



# THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis  
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## One Warm Coat Can Go A Long Way

By KATHRYN G. MCCARTY  
Staff Writer

The holiday season is a time to reflect upon our abundance and share with others who are less fortunate. One way to help those in need is by donating new and gently used coats to The Orinda Association's "One Warm Coat Project" through

The national organization supports over 3,000 coat drives each year. In its 22-year history, "One Warm Coat" has collected over four million coats, of which 300,000 went to children.

Wiley, an active member of the Orinda community and a past president of The Orinda Association, notes that the Orinda team first joined the drive last year. In its



SALLY HOGARTY

The Orinda Association is once again collecting new and gently used coats for those in need. Last year, Orindans donated 165 coats, which were taken to Oakland's Social Services Department for distribution. Shown above are volunteers **Kate Wiley** (L) and **Carolyn Palmer** (far right) with Oakland Social Services staff.

Dec. 21 at the OA office in the Orinda Library Plaza.

Kate Wiley, Director of "Seniors Around Town," is leading the Orinda effort. According to Wiley, the project is in need of outerwear coats, ski jackets, rain coats, leather coats, dress coats, casual, sport and athletic coats, in all sizes.

This is the second year the OA has participated in the "One Warm Coat Project," a San Francisco based charity founded in 1992.

first efforts benefiting Alameda County Social Services, the group collected and donated 165 coats from the donation site

[SEE COAT page 6]



MICHELLE BEA

These are just a handful of the intrepid swimmers at **Meadow Swim Club** who took to the waters to raise money for victims of the Napa and Sonoma fires. The swim-a-thon, organized by head coach **Kyle Peterson** (far right), raised over \$40,000.

## Meadow Swim Club Shows What the Holiday Season is All About

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

Jumping into the spirit of the holiday season with both feet and a swim cap are the swimmers and parents at Meadow Swim Club. Head coach Kyle Peterson's Swim-a-Thon to support "Go Fund a Hero: Sonoma Firefighters" turned into a water-churning success with a large turnout of participants and sponsors.

On a rainy Nov. 3, 60 young swimmers from Orinda's Meadow Swim and Tennis Club as well as parents and coaches took to the water beginning at 8 a.m. and continuing until 7 p.m. Setting a goal of raising \$5,000, the intrepid participants swam

4,854 laps raising a total of \$40,581.20!

Club social chair Emily Stoddard kept the swimmers fueled with hot cocoa, cider, popcorn and energy bars. Four members of the Moraga Orinda Fire District even came with their ambulance and fire truck to cheer on the swimmers during the afternoon session.

According to Peterson, the Meadow community had been wondering how they could help those who lost so much in the Sonoma and Napa County fires. They decided on the swim-a-thon that would be a "FUNdraiser," benefitting the firefighters and their families who lost their homes to the fires.

The two youngest swimmers were Xavier Portet (age 5) and Sam Stoddard (age 4),

[SEE SWIM page 4]

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### Tree of Lights Ceremony on Dec. 2



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The 31st annual **Hospice Tree of Lights** ceremony takes place on Dec. 2 in Orinda Village in front of the Bank of America. Beginning at 4:30 p.m., elementary and middle school choirs will sing holiday songs followed by the tree lighting and a very special visit from Santa Claus. The Tree of Lights ceremonies provide a way for families and friends to honor loved ones while raising funds to help Hospice do its invaluable work. To donate to Hospice, go to [www.hospiceeastbay.org](http://www.hospiceeastbay.org).

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### The OA Has You Covered!

Don't let year-end tax worries turn you upside down. Make a tax-deductible donation to one of The Orinda Association's valuable programs.

See page two!



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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION



Tis the season of Christmas  
When all through Orinda's streets  
Many merchants are stirring  
To help provide Santa's treats.

With that same Christmas spirit  
*The Orinda News* joins too:  
To this year's advertisers  
We send a joyous "Thank You."

With visions of sugar plums  
Dancing in front of our eyes,  
We hope this contemplation  
Will resonate or surprise.

And, so, to recipients,  
As loyal as one might find,  
With hopes that you, dear reader,  
Will treat them warmly in kind:

We'll start with **Casa Orinda**,  
With more than chicken to boast,  
One of CoCo County's best,  
This gem surely earns a toast.

**Baan Thai** – homey and perfect  
Lunch/dinner for elves/helpers.  
Folks love **Siam Orchid** too –  
Witness its happy Yelpers.

It's hard to resist Moraga Way's  
**Tavernna Pelligrini**,  
Owner Dario Hadjian's  
Old world charm of Italiini.

**La Mediterranee** too –  
Located in Bes-Zerk-Lee,  
But owned by proud Orindan,  
Restaurateur Garbis B.

And cheers, **Village Inn Café**,  
A Lamorinda fixture,  
Still specializing in its  
Breakfast/brunch pleasing mixture.

And when the New Year arrives  
Might be time to see Sheena,  
The owner/nutritionist  
Of – pardon – **Living Lean**-ah.

An alternative would be  
To wait all the way to spring:  
Orinda's **Farmer's Market**  
Then healthy harvest will bring.

Kudos to community  
Long-time trustworthy stalwart --  
Loyal **Orinda Motors**:  
Always right advice and part.

**Maureen Wilbur, Shellie Kirby,**  
**Suzanne Geoffrion**, thanks.  
And not to forget **Laura**  
**Abrams**, also from **Coldwell**  
**Banks**.

Speaking about realtors,  
Let's not forget **Leila Schlein**,  
And **Virginia and Paul Ratto**,  
Under **Pac Union's** sign.

Felicitations and cheers  
To **Prime Realty's Rod Lai**,  
And shop **McCaulou's** for gifts,  
Whether a dress, coat or tie.

**Pro Property Management**  
Deserves a jolly shout out;  
And **Village Associates'**  
**Ann Sharf**, real estate tout.

Speaking of **Village**, four more:  
**April, Steve, Dexter and Clark**,  
That is **Matthews, Stahle, Honens**  
And **Thompson** – right on the mark.

**Edwards Everything Travel**  
Will provide many a trick  
To pack a bag even to  
Please good old, jolly St. Nick.

Speaking of pleased, you surely  
Will be with good **Doctors** three –  
**Brian Clark, Laurie Langford,**  
**Mary Smith** – great choices for  
thee.

Visiting **CoreKenetics**,  
You can center your body and mind;  
Use **Animal House Pet Sitting**  
To treat your dear "oh so kind."

Eggnog toasts to **Orinda Shell**  
And to **5A Rent-A-Space**.  
To **McDonnell Nursery**,  
Adorning many a place.

You might take Santa also,  
If he won't throw in the towel,  
To a session of yoga --  
That is **Yoga by Jeanne Dowell**.

**Advanced Therapy Center,**  
**Kirby Carpet, Taxi Bleu,**  
**Architect James Wright** and  
**Nurtury**, greetings to you.

**Alan Wong** greets all patrons  
By name at **Medicine Shoppe**  
While **Cruise Adventures Unlim.**  
Will head Santa's list on top.

**Blue Ridge Landscaping** will give  
You the idyllic down low,  
And the boon to area  
Schools is still the **E.F.O.**

If your winter wonderland  
Is in need of complete care,  
Be sure to see **Tree Sculpture**  
Before pulling out your hair.

As we come close to the end,  
Approaching St. Nick's turn-style,  
We can't forget **Orinda**  
**Books**, says this Bibliophile.

First, **Orinda Afternoons**  
Needs to garner a shout-out,  
As does **Orinda Chamber**  
For support of all about.

But, what's that under the tree?  
A present from **Parks and Rec**:  
Ongoing and bright all year,  
Letting us know "What's On Deck."

As I'm drawing in my head  
Twisting and turning about,  
Down the chimney comes St. Nick  
With not the trace of a pout:

"Now! Dasher, now! Dancer, Now!  
Prancer and you too Vixen;  
On! Comet, on! Cupid, on!  
Dunder and you too Blixem."

And leading them all, Rudolph  
With his tomato-like nose:  
Sleighting Orinda elders  
All over town as it goes.

Surely "**Seniors Around Town**"  
Has captured your attention,  
The **O.A.** does very much,  
This though earns special mention.

To sum up this verse, we wish  
You and yours seasonal cheer.  
Thankful for much, including  
The blessing that we live here!

Merry Christmas and Happy New  
Year from *The Orinda News*.

**DONATE**

**Your tax-deductible donation supports our community!**

Please send your year-end gift in support of The Orinda Association's valuable programs. For over 70 years, we have been putting donors' dollars to work for Orinda residents. If you are already a member, please renew this month – our membership fees are nominal, but the returns are immeasurable!

**Your Dollars Support These Programs & More!**

- Publishing *The Orinda News*
- Operating the Volunteer Center
- Hosting Community Forums
- Organizing the All-Community 4th of July Celebration and Orinda Annual Classic Car Show
- Providing transportation through "Seniors Around Town"

**To Donate by Dec. 31st:**

**Online:** Visit [OrindaAssociation.org](http://OrindaAssociation.org)  
**By Phone:** 925-254-0800 (Credit Card)  
**By Mail:** Use the enclosed envelope, or send a check to PO Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563  
**Drop by:** We'd love to see you! Our office is on the ground floor of the Library Plaza at 26 Orinda Way.

**Notice to Current Members of The Orinda Association:**

The Board of The Orinda Association (OA) has drafted limited amendments to the OA bylaws. These amendments address necessary updates and are the first bylaw changes since 2002. Pursuant to the current bylaws, any changes must be available for members to comment upon and approve.

To that end, the OA board has posted the proposed changes on the OA website. Please go to [www.orindaassociation.org/membership](http://www.orindaassociation.org/membership) to review and/or download the changes.

If you approve the changes or have additional input, email the OA at [oa@orindaassociation.org](mailto:oa@orindaassociation.org), call 925-254-0800 or mail your approval to P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563. The Board seeks to finalize the amendments by January 1. We look forward to hearing from you! Thank You!

**Nominate an Outstanding Community Member**

Do you know someone who is an outstanding volunteer in the Orinda community or who has worked tirelessly to preserve or enhance the environment? If so, why not nominate them for the 2017 Citizen of the Year or the 2017 William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award? The winners will be feted at a festive dinner at the Orinda Country Club on Mar. 11, 2018. The Orinda Association is currently accepting nominations. Go to [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org) to download a nomination form or call 925-254-0800.

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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President  
Winter is Coming ...to Orinda



Cindy Powell

**M**eteorological winter begins December 1, and lasts until the end of February. It is marked by the coldest average temperatures during the year. Bundle up and come to **Orinda Hospice Tree of Lights Ceremony** on Dec. 2, to see the elementary and middle school singers, the beautiful Tree of Lights and maybe catch a word with Santa. Bring your dog in observance of **National Mutt Day**. That evening is the **Miramonte Winter Ball**. Thank you to the parents and staff who create this beautiful event.

**Diablo Women's Chorale Holiday Concert** is Dec. 3, and the group is celebrating its 75th Anniversary with "Season of Light," songs of peace and unity, and holiday music for all. On Dec. 6, come to the **OUSD Facilities Master Plan Town Hall** meeting and hear about potential improvements to our school campuses. Dec 7 is **Letter Writing Day**, and I want to say "Thank You" to the residents here in Orinda who accompanied the donations sent from Orinda to Napa on **Giving Tuesday** last week with handwritten notes and letters. This personal touch was truly heart-warming.

At **The Nobel Prize Award Ceremonies** on Dec. 10, Nobel Laureates receive their prizes from the Swedish King – a Nobel diploma, a medal, and ten million Swedish crowns per prize. Alfred Nobel spoke five languages fluently, became an inventor and businessman, and at the time of his death on Dec. 10, 1896, had 355 patents worldwide – one of them the patent on dynamite. He started 87 companies and willed his enormous fortune to be used to establish prizes to those who had done their best to benefit mankind in the fields of physics, chemistry, medicine, literature and peace.

Here in Orinda, submit your **Citizen of the Year** or **William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award** nominations to The Orinda Association to recognize our town's special people and groups that have made a difference in 2017.

**Green Monday**, on Dec. 11, is an online retail industry term coined by eBay to describe its best sales day in December. Instead, **Shop Orinda** and keep the green in our town.

**Gingerbread House Day** is observed annually on Dec. 12. Armenian monks brought gingerbread to Europe around 992 AD, and taught French Christians to bake

it. Gingerbread was often used in religious ceremonies and was baked to be sturdy enough to be molded into images of saints. We can thank the Brothers Grimm for the idea of a gingerbread house shape from their tale of "Hansel and Gretel."

On Dec. 13, **WomenSing** will present a "Sparkling" performance at Santa Maria Church. **Ugly Christmas Sweater Day** on Dec. 15 was started in 2011 to lighten up the busy holidays and to show off ugly or silly holiday-themed sweaters. It is growing in popularity every year among adults and children and is sometimes used as a light-hearted fundraising event for organizations that help children.

