3228 or reach the Spa 925-254-5775, website allaboutskincare.net

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

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MUSIC

Pianist Bobby Mitchell Dazzles with Schumann's *Concerto Without Orchestra Op 14*

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

Classical pianist and composer Bobby Mitchell, artistic director of France's "En Blanc et Noir Music Festival," plays two solo piano pieces: Robert Schumann's *Concerto Without Orchestra* and his own *Songs from Childhood* Saturday, Dec. 4 at 7 p.m. in Santa Maria Church.

Classical music lovers may recall Schumann (1810 – 1856) is known for this piece, described by Mitchell as, "Grand Romantic piano music at its very best. Expect all of the drama of a great theatrical play infused into remarkable virtuoso piano textures." Known for telling a story through his music, Schumann pushed against the emotional, structural and philosophical boundaries of his time.

While no stranger to performing in the Bay Area, Mitchell has covered the globe both as a soloist and collaborative concert pianist in Europe, South Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Middle East.

NRC Netherlands said, "Bobby Mitchell not only knows how to make exciting and unique music using ornamentation, sound and tempo, but you can hear that he never just plays what is written."

Orinda resident Vicki Nakamura, who has followed Mitchell's career for many years said, "Listen and watch Bobby's performance of the eight-part *People United Will Never be Defeated* on YouTube – it gives me the chills. The composition requires immense virtuosity and other extended techniques. He has performed as a guest concert pianist on every continent except Antarctica. While he lives in Germany, we are fortunate that he includes the Bay Area in his current tour."

Mitchell is comfortable in traditional classical repertoire as well as music as modern performance art and improvisation with classical elements: Hence, his *Songs from Childhood*, commissioned by the San Francisco International Piano Festival's artistic director Jeffrey LaDeur for the occasion of the festival's fourth edition in 2020. This 25-minute modern solo piano composition has eight movements or sections. You will hear elements of familiar songs from childhood (such as *Old McDonald Had a Farm* and *Daisy, Daisy*) filtered through the sophisticated palette of a virtuoso pianist.

Mitchell said, "I have dedicated my life to the piano because live music brings us together and fills our souls with sounding joy. When you hear the Santa Maria Church filled with piano music, you will be transported to a place that only great live art can take you."

JIYANG CHEN

Bobby Mitchell is an American classical pianist, composer and soloist. He frequently performs new and rarely heard works in the contemporary music canon as well as standard classical repertoire of centuries past.

While this hour-plus concert is offered at no cost in Santa Maria Church, 40 Santa Maria Way, donations are accepted at www.fundraising.fracturedatlas.org/bobby-mitchell-pianist. All COVID-19 precautions observed; ample parking.

To learn more about Mitchell, visit www.bobbymitchellpiano.com or call Vicki Nakamura at 925.708.1915.

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

A Night of Indian Classical Music & Dance

MICHELLE LEWIS

A night of North Indian classical music and South Indian dance will take place Dec. 11 at Piedmont Center for the Arts, 801 Magnolia Avenue, Piedmont, at 7 p.m. In photo above (L-R) **Dr. Michael Lewis,** a 30-year Orinda resident, will play tabla, alongside his 45-year friendship with **Steve Oda,** an exceptionally talented sarode player and **Pushpa Oda** on tanpura. Kali Futnani, a Bharatanatyam dancer, will also perform. The concert begins at 7 p.m. and costs $20. Masks and vaccination cards required.

♦ CLUBS from page 10

Road Runners. Runners meet 5:45 a.m. Tuesday at Papilion (67 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette), Wednesday (Gepettos 87 Orinda Way), Thursday (SiSI, 910 Country. Club Drive, Moraga) and Friday (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.

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BUSINESS

Orinda's Most Visible Landmark Celebrates its 80th Anniversary

By SALLY HOGARTY
Executive Editor

That Grand Old Lady, also known as the Orinda Theatre, celebrates her 80th birthday in style Dec. 27 at 6:30 p.m. Owner/Operator Derek Zemrak has secured the rights to *Cinema Paradiso* for the evening, which will include surprise announcements regarding the theater.

"In celebration of this milestone, the Orinda Theatre is giving a gift to the community that donated to our GoFundMe campaign," said Zemrak. "The classic film, *Cinema Paradiso*, will be shown free to all donors and a guest. We want to personally thank our donors who kept the theater alive during this pandemic. If it were not for their generosity, we would not be open today."