Dec. 20 is **Sangria Day**. Enjoy the delicious, fruity drink that Spaniards have enjoyed for 2000 years. Sangria is a beverage made with wine and sweetened with fresh fruit and juices that can include herbs, spices and liquor. One of the best glasses of Sangria I have tasted was here in Orinda at Cine Cuvée. The 20th anniversary of **Bacon Day** is also on Dec. 20.

Dec. 21 is **Free Movie Night at Orinda Theatre, The Polar Express**. Because this will not be shown in the big theatre, arrive early to get a seat. The **Winter Solstice** is also on Dec. 21. It is considered the astronomical beginning of winter and is the shortest day of the year. At 8:28 a.m. Orinda time, the sun will be at its southernmost point and begin its long, six-month journey north.

Dec. 21 is also **Crossword Puzzle Day**. Not only are they fun, but challenging crossword puzzles may help delay the effects of dementia and sharpen your brain for problem solving. In winter, they kept us busy when it got dark before TV and cell phones ruled the night.

**Super Saturday** or **Panic Saturday** on Dec. 23 is the last Saturday before Christmas, a major day of revenue for American retailers. It marks the end of the shopping season and targets last-minute shoppers. Please plan ahead and remember to shop local and keep the funds for our schools, roads and services in our town

Ring in the New Year is the perfect opportunity to celebrate **National Champagne Day** on Dec. 31, as we look back at the year and reminisce with friends and family. Think of a resolution you would like to keep that may improve your life and

[SEE PRESIDENT page 4]

The Orinda Association

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

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

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www.orindaassociation.org

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# Letters to the Editor...

## Housing Prices Could Tumble

A sharp decline in the value of Orinda's homes is possible under provisions of President Donald Trump's new tax plan.

According to *The Wall Street Journal* (Nov. 2, 2017), the National Association of Realtors wants an "action plan" to change what Trump has proposed. The *Journal* reported that the realtor's group has the goals of "preserving deductions for mortgage interest and property taxes . . ."

Under current federal law, home-mortgage interest and property taxes are, for taxpayers who itemize their federal tax returns, deductible from total annual income.

Currently, an Orinda home could cost \$2 million. For a \$1 million, 30-year, fixed-rate loan at four percent, the mortgage interest – for the first 10 years of the loan – would be \$40,000 a year. See ([www.interest.com](http://www.interest.com)). The property tax would be \$20,000 (or more) a year.

Under the Trump plan, the mortgage loan limit would be \$500,000. For a \$500,000 loan on the same terms, the mortgage interest would be \$20,000 a year. The property tax would still be \$20,000 (or more) a year.

Assume an Orinda homeowner earning \$90,000 a year. Under current law, that homeowner would have a taxable income of \$30,000. (\$90,000 minus \$40,000 for mortgage interest and another \$20,000 for property taxes equals \$30,000.)

If the seller of that home worth \$2 million found a buyer, that buyer, under the Trump plan, would have a deduction for home-mortgage interest of \$20,000 a year. The buyer's deduction for property taxes would be \$10,000. The buyer, if earning \$90,000 a year, would have taxable income of \$60,000. \$90,000 minus \$20,000 for mortgage interest and another \$10,000 for property taxes equals \$60,000 – or twice as much as the seller.

These calculations assume that there is no Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT). The AMT can place limits on deductions. (Under the Trump plan, the AMT would be eliminated.)

Of course, Congress could make changes in the Trump plan, but no one knows what these changes might be.

If the Trump plan, with no changes, passes, the buyer of that \$2 million Orinda home would not obtain the tax advantages of the seller, and the seller would be asked to lower his asking price.

The Trump plan offers several types of tax cuts, but if the Trump plan only deals with deductions for mortgage interest and property taxes, home prices in Orinda could fall – and fall sharply.

– Richard S. Colman

## Orinda Must Chart its Own Course

The State of California recently passed Senate Bill 35 which will expedite housing

development approvals statewide. Orinda residents should pay attention. It's the opening salvo against cities like Orinda that have prime access to regional transit like BART but have outdated General Plans that continue to govern land use policies and prevent new housing from being built.

With many communities in the Bay Area claiming they are "built out," the region now faces a severe housing shortage. The result of this shortage is skyrocketing rents and home prices that may benefit longtime homeowners, but condemn future generations to a lifetime without the possibility of affordable home ownership in communities close to their work place.

Some say another negative consequence of restrictive housing policies is the enormous environmental cost of sprawl in outlying areas. SB 35 is one way that state legislators are beginning to address the problem. Cities that are resistant to the addition to new housing stock will be reined in.

What should Orinda's response to this new law be? Some want us to retreat further into our cocoon, closing off our downtown for any new investment. But that will only increase the state's bullseye on us, given our convenient freeway and BART access. The longer we try to prevent new development through restrictive zoning, the more likely it will be that the state and outside developers will do it for us.

Fortunately, there is a better way forward. Orinda should take action and chart its own course for downtown. We should begin planning for a more convenient, fun and beautiful downtown, where empty nesters, young professionals, and other locals can live and support better retail amenities and public spaces that will benefit everyone in the community.

Our City Council shouldn't retreat from Sacramento's warning shot. It should immediately begin a process for a comprehensive update to the rules governing downtown development with the end goal of creating a Downtown Specific Plan. Earlier in the year, a City Council downtown subcommittee was created to discuss the process of downtown renewal. We urge this subcommittee to address our call for action. State and local agencies provide grant opportunities for such a process. Our current general plan is outdated, and its restrictive codes provide no incentive for the investment required to bring in new retail, public spaces and a revitalized downtown creek.

It is time for Orinda's City Council to begin this long overdue process of updating our downtown planning policy right away, before others end up doing it for us.

– Tom Trowbridge and Kirsten Larsen, on behalf of the OrindaVision and What's Up Downtown Steering Committee



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### ◆ SWIM from page 1

who swam eight and 10 laps each. Kellie Williams and Sarah Cunningham tied for the most laps – each swam an amazing 200 laps (Paul Sagara came in close behind at 186). Coach Kyle swam a total of 150 laps which energized a dedicated group of 11 and up swimmers set to beat his total. Swimming 150 laps or more were John Williams, Nicholas Bea, Elizabeth Hua, Jewel Mendiola and Mina Lim.

"I really wanted to do something for all the firefighters, and now I feel like I did. It's easy to make a difference even if you're small as long as your heart is really into it," says Lim, who raised \$6,800.

For a list of participating swimmers, email [webmaster@meadowswimandtennis.com](mailto:webmaster@meadowswimandtennis.com).

To see photos of the event, check out the Meadow Facebook page.

### ◆ PRESIDENT from page 3

the lives of those around you. Volunteer your time, donate your extra items and support our wonderful town.

Think of a resolution you would like to keep that may improve your life and the lives of those around you. Volunteer with a program you feel passionate about and consider The OA in your year-end giving, using the enclosed envelope. Your dollars directly support *The Orinda News*, July 4th Celebration, Seniors Around Town, free public forums and the Volunteer Center. Wishing you a safe and healthy New Year!

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Send letters to: Editor, *The Orinda News*, P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563, or email to [news@orindaassociation.org](mailto:news@orindaassociation.org).

Letters to Editor for the **January** issue are due **December 8, 2017**.

For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 ([jill@aspenconsult.net](mailto:jill@aspenconsult.net)) or Elana O'Loskey at 925-984-1751 ([elanao@mac.com](mailto:elanao@mac.com)). The deadline for the January issue is December 8, 2017.

SMART WASTE / POLICE BLOTTER

# City of Orinda Looks at Adding Bigbelly to Orinda Public Areas

By DAVID DIERKS  
Assistant Editor

The Orinda City Council is looking into working with Bigbelly to install smart waste and recycling management stations in public spaces in Orinda. The smart waste management systems are either solar powered or self-powered and contain sensors

and wireless hubs that communicate real-time status to collection crews. Station options include trash, single stream recycling, bottles and cans recycling, paper recycling and compost/organics. Republic Services will service the stations.

According to City Manager Steve Salomon, the new system could reduce man hours by two-thirds. He hopes to have the

item on the City Council's agenda in the near future.

Bigbelly's suite of stations includes a smart, compacting model for high traffic areas and a standard capacity model for less busy areas. The compacting model's increased capacity is five times the size of a standard waste bin and contains up to 150 gallons of waste. The stations communicate

their status by generating emails, texts and online notifications to indicate which stations need to be collected. This data is used to streamline collection routes, measure and benchmark operations, and give insight into waste patterns including volume, fill rate and collection activity.

For more information, visit <http://bigbelly.com>.



## POLICE BLOTTER

October 1 through November 4, 2017

**Calls for Service**

- 911 Hangup: 10 incidents.
- Abandoned Vehicle: 5 incidents.
- Accident Injury: 4 incidents.
- Accident Property: 11 incidents.
- Alarm, False: 86 incidents.
- Animal Cruelty: 1 incident.
- Arson: 1 incident.
- Barking Dog: 2 incidents.
- Burglary, Auto: 7 incidents.
- Burglary, Commercial: 2 incidents.
- Burglary, Residential: 5 incidents.
- Civil Matter: 10 incidents.
- CVC Moving Violation: 101 incidents.
- CVC Non-Moving Violation: 57 incidents.
- Defraud Innkeeper: 1 incident.
- Disturbing the Peace: 1 incident.
- DUI Misdemeanor: 2 incidents.
- Exhibition of Speed: 1 incident.
- Fire/EMS Response Info: 1 incident.
- Forgery: 1 incident.
- Found Property: 2 incidents.
- Health & Safety Violation: 1 incident.
- Hit & Run Misdemeanor: 4 incidents.
- Identity Theft: 5 incidents.
- Indecent Exposure: 1 incident.
- Juvenile Disturbance: 4 incidents.
- Litter: 1 incident.
- Lost Property: 2 incidents.
- Loud Motorcycle: 1 incident.
- Loud Music: 2 incidents.
- Loud Noise: 1 incident.
- Loud Party: 3 incidents.
- Medical Hospital: 1 incident.
- Motorist Assist: 3 incidents.
- Ordinance Violation: 7 incidents.
- Other Infraction: 1 incident.
- Other Misdemeanor: 1 incident.
- Outside Assist: 16 incidents.
- Parking Detail: 84 incidents.
- Patrol Request: 27 incidents.
- Petty Theft from Vehicle: 2 incidents.

- Phone Harassment: 2 incidents.
- Public Assembly Check: 2 incidents.
- Public Nuisance: 1 incident.
- Reckless Driving: 9 incidents.
- School Check: 19 incidents.
- Security Check: 27 incidents.
- Service to Citizen: 105 incidents.
- Shoplift: 1 incident.
- Shots Heard: 1 incident.
- Suspicious Circumstances: 17 incidents.
- Suspicious Person Stop: 8 incidents.
- Suspicious Subject: 11 incidents.
- Suspicious Vehicle: 20 incidents.
- Suspicious Vehicle Stop: 29 incidents.
- Tow: 8 incidents.
- Traffic Collision/Property Damage: 1 incident.
- Traffic Hazard: 13 incidents.
- Trespass: 1 incident.
- Vacation House Check: 35 incidents.
- Vandalism: 2 incidents.
- Verbal Dispute: 5 incidents.
- Welfare Check: 14 incidents.

**Arrest**

- DUI Misdemeanor: 1 arrest.
- Misdemeanor Arrest: 1 arrest.
- Possession of Controlled Substance: 1 arrest.
- Possession of Glue Inhalant: 1 arrest.
- Shoplifting: 2 arrests.
- Stolen Vehicle Recovered: 1 recovery.
- Warrant Arrest: 2 arrests.

**BART Statistics**

No incidents reported.

– Compiled by David Dierks  
Assistant Editor

For more incident details, visit  
[www.crimereports.com](http://www.crimereports.com)



PHOTO COURTESY OF BIGBELLY SMART CITY SOLUTIONS  
The Orinda City Council is considering using BigBelly trash and recycling containers similar to these in public areas.

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## BART Encourages Carpooling to Orinda Station

By DAVID DIERKS  
Assistant Editor

On Nov. 13, BART rolled out a new program at the Orinda BART station which encourages people to carpool to the transit hub. BART Board President Rebecca Saltzman says, “The goal of this program is really to maximize the limited parking spaces we have at BART stations. I know Orinda BART parking is very oversubscribed, and we have a very long wait list for the monthly parking permits.” Those who use the program are guaranteed a parking spot at the Orinda BART parking lot until 10 a.m. “We’re trying to get more than one person to show up in each car so that there will be more parking spaces available for those who need them.”

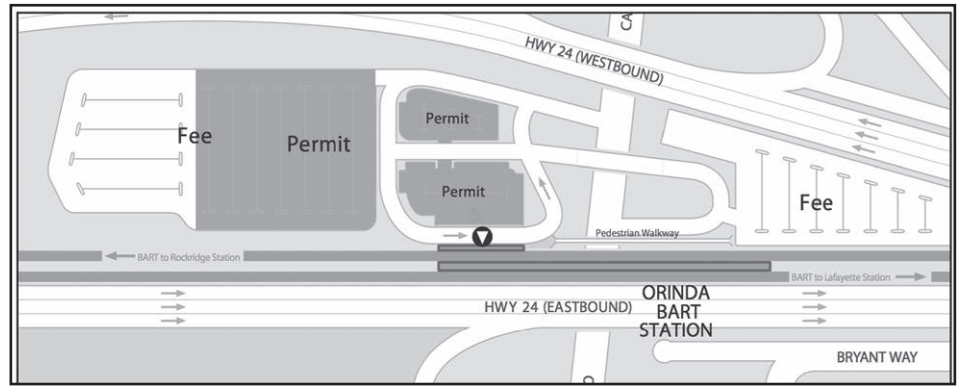
The program uses an app called Scoop. Saltzman notes, “All people have to do, if they want to use this, is download the Scoop app and set their work location as BART, because the app is made to get you to and from work through carpooling. The night before a BART trip, you go into the app and say you want to schedule a trip to the BART station, and it will try to match you with a nearby rider or driver, depending on what you are looking for.” The program has been in use at the Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station since January, and 90 percent of people get matched. “Drivers receive a placard that they have to display in their car. The reason this works so well is that BART police get the data from Scoop directly and every day check to make sure those people showing those placards actually did carpool,” adds Saltzman.

Scoop carpoolers are allowed to park in the monthly parking permit holders area

in the Orinda BART parking lot. Orinda BART expanded the permit parking area by 68 spaces in preparation for this program. “Over time we’ll look at it, and if we have to either increase or reduce the spaces, we’ll do that,” says Saltzman. The Dublin/Pleasanton station has 50 to 70 carpools matched per day. “Each of those carpools have at least two people per car and some have more,” points out Saltzman before adding, “We’ve recently rolled out the program at Millbrae, San Bruno, Concord, Rockridge and Pleasant Hill. They’re pretty new there so not a lot of people are using it yet, but we think those numbers will go up pretty quickly.”

Scoop does regular surveys of those who use the app. A survey done in August with people using the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station showed that half the people using the program would have been parking there anyway. “That really shows that we’re maximizing those parking spaces for other people who need them,” says Saltzman. “The survey data also showed that people changed their BART usage because of Scoop. Seventy-seven percent of those surveyed took BART more frequently because of the program. They also found that 52 percent of the people who changed their driving frequency drove less often because of the Scoop program. “So, we’re also reducing vehicle miles traveled,” affirms Saltzman.

Monthly parking permit holders should not be affected by this new program. “The beauty of partnering with a tech company is they have the data every day, and we get the data every day and can look at it and respond quickly,” says Saltzman. “They switched more spaces to be permit spaces at Dublin/Pleasanton as usage went up.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A map of the Orinda BART station showing the permit parking areas usable by those with the Scoop app.

So, if in weeks or months it’s clear that we need more permit parking spaces, that will happen. We’ll keep expanding until we can accommodate everybody who wants to carpool.”

So far, the program has been a great success. “We’re really finding great things

from the program. It frees up BART parking spaces, decreases driving and increases usage of BART,” concludes Saltzman. “It’s really meeting all of our goals.”

For more information, visit <https://511contracosta.org/scoop>.

### ◆ COAT from page 1

in front of the Orinda Volunteer Center.

According to Wiley, the group wasn’t sure what to expect from their first coat drive. After sorting the clean and gently used garments, OA volunteers checked for broken zippers and missing buttons. The coats were then transported to the Social Services building where individuals and families could receive a warm coat.

“We felt good that the coats we had collected, and which were lovingly donated, were presented in an attractive, convenient and dignified way,” enthuses Wiley who is looking forward to the 2017 outreach.

This year’s beneficiary is the Contra Costa County’s White Pony Express Free General Store. The group distributes adult and children’s clothing, toys and children’s books to those in need. The White Pony Inn works to help prevent homelessness by connecting people with the resources

they need to move from the margins to the mainstream of society.

“We chose this approved organization this year because we are more familiar with the very good work that they do,” said Wiley.

According to White Pony Express founder, Dr. Carol Weyland Conner, many people in Contra Costa County are in need of food and clothing. She started the non-profit to help eliminate hunger and poverty in Contra Costa County, and the organization features three programs: Food Rescue, White Pony Inn and a Free General Store.

“We’ve found that many businesses would be pleased to donate their excess food and goods if someone could just pick it up and deliver it. That’s why we created the White Pony Express. We are the connecting link between those with surplus and those in need,” adds Conner.

For more information on the OA’s drop-off center, call 925-254-0800 or go to [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org).

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WILDER / ROTARY

# Wilder Update: Art and Garden Center, Ballfields on Schedule

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

As you travel up Orinda Fields Lane in Wilder Park past the Ranch House, the ballfields proceed upward in numerical order from one to five, past the parking lot on toward the crest of the road. Above and to the right of the parking lot sits the 6,600 sq. ft. work-in-progress Art and Garden Center (AGC). Groundbreaking of the AGC occurred on June 7, and work has been ongoing ever since.

Completion is slated for July 2018, and work seems to be on schedule, according to Orinda Parks and Rec. Director Todd Trimble, "By late summer in 2018, Orindans will have more opportunities for sports, classes and rentals. The AGC really helps with flexibility in being able to offer a wide range of topics, the arts, and special interest things like dog obedience and bridge." Brooks Street, who is building the AGC, built the three existing ballfields and existing playground and will build the two additional ballfields and a new playground in Wilder Park.

Steve Ehrhardt, facilities and park supervisor at Orinda Parks and Rec., points out several areas of progress at the AGC building site. The roof and walls are in; flashing around the windows is being installed; and grading has begun on the amphitheater and back patio, which provides a unique out-

door gathering space. The L-shaped layout consists of three rooms separated by movable partitions down the long side of the "L" shape. A small side lobby provides separation to a fourth room, the short part of the "L." In the three long rooms – which can function together or separately – the floors are wood and can accommodate athletic activities and various types of rentals. The smaller room has a stained concrete floor, better for activities where durable flooring is appropriate.

All 50-60 instructors at the Orinda Community Center (OCC) will be taken on a tour of the building to determine whether their particular program would work in the new space. "The youth karate program is bursting into the hallways, there are so many kids; they could use the extra space. We'll see if that works out," explains Trimble. Restrooms in the AGC are accessible from outdoors for use by people on the ballfields. A gas line will be installed for potential use with hot water heaters or other equipment. There is no kitchen in the building; Trimble suggests food carts as a solution for event rentals.

While the OCC administrative offices are open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., it's a little different at the AGC. With no office on-site, if classes or rentals are scheduled, staff will open and close the space much like what happens at the OCC during and after normal business hours. Trimble does not anticipate



STEVE EHRHARDT

The 6,600 sq. ft. Art and Garden Center in Wilder has the walls up and roof on. Completion, which is on schedule, is slated for July 2018.

adding full-time staff for the AGC, which operates 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. (based on use), the same hours as the OCC.

Ballfields one, two and three now have large identifying numbers on their fences and backstops. Ballfields one and two have synthetic turf, are lighted, and used almost every day of the year until 10 p.m. Weekday use begins around 3 p.m. Wilder ballfield three, like the other natural grass playfields at Pine Grove Park and Orinda Sports Fields, is heavily used from March to

November during daylight hours. All grass fields are closed each year from November to March for renovation. There are already restrooms between fields one and two, and fields two and three, each with a drinking fountain and vending machine. Even if the AGC is closed, the restrooms will be open.

Ballfields four and five are scheduled to be completed by February 2018. Field four is a large soccer/softball field made of synthetic turf. Once Trimble is sure the

[SEE WILDER page 16]

## Rotary Tribute to Veterans

At its Nov. 9 meeting, Orinda Rotary celebrated all those who served their country with a festive luncheon that included Meals Ready to Eat (MRE) meals. The MREs, used during Vietnam and known as K rations during WWII and Korea, contain 1,200 calories and were given to attendees. Fortunately, attendees also had a hot lunch to enjoy that included scalloped potatoes, chicken and Spam! Special guest Steven Burchik, author of *Compass and a Camera: A Year in Vietnam* and *Focus on Vietnam*, shared his photos taken during his deployment as a forward observer in the 1st Infantry Division stationed in the rice paddies near Saigon at the height of the Vietnam War. His stories included the horrors of war but also the exhilaration of helicopter rides over gorgeous countryside and the fun of introducing village



SALLY HOGARTY

Steve Burchik was the featured speaker at Orinda Rotary luncheon.

children to a gumball machine. For more information on Burchik's books and photos, go to [www.stevenburchik.com](http://www.stevenburchik.com).

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### ORINDA UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT FACILITIES MASTER PLAN TOWN HALL

As a valued resident of Orinda, you are cordially invited to attend a Town Hall to provide your feedback regarding the exciting improvements planned for Orinda Union School District's school campuses!


**WHAT:** Orinda Union School District is pleased to host a community Town Hall to provide information about our long term facilities master planning process and share preliminary ideas about ways to improve our campuses so they better support teaching and learning for our students.

**WHEN:** Wednesday, December 6th, from 6-8 p.m.

**WHERE:** Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way in Orinda

**TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED:**

- Status of current school facilities
- How school facilities support teaching and learning
- Currently identified improvements desired by staff, parents, and students




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SCHOOLS

# December Features Tree of Lights and Student Concerts

By KATHRYN G. MCCARTY  
Staff Writer

The sounds of the season will echo from the halls of Orinda's schools as young musicians from K-12 classes prepare for the holiday season's choral and band concerts. Music teachers Meredith Hawkins (Miramonte High School, Choral), Christina Holling (Orinda Intermediate, Del Rey and Sleepy Hollow Elementary Schools), Ron Pickett (Glorietta and Wagner Elementary Schools), Molly Smart (Orinda Academy) and David Uyeno (Miramonte High School, Instrumental) will lead hundreds of young musicians in performances throughout the holiday season.

*"Preparing for the show can be stressful, but it's all about teamwork under a deadline," says Orinda Academy senior Stevie Earp.*

The holiday festivities begin with elementary and middle school choirs gathering in Orinda Village in front of Bank of America on Saturday, Dec. 2, at 4:30 p.m. for the 31st Annual Tree of Lights Festival.

According to Hospice East Bay President and CEO Cindy Hatton, the organization is celebrating its 40th year of caring for more than 28,000 patients and their families and guiding them through difficult

times. The Tree of Lights ceremonies across Contra Costa County provide a way to honor departed loved ones and raise funds for the organization to continue support of those in need.

Following Tree of Lights, music teachers from area schools will lead choir and band ensembles in a variety of music marking the culmination of a semester of preparation. From traditional carols to rock, the concerts are "a reflection of the hard work the students have put into practicing during the semester, and showcases the instruments that they are most excited about at the moment," says Orinda Academy Music Director Molly Smart.

Smart's students Tianyuhao Nie, Ian Williams and Stevie Earp have been playing together for three years and look forward to their December concert, an event Williams declares "gives people the chance to come together and have fun."

"At this point, being a senior, the pre-holiday concert prep is like a tradition," Earp adds. "Preparing for the show can be stressful, but it's all about teamwork under a deadline."

His band mates agree. "The holiday concerts are important because they allow musicians at schools to share and show off what they have accomplished and are capable of doing," concludes Nie.

See *School Concert Calendar* on this page for concert dates and contact information.




Alma students (L-R) Alex Vinn, Tianyuhao Nie and Stevie Earp rehearse for an upcoming concert.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

## SCHOOL CONCERT CALENDAR

### DECEMBER

- 2 **Hospice Tree of Lights**, 4:30 p.m., elementary and middle school choirs, Orinda Village Square on Orinda Way.
- 6 **Orinda Intermediate with Del Rey and Sleepy Hollow Elementary School** Choirs, 7 p.m. at OIS, 80 Ivy Drive, 7 p.m., 925- 258-3090, <https://ois-orinda-ca.schoolloop.com>.
- Miramonte High School**, 7 p.m., Winter Choral Concert. 750 Moraga Way, Theatre 925-280-3930, [www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/miramonte](http://www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/miramonte). Also, Dec. 7.
- 7 **Del Rey Elementary School**, Sawyer: Sing to the Elderly, Lamorinda Adult Respite Center field trip.
- 8 **Orinda Academy**, 7 p.m., Band Winter Concert at Orinda Masonic Lodge, \$10 suggested donation, 9 Altarinda Road, 925-254-7553, [Orindaacademy.org](http://Orindaacademy.org).
- 14 **Miramonte High School**, 7 p.m., Winter Instrumental Concert, 750 Moraga Way.