Winner of Best International Film Feature at the 1990 Academy Awards, *Cinema Paradiso* tells the story of a filmmaker recalling his childhood when he fell in love with the movies shown in his home village while developing a deep friendship with the theater's projectionist. Light snacks, popcorn and soft drinks will be provided with beer and wine available for purchase.

The Orinda Theatre's GoFundMe campaign was one of the many innovative ways Zemrak and his team kept the theater doors open. He also offered the middle-sized theater as a rental for special events and, for a small fee, put Happy Birthday and other signage on the marquee for local residents. Outdoor music in front of the theater's ornate entrance also became a popular way to see friends in a COVID-safe atmosphere while supporting the theater.

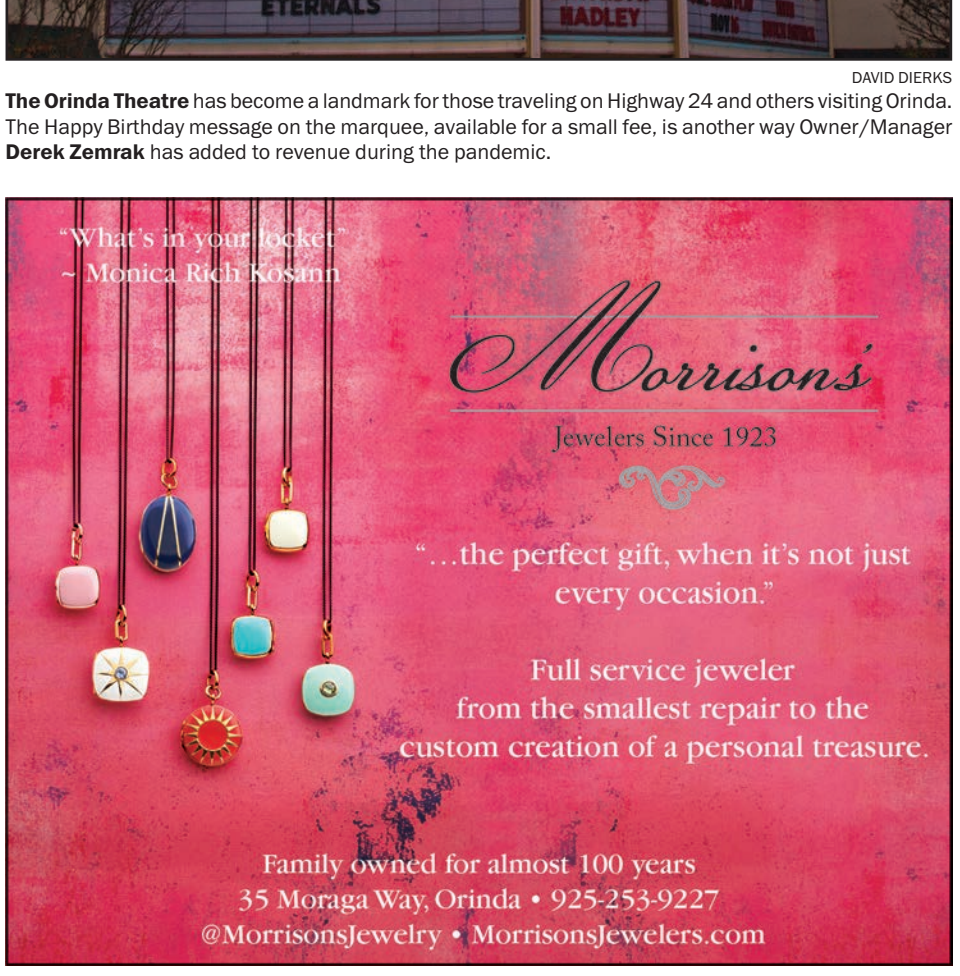
Built by Donald Rheem with architect Alexander Aimwell Cantin, the Orinda Theatre originally opened Dec. 27, 1941, with the movie *Texas* starring William Holden.

Slated for demolition in 1984, it was saved through the efforts of preservationists and reopened in 1989 with two additional screens added. The original lobby and main theater were left intact, with the murals in the middle-sized theater coming from the Garden Theatre in San Jose when it was demolished. The theater is listed on the National Register of Historic Places in Contra Costa County.

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

SALLY HOGARTY

Derek Zemrak with his new book on his favorite movies flanked by advertisements for current and upcoming movies showing the diversity offered at the Art Deco theater.



DAVID DIERKS

The Orinda Theatre has become a landmark for those traveling on Highway 24 and others visiting Orinda. The Happy Birthday message on the marquee, available for a small fee, is another way Owner/Manager **Derek Zemrak** has added to revenue during the pandemic.

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