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## Sharing for Halloween

Camino Pablo fourth grader, **Olivia Metz**, decided to help others this Halloween by founding Costumes4Kids. The Meadow Swim Club member hoped to collect 200 costumes in two weeks to benefit local hospitals, including the pediatric unit at John Muir, as well as STAND! For Families Free of Violence, Love-a-Child family shelter in Bay Point and for families who were impacted by the fires in Santa Rosa. She and friends collected over 300 costumes, which they then distributed, including a drive to Santa Rosa to spread a little joy to the children and their families who lost everything in the fires. Metz's project was so successful thanks to local businesses like Loard's Ice Cream, who along with Orchard Nursery and Rheem Theatre, allowed collection containers at their sites. Costumes4Kids will also be collecting dance wear and costumes



REBECCA METZ

along with sports uniforms/equipment through community partnerships in Orinda, Lafayette and Moraga.

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

**Week of December 5 – Winter/Spring 2018 Activity Guide mailed and Registration begins**

**December 15 – Deadline to register for Orinda Youth Basketball program**

**December 18-22 – Holiday Break Camps; AM, PM, and All Day – See Fall/Winter Activity Guide or website for schedule – Register Now!**

**December 22 (12pm) through December 25 – City Offices are Closed**

**December 27-29 – Holiday Break Camps; AM, PM, and All Day – See Fall/Winter Activity Guide or website for schedule – Register Now!**

**January 1 – City Offices are Closed**

Orinda Parks and Recreation Department  
925-254-2445  
[www.OrindaParksandRec.org](http://www.OrindaParksandRec.org)  
[OrindaParksandRec@CityofOrinda.org](mailto:OrindaParksandRec@CityofOrinda.org)  
28 Orinda Way – Orinda Community Center  
Administrative Office Hours – Monday – Friday 8:30am-4:30pm





## STUDENTS / ARTS

Orindan Organized Stanford's  
32nd Annual Charity Run

TYLER SABREE CLOYD

Kady Richardson (2nd row, 3rd from right) helped organize Stanford's annual charity run, hosted by Kappa Alpha Theta, which raised \$32,000 to benefit foster youth in Silicon Valley. An Orinda native, Richardson even donned the "Cinderella" costume for The Orinda Association's annual 4th of July parade one year!

## SCHOOL CALENDAR

## DECEMBER

- 1 **Orinda Academy**, Basketball - Pescadero Tournament through Dec. 2.  
**Orinda Intermediate School**, 7:30 p.m., Bulldog Theater presents *Monty Python's Spamalot*. Also Dec. 2 at 2 p.m.
- 2 **Miramonte High School**, Winter Ball.
- 4 **Miramonte High School**, 6 p.m. Sport Booster meeting.
- 6 **Miramonte High School**, 8 to 11 a.m., Toys for Tots Drive, 750 Moraga Way, cafeteria, 925-280-3930, [www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/miramonte](http://www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/miramonte). Through Dec. 16.  
**Orinda Unified School District**, 6 to 8 p.m., "Town Hall" meeting on long term facilities master planning process, Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way, Orinda.  
**Miramonte High School**, 7 p.m., Governing Board Meeting, AUHSD Community Room, 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette.
- 8 **Sleepy Hollow Elementary**, 9 to 11 a.m., Parents Club General Meeting.
- 9 **Orinda Academy**, 1 to 4 p.m. Open House.  
**Del Rey Elementary School**, 6 p.m. Wreath Building Party.
- 11 **Miramonte High School**, 7 p.m., Mindfulness meet-up.
- 13 **Del Rey Elementary School**, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wallace field trip to Chabot Space Center.  
**Holden High School**, 6:30 p.m., Parent Support Group meeting.
- 14 **Miramonte High School**, 1 p.m., Therapy Dogs during lunch on quad.
- 18 **OUSD Schools**, winter break through Jan. 1.
- 20 **Orinda Academy and Holden High School** on winter break through Jan. 1.

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

## A Middle-School Writing Contest Supports Literary Arts in the Community

By CHANTAL VALENTINE  
Contributing writer

The Orinda Junior Women's Club (Orinda Juniors) is delighted to announce details for Youth Ink 2018, the annual creative writing contest open to all sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students who live in or attend school in Orinda. The Youth Ink 2018 prompt is My World. This prompt was chosen because it encompasses almost limitless potential for subject matter, thereby encouraging young writers to personalize their pieces.

Entrants are encouraged to write about anything they like: real or imaginary. The Orinda Juniors suggest to potential participants: "There is no limit to the imagination, and entrants do not have to adhere to the prompt. Whatever you write about, just remember to have fun!" Katie Walsh, president of Orinda Juniors, adds, "We eagerly await the results of how Orinda's talented young writers approach this year's prompt,

although they can write about anything they choose."

Generous co-sponsors of Youth Ink 2018, including The Orinda Community Foundation, Friends of the Orinda Library, and The Orinda Association, make it possible to provide impressive prizes of \$250 for first place, \$125 for second place, \$75

*"There is no limit to the imagination . . . Whatever you write about, just remember to have fun," says Orinda Juniors President Katie Walsh.*

for third place, and gift certificates for 10 honorable mentions.

A panel of several local professional writers, including reporters and best-selling novelists, will evaluate Youth Ink 2018 submissions and choose winners. The judges' names will be shared when the winners are announced at an awards

ceremony at the Orinda Public Library on Thursday, April 19, 2018, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. The public is welcome to attend.

Youth Ink 2018 submissions will be accepted on an ongoing basis once the competition opens, but they must be emailed or postmarked by Wednesday, February 14, 2018, to be considered for an award. Full entry details will be on the Youth Ink 2018 submission forms, available through the administrative offices and/or English departments at Orinda Intermediate School and other Orinda schools, the Orinda Public

Library and online at [www.orindajuniors.org](http://www.orindajuniors.org).

Orinda Juniors, a local non-profit service organization, supports a variety of organizations in the greater East Bay. Every year, its community service projects help the Orinda Senior Village, STAND! Against Domestic Violence, the Oakland Children's Hospital Family House, Brighter Beginnings, Bay Area Crisis Nursery and others. If you are interested in becoming an Orinda Juniors member or making a donation to the group's service projects, please email [info@orindajuniors.org](mailto:info@orindajuniors.org).



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HOLIDAY EVENTS



SUZIE SHEPARD

Orindan **Morgan Pavey** (3rd from left in orange) appears in Town Hall Theatre's *A Civil War Christmas*, running at the Lafayette Theater through Dec. 16.

## Orinda Native Returns to Perform in Life Affirming Christmas Play

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

While productions of *A Christmas Carol* and *The Nutcracker* continue to be perennial holiday favorites, Town Hall Theatre offers a charming, yet provocative alternative with *A Civil War Christmas: An American Musical Celebration*.

The life-affirming musical by Pulitzer Prize-winner playwright Paula Vogel also enticed Orinda native Morgan Pavey to travel from her San Francisco home to audition for the Lafayette theater company.

"It just feels so good to be at Town Hall Theatre again. I played a munchkin in their youth theater's production of *The Wizard of Oz* when I was six or seven," recalls the 2010 Miramonte graduate, whose parents, Ina and Kent Pavey, still live in Orinda. "I even ran into my former drama teacher, Heather Cousins, when I was at rehearsal. She was picking up her 8-year-old daughter from the same youth theater program. I remember being one of Ms. Cousins' students at Miramonte when she was pregnant with her daughter."

While Pavey enjoys such chance encounters with old friends, not to mention dropping in on her parents, it was the play itself that drew Pavey back to Lamorinda. "Vogel wrote this as an answer to *A Christmas*

*Carol*, which is basically a British story," she explains. "She thought there should be a play about the American experience and chose the Civil War."

Vogel's play, however, isn't about all the fighting. It deals more with a group of people living through a bitterly cold Christmas Eve in 1864 while the war rages all about. Here, President and Mrs. Lincoln plan their gift-giving while on the banks of the Potomac a young rebel soldier is captured by a Union blacksmith. Nearby, John Wilkes Booth hatches a plot with his conspirators and an enslaved woman and her daughter become separated on their journey to freedom. The show also features hymns and carols of the period.

"We are often given very isolated narratives and accounts of the Civil War and to look at just one night in the lives of such a cross section of folk is deeply moving and affirming," says Town Hall director Dawn Monique Williams. "This is a uniquely American story of hope, and it certainly asks us to go on a journey with spirits from our past, present and future."

Pavey concurs and feels the material is still, unfortunately, very timely today. "We continue to have so many issues over race and now with the controversy over the Confederate monuments, this show should be [SEE PAVEY page 16]

## Interfaith Advent Celebration Dec. 7

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

Neighbor to Neighbor Interfaith Women's groups invite women of all faiths to join with them on Thursday, Dec. 7, for an Advent Celebration, "Bringing Light into a Darkened World." It will be held at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC), 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., with refreshments and conversation to follow. Women from Muslim, Jewish, and Christian congregations will share their insights.

LOPC's Kaaren Rose says, "Although Advent is a Christian tradition, a period of anticipation, we will look at it with the focus of all our faiths waiting for something new and miraculous to happen in our lives, and in the world in which we live. I believe each of us can have the opportunity to bring



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Members of the Interfaith Women's Group include (L-R) **Terri Moss Bookbinder**, **Kaaren Rose** and **Maimoona Ahmed** shown here at the Walnut Creek Women's march.

forth change by being part of an accumulation of acts to create peace and justice in our community, nation and world. One of the ways we can do this is to have women [SEE INTERFAITH page 16]

## Church Holiday Events and Services

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

As the Christmas holiday season approaches, local churches will provide a wealth of opportunities to celebrate the Christmas season in Lamorinda.

Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church will bring the Christmas story to life Dec. 2, from 5:30 to 8 p.m., as its courtyard is transformed into a Bethlehem manger with live animals, shepherds and an appearance by the Wisemen. At the church, 10 Moraga Valley Lane, Moraga, you will also have an opportunity to make an Advent wreath then, or on Dec. 3, at 10:30 a.m. or 6 p.m. when you can also pick a devotional guide. The church's Christmas on the Hill concert, Dec. 9 at 7 p.m., will be a Messiah Sing-Along. Christmas Eve Services are scheduled at 5 p.m. (Family Service); 9 p.m. (Carol Service); and 11 p.m. (Candlelight Service).

Orindan Joy Elkington-Walker says that

on Dec. 10, at 10 a.m., the Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, will feature a display of George Wahbeh's beautiful paintings of the Holy Land in the Douglas Adams Gallery. Wahbeh will introduce the paintings with a reception to follow. Services on Christmas Eve will be at 5 p.m.

On Dec. 13, Santa Maria Catholic Church, 40 Santa Maria Way, Orinda, will be the site of Women Sing's holiday concert beginning at 8 p.m. On Dec. 24, the church offers a children's Mass at 4 p.m., followed by another Mass at 6 p.m. At 9:30 p.m. carols and scripture will be followed by Christmas Eve Mass. On Christmas day, masses will be at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Also on Dec. 24, St. John the Evangelist Church, 501 Moraga Way, Orinda, will have a 6 p.m. Christmas Eve Matins service and then celebrate a 7 p.m. Divine Liturgy according to Father Nicolas.

Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette, will present sea- [SEE SERVICES page 16]



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HOLIDAY EVENTS

# Sweet Dreams Ballet Coming to Orinda in December

By KATHRYN G. MCCARTY  
Staff Writer

Over the nine years Orinda Ballet & Company Artistic Director Patricia Tomlinson has produced *A Sweet Dream Nutcracker*, she has learned what endless joy the story brings to performers and audience members. The company's adaptation of *The Nutcracker*, which Tomlinson choreographed, returns to the Orinda Library Theater, 26 Orinda Way, Dec. 8-10.

According to Tomlinson, the story ballet is about Clara (a young girl) who is given a special Nutcracker doll from her Uncle Drosselmeyer, who performs magic for Clara's family and friends. Later that night, when the Nutcracker and various toy soldiers and mice become life-sized, Clara is taken on the adventures of a lifetime through the Enchanted Winter Forest to the Land of Sweets.

Tomlinson says the ballet is magical, with its array of colorful characters, including frolicking Snowflakes and their Snow Queen, dancing Russian Tea Cakes, Gingerbread Cookies, Jack-in-the-Box Clowns and Jesters, and an adorable pre-ballet division of Peppermint and Wintermint Sweets.

With over 1,000 costumes utilized in the

show, the director exclaims that the cast "always stirs with excitement." Tomlinson choreographs dozens of young promising dancers, ages 4-18, performing alongside experienced veterans of the stage.

The story ballet provides an opportunity for training and growth as it contains many tiers of challenging dance roles, which Tomlinson notes "both inspire and create incentives for the young performers to grow in their dance training. The performers enjoy knowing what they will be performing when they graduate to the next division."

Though making some alterations to her choreography each year, Tomlinson keeps the majority of her original work from its traditional 2009 staging. She enjoys "witnessing the accomplishments of the young performers as they develop in their ballet training. There is much work involved, but also a lot of accomplishments to witness."

Several of Tomlinson's students performed in the original 2009 ballet she choreographed, including dancer Lila Moss, now a 6th grader at Orinda Intermediate School, and dancing this year in the role of Clara. Moss first performed the role of Peppermint Sweet when she was in pre-ballet. Alumni student Alyssa Palano, a 2010 Campolindo High School graduate, was



PATRICIA TOMLINSON

Performing in the Nutcracker are: (L-R) Front row: **Sofia Paraskaki** (Waltz of Flower), **Helen Casendino** (Sugar Plum Fairy), **Lila Moss** (Clara), **Claire Mercer** (Waltz of Flower); Back row: **Mila Radetich** (Spanish Hot Chocolate), **Alison Sagara** (Snowflake), **Katherine Eberts** (Russian Tea Cake) and **Gemma Leach** (Ribbon Candy).

## Hacienda Holiday Faire Dec. 1



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jackie Smith's *A Cottage in the Forest* will be one of the many unique gifts available at the Hacienda Holiday Faire.

In case you missed the Artisan Faire and the Holiday Bazaar, you still have an opportunity to purchase one-of-a-kind gifts for that special person on your holiday list and support local artists at the same time. The Hacienda Holiday Faire, 2100 Donald Dr., Moraga, takes place Dec. 1, from noon – 8 p.m. and Dec. 2-3, from 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Handcrafted gifts and gourmet foods from over 45 local artisans will be on display in addition to a complimentary wine-tasting of Captain Vineyards Lamorinda AVA wines on Dec. 1 from 6 – 8 p.m. and Dec. 2 from 4 – 6 p.m. Proceeds benefit the historic Hacienda de las Flores.

Former Orinda Mayor and long-time City Councilmember Victoria Smith will be working at the Faire on Friday night. For more information, email [haciendaholidayfaire@gmail.com](mailto:haciendaholidayfaire@gmail.com) or go to [www.facebook.com/HaciendaHolidayFaire](http://www.facebook.com/HaciendaHolidayFaire).

the company's original Sugar Plum Fairy. She returns this year to dance the Arabian Coffee Pas de Deux with professional guest artist Maurice Monge.

Helen Casendino, a Miramonte High School senior, who has danced with the company for six years, is featured as the Sugar Plum Fairy, Snow Queen, Dew Drop and is dancing the Spanish Coffee Pas de Deux. Professional guest artists include Jacob Kreamer (Nutcracker Prince) and Emily Kerr (Snow Queen).

As the young performers prepare for the

holiday performance and audiences gather, Tomlinson enthuses that the show's familiar music and dramatic, fun-filled story will appeal to all ages: "Orinda loves the arts and loves the tradition of having a *Nutcracker* ballet in its community to attend and support," Tomlinson avers before adding, "Traditions bring a community together."

Performances take place Dec. 8 at 6:30 p.m., Dec. 9 at 11:30 a.m. and 4 p.m., and Dec. 10 at 11:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. For tickets, visit [www.OrindaBalletAcademy.com](http://www.OrindaBalletAcademy.com) or call 925.254-2445.

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Photo's courtesy of Tiffany Fong



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LIBRARY GALLERY

# Paintings and Much More Light Up Holiday Gallery During December

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

The Lamorinda Arts Council (Council) cordially invites you to tour the Orinda Library Art Gallery during the month of December to view vibrant paintings by the late Pam Glover, Helen Ann Licht, Barney Howard and Fred Lee's digital paintings. During the holiday season, many consider it worthwhile to reflect on and appreciate the gifts life brings us. Voltaire (1694-1778) said, "Appreciation is a wonderful thing. It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well."

To help you appreciate the art, join the artists at their reception on Dec. 3, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m., where light refreshments and special holiday cheer will be provided. As a prequel to the reception, the Council invites lovers of Pam Glover's artwork to attend Janine Glover Ehrentraut's art and wine talk, "Homage to My Grandmother,"

at 1 p.m.

Janine and Anne Marie Glover Ehrentraut are delighted to be showing the late Pam Glover's oil paintings and prints this month. Local art lovers will recall Pam taught a *plein air* painting class through the Orinda Community Center for 25 years. She communicated her love for *plein air* painting (paintings always done outside in the open air) to all who knew her and raised awareness about the art form.

Glover's signed oil paintings range in size from 12" x 16" to 20" x 24". By special arrangement, buyers can take possession of bought artwork during the receptions between 1 and 4:30 p.m. on Dec. 3. Prints are also available and all work can be previewed online at [www.lamorindaarts.org/gallery](http://www.lamorindaarts.org/gallery), "art sales." Look for *Near St. Helena*, a 20" x 24" oil on canvas which invites you to walk down a quiet pathway alongside luscious grapevines. If you look at *Moraga Poplars* long enough (a 12" x 16" oil on canvas), you can almost hear the rustle of leaves as they fall into the shadow of the trees at the water's edge.

Helen Ann Licht of Lafayette has shown her paintings in many venues in the U.S., Mexico and beyond. At the Tali Virtual Midrash website ([talivirtualmidrash.org](http://talivirtualmidrash.org)), you can find *Jacob and the Angel*. She is showing about ten large acrylic paintings themed "Travels With an Artist." They reflect her memories of Myanmar, India, Egypt and other faraway places. She describes her style as "colorful, whimsical, taken from my imagination and based on my travels." When you view *Felucca on the Nile (Egypt)*, a 48" x 48" acrylic on canvas bursting with color, I'm sure you'll agree with her description. See more of her work at [www.helenannlicht.com](http://www.helenannlicht.com).

Barney Howard of Walnut Creek lives on a piece of property that has been in his family for 100 years. He grew up surrounded by creative people, as his mother was an artist and his father built boats. After he retired from a long career at Head Royce as



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Barney Howard's *Four Seasons*, a 22" x 18" giclée an original acrylic painting can be seen in the Library Gallery during December. The original painting is attached to a 27-inch bicycle wheel with an electric motor that allows it to rotate slowly.

a biology teacher, he began painting again in his home studio. He mats and frames all his own work.

His friends describe his style thus: "Each painting is an adventure, full of whimsy." You'll see 30 works, mostly watercolors and acrylics reflecting a wide variety of subject matter, all drawn from his imagination. *Swimmers*, a 16" x 20" giclée of an original watercolor and pen painting, is reminiscent of light passing through stained glass. *Four Seasons*, a 22" x 18" giclée of an original acrylic painting, is sure to bring a smile. A giclée is a refined digital inkjet print used to reproduce fine art photography and other 2D art.

Fred Lee of Orinda, part of the "Around the World at 80" exhibit last year, is showing 10 digital paintings. His ongoing love of art fuels him to keep innovating, using digital media. Family support for his artwork abounds in the Lee household. Daughter Mary says, "My father's innate creativity

benefited his career as an engineer – especially his work in magnetism. Most people, especially those in applied sciences, don't realize that feeding one's creativity as an artist creates a flow into their work life, and vice versa."

As to the value of art in our community, Licht says, "Art is very important to the community because it takes people away from their everyday life and fuels their imagination." Howard believes that "All the arts encourage people to express their own ideas in a way that is comfortable for them." Lee articulates, "Art stimulates people's ability to have vision and enriches their life."

Visit the gallery at 26 Orinda Way during normal library hours – Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m. The library is closed on Dec. 24, 25, 26 and 31. Call 925-254-2184 for more information or visit <http://ccclib.org>.



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Sherrie and Billy wish all of our friends and neighbors a safe, healthy, and joyous Holiday Season and a Happy New Year.



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*The Corners*, a giclée print of a digital painting by Orindan **Fred Lee**, depicts an historic landmark. In 1880, roads from Pacheco and Lafayette met at the corner of what is now Main Street and Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Walnut Creek.



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NATURE / PETS

# Tributes to Three Wagner Ranch Nature Area Leaders at Olive Festival

By KATHARINE BARRETT  
Contributing Writer

On Oct. 1, about 1,000 children and adults gathered for the 8th annual Orinda Olive Festival to celebrate the Nature Area and its 135-year-old historic olive grove. This year, the trees having benefited from the winter rains, produced new green boughs loaded with olives. The festival opened with a tribute to three of the Nature Area's Environmental leaders: Claire McCullough, Dr. James Hale and Marjorie Musante.

Claire McCullough was honored for her Girl Scout Gold Award, which involved renovating the watering system for the pond and repairing the fence. She put her science ideas to work experimenting with ways to trap the invasive Bull Frogs that now threaten the native population of Red-legged Frogs. McCullough also installed a camera trap to document wildlife using the pond. What a surprise she and others got when the night time activities of raccoons, foxes and feral cats were documented with photographs of their activities at the



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Claire McCullough** was honored for renovating the watering system.

pond. McCullough is now attending San Francisco State University, but her project will be carried on by the Wildlife Committee chaired by emeritus professor, Reg Barrett.

Dr. James Hale, fondly known as Doc Hale throughout the region, was acclaimed a Champion of Wildlife and Native Ameri-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Dr. James Hale** was recognized for his many years of volunteerism.

can archeological sites. During his many years of work and volunteerism in Northern California, he introduced thousands of people to the beauty and historic significance of the Mt. Diablo area. Doc shared his wisdom and programs with visitors to his booth, and he will be leading the winners of his silent auction contribution on a local nature hike.

Marjorie Musante, retired Orinda teacher, has been pivotal in promoting environmental education and the arts. She is a founder of the Orinda Olive Festival and developed hands-on activities and games for children highlighting the fun features of olive science. Musante was the inspiration for the "Bug Hunt" at the festival in which



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Marjorie Musante** received honors for her role in promoting environmental education.

the five and under crowd found toy critters in the garden to take home. The youngsters observed realistic examples of the diversity of small animals important to our gardens and wild lands.

Contra Costa County's only Olive Festival came to a close with the student musicians of ALMA, the Academy of Language and Music Arts providing the counterpoint to the native birds. This vibrant fundraiser, conducted by the Friends of the Wagner Ranch Nature Area, raised funds to support the outdoor environmental education programs for children and youth this year. Educational activities at the site, owned by the Orinda Union School District, provide a

[SEE TRIBUTE page 16]

## Something to Howl About... Animal Tales

Sojourn in Yosemite



Jennifer Conroy

On a recent sojourn in Yosemite, I saw two young Mule deer bucks walk leisurely in front of a line of cars. Their antlers were still covered in that soft tawny velvet and, though they were clearly young, they carried themselves across the road with an air of majesty. Unaffected by the stares of drivers and hikers along the roadside, they caused a few moments of complete silence before they dissolved into the deeper woods.

During a season given over to gift giving, perhaps the greatest gift of all is nature's ability to cause us to stop. Those broad swatches of pink and gold sweeping across an early evening sky. The skitter of a bushy tailed squirrel running up a tree. The drift of a hawk riding the thermals.

We stop. We look. And in that moment, nature is new, fresh, immediate.

Here in the Bay Area, the gift of nature is constant. Along our coast we have whales, brown pelicans, seals. We can look up in the sky and see flocks of geese migrating

along the Pacific Flyway. Depending on the season, we may be privy to a nest of baby birds in the eaves of our home or the establishment of a hive of bees in our garden.

In places like Yosemite, nature becomes a destination. In some cases it becomes a challenge – witness the avid long-distance hiker or the fearless rock climber. For those of us with a less vigorous agenda, Yosemite can be a vivid reminder of what we have here, in our own neighborhoods, our own yards, our own local parks. And in this season of giving, consider those gifts that will help in bringing our local nature closer. Consider a gift list that includes binoculars, a camera macro lens, guides to local wildlife and bird watching, books identifying Bay Area trees and other flora, guides to area insects, arachnids and reptiles.

One can use those gifts in comfort close to home and, in so doing, there will be discovery and connection to treasures that have been there around us all along.



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## Lamorinda Arts Council “Call for Poet Laureate Applications”

By CHRISTY MACK  
Contributing Writer

Lamorinda Arts Council (LAC) president Lawrence Kohl announced the formation of a Poet Laureate Program (PLP) which marks the first opportunity of its kind for our local literary community. Thanks to endorsements from the City Councils of Orinda and Lafayette, the Lamorinda Arts Council PLP will manage and support the poet laureate who will serve both Lafayette and Orinda. Poets interested in this position are invited to apply online at <https://lamorindaarts.org/poet-laureate-application/>. Deadline to receive all online applications is Dec. 31, 2017 at 5 p.m.

The poet laureate will be called upon to write theme-based poetry and read poetry at civic and other events such as public ceremonies and dedications. They will also support the Lamorinda Arts Council PLP activities in the schools and community and serve as a liaison with literary organizations. Goals of the program include encouraging poetry and the literary arts in our communities, stimulating and inspiring residents of all ages in their writing and presenting poetry in non-traditional venues to expand its reach.

Members of the Poet Laureate committee include: former Livermore Poet Laureate Connie Post, who has assisted area communities in creating laureate programs; Janice Peacock, a member of the Lafayette Public Art Committee; LAC Board member Denise Nomura; Gail Entrekin of Hip Pocket Press in Orinda; Jennifer Shaw with the

Institute for Poetic Medicine, who's work also appears in *The East Bay Times*; Sue Janet Clark of Lincoln, poet and founder of Lincoln's Poetry Open Mic; Robin Moore of AC5's Poetry Out Loud program and Elana O'Loskey of *The Orinda News*.

The selection committee will review potential candidates and recommend a poet laureate to the two city councils to be appointed in early 2018. The poet laureate will serve a two-year term and receive a yearly \$3,000 stipend. Professional poets who live and/or work in the cities of Lafayette or Orinda are eligible. Duties include poems of occasion for community and civic events, poetry events including

Lamorinda Arts Council-  
Poet Laureate  
Applications

Due Dec. 31 at 5 p.m.

Apply online at [www.lamorindaarts.org/poet-laureate-application](http://www.lamorindaarts.org/poet-laureate-application).

K-12 schools and more.

According to Lamorinda Arts Council President Lawrence Kohl, “We are very excited to be able to work with the cities of Lafayette and Orinda to create this important post. Poetry is both personal and public; using words in rhyme and rhythm to uncover emotional truths that bind us together. If you are interested in volunteering to become involved in the Poet Laureate Program, go to <http://lamorindaarts.org/>


and check the poet laureate box to join us organizing poetry events and activities.”

### About the Lamorinda Arts Council

Founded in 1950 as the Orinda Arts Council, the now Lamorinda Arts Council is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that has been igniting and sustaining artistic expression and appreciation in


the visual, performing and literary arts for people of all ages in our community for over 65 years. Notable LAC events include Lamorinda Idol, the High School Visual Arts Competition, Lamorinda ShortDocs Film Fest, Art in Public Places, and Orinda Library Art Gallery exhibits.

For more information, visit [www.lamorindaarts.org](http://www.lamorindaarts.org).



## THE REEL LESS TRAVELED

### TWO TURTLEDOVES



Tom Westlake

The International Showcase is still in hibernation until the holiday glut of films is done, and I can't really see Lord Blood-Rah making merry during the holiday season (but rumor has it that he's going to pull out all the stops come January with a festival of cheesy horror/sci-fi films), so that leaves naught but the Film Classic Showcase and the Moraga Movers to take up the slack. You can take it from me that they're more than up to the challenge as they have one film apiece that is not only geared for the season but that also has a significant place in cinema history.

The first film carries a history that dates back to 1843. For those in the know, you have probably already guessed where this is leading. For everyone else, the movie I'm about to bring to your attention features, as its central character, a man so well known that all one needs to do is utter the phrase “Bah! Humbug!” and everything else will fall into place. Indeed, Ebenezer Scrooge is right up there with Dracula and Sherlock Holmes when it comes to popular, well-worn – and oft incarnated - characters. There are many of you who will fondly remember actors like George C. Scott (1984), Albert Finney (1970), Michael Caine (1992) and, of course, Alastair Sim (1951). The less said about Jim Carrey (2009), the better, but before them all, there was Reginald Owen.

By this time, according to the IMDB (Internet Movie Database), there were already at least six versions of this story already committed to film but this one, which came out in 1938 was the most faithful to date. Though the role was originally to be portrayed by Lionel Barrymore, Reginald Owen, who later audiences would know better as Admiral Boom in *Mary Poppins*, does a serviceable job as that most popular of misers. Leo G. Carroll takes on the role

of Jacob Marley – a role that, by the way, your humble columnist “brings to death” at The Great Dickens Christmas Fair ([www.dickensfair.com](http://www.dickensfair.com), a shameless plug, but I'm not sorry). Gene and Kathleen Lockhart (future parents of June of *Lassie* fame) star as Mr. and Mrs. Cratchit. *A Christmas Carol* will screen at the Rheem on December 20, at 2 p.m.

Then on the very next day, the Orinda Theatre presents *The Polar Express*. Also based upon a book, this time by Chris Van Allsburg, who also co-wrote the screenplay, the historical significance here is that it is one of the early examples of motion capture technology. Its director, Robert Zemeckis, has always pushed the boundaries of what could be done on film. Having already proven his mettle on such movies as *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988), the *Back to the Future* trilogy (1985 – 90) and *Contact* (1997), he was one of the pioneers who always sought to push the limits of what a computer could do. The result is, by today's standard, somewhat wooden but it is still a feast for the eyes. Add to this, the talented Tom Hanks, prominently featured playing six separate roles (Scrooge being one of them – Boy, you just can't get away from that guy, can you!) and you'll be hard pressed to deny the Christmas Spirit. Of interest here is that, several years later, he would try his own hand at bringing Charles Dickens' classic novella to the screen, using much the same technology amply on display here. *The Polar Express* will screen at the Orinda Theatre on Dec. 21 at 7 p.m. Admission is free.

So, through this month, you'll have the opportunity to see the very best of the past and present. As to the future, well that remains to be seen but until then, remember to stay in the dark for that's where the reel magic lies. And Merry Christmas, one and all!

## Shellie Abbes Kirby

### Warm wishes for a Happy & Healthy Holiday Season



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EVENTS/BOOKS

# Diablo Women's Chorale Presents "Season of Light" on December 3

By HILLARY DREYFUSS  
Contributing Writer

The Diablo Women's Chorale (DWC) celebrates 75 years in the community with their fall concert "Season of Light," on Sunday Dec. 3 at 2 p.m. at Temple Isaiah, 945 Risa Road, in Lafayette.

Director Lisa Forkish, accompanist Emily Tian and the Chorale have selected a program filled with reflective songs of peace and unity. The concert theme, "Season of Light," speaks to both the light within us and the light that connects all of us. From classic to contemporary, reverent to joyful, DWC's music will warm the heart, uplift the spirit and soothe the soul.

Diablo Women's Chorale is a lively group of singers from the Bay Area, presenting concerts in December and May. New members are welcomed in August

and January.

Oakland-based vocalist, composer, arranger and music educator Lisa Forkish served four years as music director for the University of Oregon's a cappella group, Divisi, featured in the best-selling book *Pitch Perfect*, which was later made into the hit film of the same name. Forkish studied at the Berklee College of Music in Boston and is currently part of the vocal music faculty at Oakland School for the Arts (OSA) as well as the director of Vocal Rush, OSA's award-winning a cappella ensemble. The busy educator is also a founder of the Women's A Cappella Association. This is her second season directing DWC.

Emily Tian, the former vocal and instrumental coach at Cal State East Bay University, has also been the accompanist for Young Women's Choral Project in San Francisco and CSU East Bay Singing



LESLIE HOLST

Diablo Women's Chorale members celebrate their 75th anniversary with a concert on Dec. 3. (L-R) Jeni Webber, Kerri Dwyer, Nancy Hickman, Karen Large, Terri Larson, Rebecca Andre and Corrin Vanetti.

Society. Currently, Emily collaborates regularly with emerging and established composers and musicians alike, all while maintaining a full-time position as the lead piano faculty-member at Oakland School for the Arts. This is Emily's first season as the DWC accompanist.

Advance purchase tickets for the "Season of Light" concert are \$18 general admission, \$10 student and \$24 premium seating. Tickets purchased at the door will be \$25. For more information and to purchase advance tickets, call 1-800-838-3006 or go online at [www.DiabloWomensChorale.org](http://www.DiabloWomensChorale.org).

## Between the Lines Gift Books for the Holiday Season

Pat Rudebusch



The holiday season can be a dizzying time of parties, travel and shopping for that perfect gift. Why not simplify things by giving books? With a growing array of new titles alongside the trusted classics, there's sure to be a title that fits the occasion.

At the top of my list is *Obama: An Intimate Portrait* by Pete Souza. As chief White House photographer, Souza had unfettered access to the President and has captured the essence of the Obama presidency in photos that are both iconic and intimate.

*Promise Me, Dad* by Joe Biden is a deeply personal account of the struggles and triumphs faced while serving his last two years as vice president while dealing with his eldest son's hard-fought battle with a malignant brain tumor. This deeply moving memoir has lessons for us all about what it means to love our families and serve our country.

Globetrotters and armchair travelers alike would enjoy Lonely Planet's beautifully illustrated *Atlas of Adventure*, which is a thrill-seekers guide to adventure travel, or *The Cities Book* which offers a stunning collection of facts and photographs from the world's great cities. If the visual globe-trotting leaves you ready to pack your bags

and hit the road, *The World: A Traveler's Guide to the Planet* is the ultimate travel guide to every country on Earth in one volume.

Those looking for out-of-this-world travel may have to settle on one of two new books by astronauts who spent time on the international space station. Scott Kelly's *Endurance: A Year in Space, A Lifetime Discovery* chronicles his year in space. In *Hello, Is This Planet Earth?* astronaut Tim Peake shares the breathtaking photos he took while circling the planet 16 times a day. It's a stunning compilation that brings a whole new perspective to our place in the universe. Stargazers might enjoy *What We See In the Stars*, an illustrated guide to the night sky by Kelsey Oseid.

Coming back down to Earth, Andy Goldsworthy's newest book, *Projects*, is a visually stunning collection of forty of his large-scale natural sculptures along with drawings and photos from each project's installation. *Critical Critters* is the third in a trilogy of books depicting extinct and critically endangered species by illustrator Ralph Steadman. With equal parts wit and science, Steadman and his coauthor Ceri

[SEE LINES page 16]

## First Friday Forum Line-Up

First Friday Forum has an outstanding line-up for the 2018 series beginning Jan. 5 with Dr. Stephen Mende who titles his lecture, "Spirits of the Polar Night." Working at UC Berkeley's Space Sciences Laboratory, he specializes in the aurora and has excellent pictures to feature in his presentation.

The schedule for the following months includes: Feb. 2, Dr. Catherine Wolfram, "Energy Policy in California and Around the World"; Mar. 2, Dr. Sarah Anzia will discuss pensions; April 13

(note date change), Dr. Glenn Robinson, "What's Going on in the Middle East;" and May 4, a representative from the National Heart Association will address "Strokes." The June 1 forum is yet to be announced.

All lectures take place at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive in Lafayette. Refreshments for each forum are served in Fellowship Hall at 1p.m. with the lecture at 1:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. For further information, call 925-283-8722.

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for their loyalty and trust  
and wish everyone a  
Happy New Year 2018!





## CALENDAR

## ON THE CALENDAR

## DECEMBER

- 1 **Orinda Books.** Guest artist Pam Miller is displaying acrylic paintings of Contra Costa barns in winter landscapes all month at 276 Village Square, Orinda, 925-254-7606.  
**Orinda Association,** 9 a.m., One Warm Coat Project, through Dec. 21 at the OA office in the Orinda Library Plaza. See article page 1.  
**Hacienda Boutique,** noon to 8 p.m., purchase holiday gifts raising funds for Hacienda de las Flores. Dec. 1, 6 to 8 p.m. and Dec. 2, 4 to 6 p.m., Captain Vineyards is offering complimentary wine tasting of their Lamorinda AVA wines. Also Dec. 2-3, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Hacienda de las Flores, 2100 Donald Drive, Moraga, CA 94556, [www.facebook.com/HaciendaHolidayFaire/](http://www.facebook.com/HaciendaHolidayFaire/).  
**Diablo Choral Artists,** 8 p.m., presents "Carols and Lullabies," St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Pleasant Hill. Also, Dec. 3, 4 p.m., Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, Walnut Creek, [www.dcachorus.org](http://www.dcachorus.org), 925-680-7089, [info@dcachorus.org](mailto:info@dcachorus.org). See article page 15.  
**Town Hall Theater Company,** 8 p.m., *A Civil War Christmas: An American Musical Celebration*, through Dec. 16, 3535 School Street, in Lafayette. Call 925-283-1557 or go to [www.townhalltheatre.com](http://www.townhalltheatre.com) for tickets. See article page 10.
- 2 **Sleepy Hollow Holiday Walk 2017 & Santa Photos,** 8:45 to 9:30 a.m. for Santa Photos prior to walk. Bring your own camera. 76 Tarry Lane, Orinda.  
**Hospice Tree of Lights,** 4:30 p.m. by Bank of America building in Orinda Village.
- 3 **Orinda Library Art Gallery,** 1 p.m., wine and art talk by Janine Glover Ehrentraut, "Homage to My Grandmother" and an artist reception with special holiday refreshments 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. Exhibit features paintings by the late Pam Glover, Helen Ann Licht and Barney Howard and digital paintings by Fred Lee on view all month. See article page 12.
- 6 **Saint Mary's College Guild,** 11 a.m., annual Christmas luncheon, Dryden Hall, Saint Mary's College, 1928 St. Mary's Rd., in Moraga. Music provided by the college's award-winning choir. Event also includes a bake sale, raffle baskets and the infamous Christmas Money Tree. \$45. Send checks payable to SMC Guild to Susan Hooks, 120 Ardith Dr., Orinda, CA 94563. For info, call Pat McEnaney at 925-376-3306.
- 7 **Orinda Books,** 10 a.m., Story Hour with Cathy G. 2-4 year olds and their grown-ups are invited for a lively hour of books and fun. Also Dec. 14. 276 Village Square, Orinda, [info@orindabooks.com](mailto:info@orindabooks.com), 925-254-7606.  
**Orinda Books,** 11 a.m. - noon, Maria's Book Club discusses *The Mothers* by Brit Bennett. 276 Village Square, Orinda, [info@orindabooks.com](mailto:info@orindabooks.com), 925-254-7606.  
**City of Orinda,** 5 p.m., The Taste of the World Market Street Feast food trucks, Orinda Community Center. Also, Dec. 14, 21 and 28.  
**Neighbor to Neighbor Interfaith Women,** 7 to 8:30 p.m., invite women of all faiths to join with them for an Advent Celebration, "Bringing Light into a Darkened World." Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. See article page 10.
- 8 **Orinda Books,** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Gerry Wallace (Ceramics) and Paul Kratter (Paintings) will have their Holiday Exhibition and Sale. 276 Village Square, Orinda, [info@orindabooks.com](mailto:info@orindabooks.com), 925-254-7606.  
**Orinda Ballet Academy & Company,** 6:30 p.m. presents *A Sweet Dream Nutcracker*, Orinda Library Theater, 26 Orinda Way. Also, Dec. 9 at 11:30 a.m. and 4 p.m., and Dec. 10 at 11:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. For tickets, visit [www.OrindaBalletAcademy.com](http://www.OrindaBalletAcademy.com) or call 925.254-2445.
- 9 **Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church,** 4 p.m., seasonal concerts featuring the Festival Choir and Orchestra, also Dec. 10 at 2 and 5:30 p.m. Tickets are free, but you must reserve at [lopc.org](http://lopc.org), limit six per person, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette.
- 10 **Mindful Littles,** 9:30-11 a.m., Welcome Refugee Project partnering with Contra Costa Jewish Day School. Putting together Welcome Kits for refugees. 955 Risa Road, Lafayette.  
**Orinda Community Church,** 10 a.m., will feature a display of George Wahbeh's beautiful painting of the Holy Land in the Douglas Adams Gallery, 10 Irwin Way.
- 13 **Women Sing Holiday Concert,** 8 p.m., Santa Maria Church, Orinda. Go to [www.womensing.org](http://www.womensing.org).
- 15 **California Academy of Performing Arts** present *The Nutcracker*, 5:30 p.m. and 8 p.m., Campolindo Performing Arts Center, 300 Moraga Rd., Moraga. Also Dec. 16 (2 p.m. and 7 p.m.) and Dec. 17 (1 p.m. and 5 p.m.). Go to [www.capashows.eventbrite.com](http://www.capashows.eventbrite.com).
- 24 **Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church,** 3 and 4:30 p.m. Family Services, 7 and 8:30 p.m. Traditional Services, 11 p.m., There will be Hawaiian music and singing of favorite Christmas songs, featuring the Na'Okina Hawaiian band and dancers, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette.  
**Santa Maria Catholic Church,** 4 p.m., will celebrate a children's Mass, 6 p.m. will be regular Mass, and 9:30 p.m. carols and scripture will be followed by Christmas Eve Mass, 40 Santa Maria Way, Orinda.  
**St. John the Evangelist Church,** 6 p.m. Christmas Eve Matins service and a 7 p.m. Divine Liturgy, 501 Moraga Way, Orinda.
- 25 **Santa Maria Catholic Church,** Christmas Masses will be at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. 40 Santa Maria Way, Orinda.

## AT THE LIBRARY

All events are free unless otherwise specified. For more information, call 254-2184 or visit [www.ccclib.org/locations/Orinda.html](http://www.ccclib.org/locations/Orinda.html). The library will be closed on Dec. 24, 25, 26 and 31. Friends of Orinda Library Book Sale for December 14 - CANCELLED.

- 1 **Teen Coloring Club,** 4 p.m. Join the Orinda Library Teen Advisory Group to de-stress, relax and have fun. The library provides age appropriate coloring books and colored pencils, you provide the inspiration and creativity. Free and open to all. Also Dec. 8, 15, 22 and 29.
- 4 **Maker Monday,** 2:30 p.m. Whether it's Legos, Minecraft, or another craft, there's always something interesting happening on Maker Mondays. Also Dec. 11 and 18.
- 5 **Toddler Stay and Play,** 10 to 11 a.m. Come meet, visit, and enjoy gentle play during our Winter Break. Toddler Lapsit returns Jan. 9 and 10, 2018. Also, Dec. 6, 12 and 13.  
**Peek-a-Boo Stay and Play,** 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Non-walking infants can enjoy the Early Literacy toys during our winter break. Peek-a-Boo returns Jan. 8, 2018. Also, Dec. 12.
- 7 **ESL Conversation Circle,** 1 to 3 p.m. For adults, practice and improve English conversation skills in a small, informal group, Registration not required. Also Dec. 14, 21 and 28.
- 12 **Holiday Music in the Library,** 5 to 6 p.m., Stop by the library and enjoy holiday music with Mary Fuller on viola. Generously sponsored by the Friends of the Orinda Library.
- 13 **Senior Scam Workshop,** 1 to 2 p.m., Learn about the scams that target seniors the most. Get tips on how to avoid these tactics, which red flags to be aware of, and what resources to use to lower your chances of becoming a victim. Presented by the Better Business Bureau. Orinda Library Garden Room.
- 14 **Just for Teens: Holiday Crafts,** 4 to 5 p.m., Just for Teens: Make holiday gift bags, boxes

## Orinda City Council Honors Mayor Phillips

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor



SALLY HOGARTY

Mayor Eve Phillips will be honored at the Dec. 5 City Council meeting.

The public is invited to attend the Orinda City Council's annual reorganization and honoring of outgoing Mayor Eve Phillips. The event takes place Dec. 5 at 7 p.m. at the Orinda Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way.

Phillips was elected to the Orinda City Council in November 2014 for a four-year term. This past year was her first term as mayor. A graduate of Stanford, MIT and Miramonte High School, Phillips works for Google and volunteers with the Miramonte Cycling Team.

In addition to being honored, Phillips will herself honor a local entity with the Mayor's Annual Award of Excellence in Architecture. The award recognizes excellence in residential design and downtown property improvements which make an extraordinary contribution to the character

and livability of Orinda neighborhoods and the vitality of downtown.

Following the awards, the City Council will select the 2018 mayor and vice mayor.

A dessert reception will immediately follow in the Library Gallery.

- and tags with artist Valerie Adinolfi. All materials provided. Garden Room. For grades 6-12. No registration required. Generously sponsored by the Friends of the Orinda Library.
- 15 **Mystery Book Club,** 3-4:30 p.m. This month's selection is *In the Dark Places* by Peter Robinson.
- 18 **Holi-dawgs!** 2:30-3:45. Beat seasonal stress with our Santa Paws, Dreidel Dogs, Kwanzaa Kanines and Frosty Fidos! Read a story, make a craft, play a game or just relax with one of our friendly therapy dogs.

## CLUB MEETINGS

- American Association of University Women (AAUW)** General meetings third Tues., <http://oml-ca.aauw.net> or email Marty Schimbor at [mgschimbor@comcast.net](mailto:mgschimbor@comcast.net).
- Diablo Star Chapter #214,** Order of the Eastern Star. Second Monday, 7:30 p.m. Orinda Masonic Center, Karen Seaborn. 925-689-0995.
- Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe.** Third Monday, 7:30 p.m., Garden Room, Orinda Library, [www.moragaadobe.org](http://www.moragaadobe.org).
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks.** Fourth Wednesday, 8:30 a.m., May Room, Orinda Library, 925-253-1997.
- Guided Meditation.** Wednesdays, 9 a.m. St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 451 Moraga Way, Orinda, focuses on health, harmony and wholeness, 925-254-5965
- Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition.** Third Wednesday, 10 to 11:30 a.m., Orinda City Hall Sarge Littlehale Room, 925-687-8844, ext. 227.
- Lamorinda Nature Walk and Bird Watching** for seniors. Wednesdays, 9 to 11 a.m., free. Call 925-254-2445 for weekly meeting place.
- Lamorinda Sirs** for retired men. Second Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School St., Moraga, Pete Giers, 925-254-4667.
- Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary.** Every Friday, 7 a.m., Lafayette Park Hotel, 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, [www.lamorindasunrise.com](http://www.lamorindasunrise.com) or 925-283-8288. Dec. 1, Precious Listana of the Invention Lab of Berkeley. Dec. 8, Brian Fischer, Entomologist of the California Academy of Science. Dec. 15, Robotic Robots with Allan Martinson. Dec. 22, Photojournalist Paul Goldsmith. Dec. 29, A club member will share life stories.
- Lamorinda Toastmasters.** Every Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Temple Isaiah, 945 Risa Road, Lafayette, <http://lamorinda.toastmastersclubs.org/>.
- Montelindo Garden Club.** Third Friday, 9 a.m., Sept. through May, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 66 St. Stephen's Drive, [www.montelindogarden.com](http://www.montelindogarden.com).
- Orinda Association.** Second Monday, 7 p.m., Orinda Library, May Room, 925-254-0800.
- Orinda Garden Club,** 315 Camino Sobrante, Orinda 925-257-0668 or [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com).
- Orinda Hiking Club.** Every weekend and first Wednesday, [www.orindahiking.org](http://www.orindahiking.org) or Ian at 925-254-1465.
- Orinda Historical Society.** Call 925-254-1353 for times and location of meetings.
- Orinda Job's Daughters.** First and third Monday, 7 p.m., 9 Altarinda Road, 925-283-7176.
- Orinda Junior Women's Club** community service group. First Tuesday, September through June, 7 p.m., [www.orindajuniors.org](http://www.orindajuniors.org).
- Orinda Masonic Lodge #122 F&AM.** First Thursday every month, except holidays, at 9 Altarinda Road, Orinda Masonic Center, Orinda. Family Dinner at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 8 p.m., 925-254-5211, [www.orindalodge.org](http://www.orindalodge.org).
- Orinda Rotary.** Every Wednesday, noon, Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way, 925-254-2222, [www.orindarotary.org](http://www.orindarotary.org). Dec. 06, Lily Samoranos - Sanctuary Cities; Dec. 13, Holiday Party in the evening at the Moraga Country Club. (No regular lunch meeting on that day.) Dec. 20, celebrating the cultural diversity we have in our club. [orindarotary.org](http://orindarotary.org).
- Orinda/Tabor (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation.** Fourth Thursday, 7 p.m., social, 7:30 p.m., meeting, call 925-254-8260 for location.
- Orinda Teen Advisory Council.** Second Wednesday, 4 p.m., Community Center, 28 Orinda Way, email [orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com).
- Orinda Woman's Club.** Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to noon, call Jean Barnhart, 925-254-3881, or [www.orindawomansclub.org](http://www.orindawomansclub.org).

## CITY/FIRE/MEETING SCHEDULE

- City Council.** First and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org).
- Historic Landmarks Committee.** Fourth Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m., Library Garden Room. Call 925-788-7323.
- Moraga-Orinda Fire District.** First and third Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m. Visit [www.mofd.org/board/meetings](http://www.mofd.org/board/meetings); meeting location will be posted on the agenda.
- Planning Commission.** Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Orinda Library Auditorium, [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org).

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

OBITUARY

# Carl Joseph Weber – A Dedicated Orinda Community Member

Carl Weber passed away peacefully on Oct. 19 surrounded by his family. Friends and family celebrated his life at the Orinda Community Center on Nov. 25.

He touched the lives of many with his dedication and commitment to serving, welcoming others and by his easy style of communication. He was a wealth of knowledge and shared it effortlessly with those around him.

Carl was born in Evanston, IL, on April 19, 1928. He graduated from Evanston Township High School and then served in the U.S. Army in Japan following World War II. He studied at the University of Heidelberg in Germany and at the University of Paris and earned a degree in mathematics from Northwestern University in 1952. On Sept. 6, 1952, Carl married Florence (Flo) Woodman. Always adventurous, the two immediately moved to New York where he

worked for a bond trading firm. Following his passion for law, he earned a JD degree from DePaul University in Chicago. In 1959, he moved his family to Orinda and initially began working for Kaiser Aluminum in Oakland. After passing the California Bar, he began practicing Worker's Compensation Law and was a longtime partner with the law firm of Hanna, Brophy, MacLean, McAleer and Jensen.

All the while, he was a steward of the Orinda Community. He was vital to securing the formation of the Orinda Community Center, the incorporation of the City of Orinda, the preservation of the Orinda Theatre and the formation of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. He also served in many civic capacities including The Orinda Association, chairman of the Planning Commission, the Trees Committee, and the Historical Society. He was selected Citizen

of the Year in 1970 and The Orinda Association's Volunteer of the Year in 1989 and 1998 and, as part of the Trees Committee, the William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award winner. Carl was an enthusiastic supporter of the arts, and was a faithful attendee of Cal Shakes, A.C.T., Berkeley Rep, the SF Symphony, the SF Opera, and the Lamplighters. Carl, as an Eagle Scout, was also dedicated to Scouting, and served as a counselor for the Citizenship merit badge. He was deeply involved in the daily lives of his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren and most Saturday mornings he could be found at Geppetto's in Orinda with various family members.

Carl is survived by his loving wife of 65 years Flo, devoted children Joe (Judith) of Portola Valley, Wendy Thorpe of Walnut Creek, Nat (Jill) of Moraga, Liz Witbeck (Ray) of Orinda, Gretchen Latimer (Jim) of Orinda and his grandchildren: Natalie Munoz (Rene), Elle Koleckar (Kevin), Joanna Warden (Jamie), Matt Weber, Andrew Thorpe, Ted Weber, Allie Weber,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Carl Joseph Weber.

Sam Weber, Tim Witbeck, Katie Latimer, Nick Latimer, Hannah Witbeck and Jay Latimer. Carl also had six great grandchildren: Grace, Shepherd and Carpenter Koleckar, Lucas and Michael Munoz, and Avery Warden. He is also survived by his sister Natalie of Sierra Madre.

## Fitness Tip of the Month

### How Can We Avoid Fitness Plateaus?

A person who runs 1 mile for the first time will get more results than one who runs 5 miles every day.

The more we do the same workout the less effective it is no matter what it is. The workout becomes our body's normal state and it has no changing effect.

Introducing variability is the key and it can be accomplished on many levels.



For more information, contact Sheena with Living Lean personal training and eating for elite fitness, at 925-360-7051 or [www.livingleanprogram.com](http://www.livingleanprogram.com).



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## Festival of Trees Celebrates 31st Anniversary



Jan Trzesniewski (R) won the raffle for two nights at the Meadowood Resort in Napa Valley. OWC member **Caroline Callaway** (L) presents her with her gift certificate.



*Beary Christmas*, designed and donated by **Caroline Callaway**, was one of 11 miniature trees raffled off at the Orinda Woman's Club's annual Festival of Trees.



ALL PHOTOS BY SALLY HOGARTY

Professional models from **Helen Lyall Clothes** start the fashion show on a colorful note.

Local community members joined the professional models to show off Lyall's latest fashions. All proceeds benefited Pillars of Hope, which offers residential restorative care programs to survivors of human trafficking, and Berkeley Hope Scholars, which provides support to U.C. Berkeley students who are current or former foster youth or orphans.

live better  
live lean

## "I Dropped Four Dress Sizes for My Wedding!"

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Before

After

Victoria Selway

NEW

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BUSINESS BUZZ

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Orinda Books is a longtime member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce and is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information call 254-7606, send them an email at info@orindabooks.com or visit the website at www.orindabooks.com

**La Mediterranée Celebrates 35th Anniversary**

Orindan Garbis Baghdassarian and his cousin Levon Der Bedrossian established this delightful Middle Eastern Mediterranean restaurant at 2936 College Avenue in Berkeley in 1982. "At the time Levon was living in Berkeley and we selected this location. As business increased we expanded our restaurant, and today we are pleased to celebrate our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being in business and serving our community," says Baghdassarian.

The casual Mediterranean décor invites customers to linger and relax. Open Sunday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 9:30

p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 10:30 p.m., this inviting atmosphere is adorned with indoor plants and a fresh rose on every table that features a mosaic tile top accompanied by bentwood chairs.

The menu offers delicious plates such as the house favorite, Chicken Pomegranate, Chicken Kebab, Vegetarian Kebab and Filo Dough Specialties. Vegetarian and vegan selections are available. The soup and salad offerings are mouth-watering, and the menu features many favorites including Hummus, Baba Ghanoush, Tabuleh and Dolma – it is all here.

A fine variety of wines including Lebanese, Armenian, French and California choices and, impressively, an Argentinian Malbec are available. "My favorite thing is to find good wines from California wineries that are not very famous and serve them," says Baghdassarian.

Anoush Ella! – May it be sweet – is the theme by which Baghdassarian lives. Both he and Der Bedrossian were born and reared in Beirut, Lebanon. "My father survived the Armenian Genocide as a ten year-old boy. My mother was born in Aleppo during the deportations. During my youth, Beirut was



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Garbis Baghdassarian (R) established La Mediterranee on College Avenue in Berkeley 35 years ago. Shown here with his son Ara.

Congrats to Miramonte Girls Water Polo Team



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Miramonte Varsity Women's Water Polo Team capped off an undefeated season by winning the D1 North Coast Section. The team went on to beat St. Francis High School in the first round of the CIF. Their next game was against Davis in Sacramento on Nov. 18, after press deadline.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Not to be outdone, the Mats JV Girls Water Polo also had a great year with an undefeated season and several tournament wins including above with their win at the Napa Crusher Classic where coach Andy LaVelle was thrown in the water.

cosmopolitan with an abundance of artistic activities including theatre, art galleries, an Armenian theatre group and tourism was booming," says Baghdassarian. "I grew up speaking Armenian, French, English, Arabic and Turkish with a little bit of Greek and Spanish," he adds with a smile.

After studying art in Paris, Baghdassarian arrived in the United States at age 27.

Today, La Mediterranée continues to be a family affair, with Garbis' son Ara, a 2008 Miramonte High School graduate, helping to manage operations. "The core kitchen staff has been here over 25 years together. Kitchen Manager Rene Bogran has been here 28 years. Manager Emily Hallam helps maintain our continuity of excellent dishes," says Baghdassarian. "I am pleased to be serving our custom-

ers' needs, whether large or small," he adds.

Baghdassarian has been married 33 years to Silva Zorian. The couple has two adult children, Ara and Tara, both Miramonte graduates. Tara is currently volunteering in Armenia, teaching art and English. An avid gardener, Baghdassarian also enjoys reading history and enjoys traveling and visiting museums with Silva. Both are actively involved in the Armenian Rugs Society.

Drop by La Mediterranée for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Brunch is served both Saturday and Sunday until 2 p.m. If you are hosting a holiday party or large dinner for friends, check out their catering services. For more information about La Mediterranée visit the website at www.cafelamed.com.



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BUSINESS BUZZ

## Business Buzz Putting a Personal Face on Local Business

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### Novelist Mitali Perkins

Inspired from a very early age to be an agent of positive social change, local award-winning author Mitali Perkins has released her 10th novel, *You Bring the Distant Near*. During her recent author appearance at Orinda Books, Perkins described her novel about an immigrant family in America embracing people they never would have known in India, their country of origin.

Nominated for the 2017 National Book Award for Young People's Literature, *You Bring the Distant Near* is a family story told in three parts, covering moments in the lives of five women who adjust to life in America. "After all, it is the moments of our lives that we remember best," points out Perkins. "I love writing for children because they read with their open hearts and open minds."

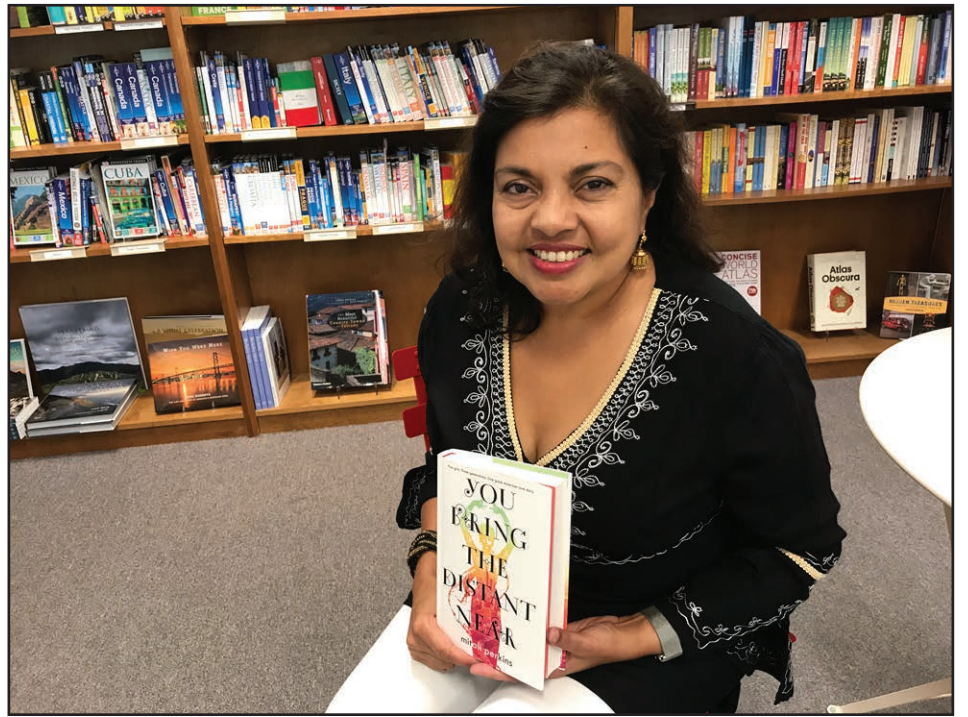
Perkins speaks to her own experience: "I was born in Calcutta, and, by the time I was 11 years of age, I had lived in Ghana, Cameroon, London, New York and Mexico,

before arriving in Northern California for middle school. Books were my stability and I kept going to the library as I navigated across the border between California and the Bengali culture of my traditional home."

"My most recent novel is about what America does best, which I believe is bringing people together and recognizing there is so much more we have in common as members of humanity," says Perkins. She developed a desire to help change the world for the better from reading books throughout childhood: "There are times when moral choices are not black and white and often they are gray. I enjoy exploring this in my novels for youngsters."

Perkins is married to Rob Perkins, pastor at Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church. The couple has twin adult sons, Jim and Tim. When not writing, Mitali may be found playing tennis or hiking. She especially enjoys traveling and exploring new cultures with her husband.

For more information about Mitali Perkins and her novels, visit her website at [www.mitaliperkins.com](http://www.mitaliperkins.com)



VALERIE HOTZ

Local author **Mitali Perkins** writes for young readers and recently published *You Bring the Distant Near*.

### Orinda Books

With the holidays upon us, now is a terrific time to stop by Orinda Books, your local independent bookseller, where you will find not only a world of books which make excellent gifts, but also an array of other fun items. These include everything from jewelry created by local artist Margaret Helsel, to tea towels, engagement calendars, journals, classic Moleskine notebooks, puzzles for children and adults, calligraphy sets, greeting cards and more.

A fine selection of coffee table books are available here, including *France is a Feast, The Photographic Journey of Paul and Julia Child*, by Alex Prud'Homme and Katie Pratt. This delightful book features the impressive photography of Paul Child, who served as the cultural attaché for the U.S. Information Service in France.

Owners Maria and Danny Roden and their staff excel in providing superior customer service. "If we don't have a title in stock, we are happy to order it, and we offer an out-of-print book service," says Maria Roden. "We are excited about our upcoming author speaker series and literary lunches. Victoria Sweet, author of *Slow Medicine* joins us on Jan. 17 for the Literary Lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and New York Times travel writer and photographer Michael Benanav is the featured author on Jan. 31, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

He will discuss his recent book, *Himalaya Bound*," says Roden.

The children's section at Orinda Books offers the traditional classics as well as finger puppet books and plushies. The comfortable wicker chair and collection of bean bag chairs invites customers to linger awhile perusing titles. There are a variety of books on tape, while the music section is fittingly and carefully displayed atop a piano. You will find titles ranging from *The Handel and Haydn Society* to Bruce Springsteen's autobiography, *Born to Run* (also available on CD and read by the author himself).

Don't miss the assortment of Hofssi chocolates from local chocolatiers Susan Rossie and Linda Hofmeister, colored



VALERIE HOTZ

Orinda Books owner **Maria Roden** has lots of holiday items to recommend this season.

pencil sets, whimsical socks and the collection of music on compact disc. Complimentary gift wrapping is available for every purchase.

Local ceramist Gerry Wallace and *plein air* artist Paul Kratter will be selling their art at Orinda Books on Friday, Dec. 8, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Kids' Story Time is a fun-filled hour that takes place every Thursday morning at 10 a.m., featuring songs, games and stories with Cathy G. Telephone the store for more details.

"Our featured charity event – 'The Crayon Initiative' – involves customers bringing in old used crayons and donating them. These old and often broken crayons are then melted down and recycled to make new crayons which are donated to hospitals," explains Susan Reckes, a member of the Orinda Books staff. For more information, visit the website at [www.crayoninitiative.org](http://www.crayoninitiative.org) An additional in-house charity event, "Blind Date with a Book" delivers proceeds to Direct Relief, benefitting fire victims. You can learn more at [www.DirectRelief.org](http://www.DirectRelief.org)

[SEE BUZZ page 19]



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