



THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis
Volume 37, Number 2

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Delivered to 9,000 Households and Businesses in Orinda

12 Issues Annually
February 2022

City Council Looking at Downtown Rezoning and Housing Needs

By ANDREA MADISON
Staff Writer

Downtown Plan Seeks Rezoning for Office and Commercial

The Orinda Theatre, open since 1941, is a unique and historical slice of the City's family-oriented community. With its easy access from Highway 24 and selection of restaurants, professional services and shops, Orinda Theatre Square is a central hub for residents and visitors of the City.

Since 2020, the Orinda City Council has been working on the Downtown Precise Plan (DPP), which, as stated by www.planorinda.com, will revise downtown development standards and establish mixed-use and residential design standards for the City's Theatre and Village Districts.

"You would have new retail and new businesses that would be associated with these changes," said Orinda Planning Director Drummond Buckley.

A spring 2021 joint meeting between the City Council and the Planning Commission established that work on the DPP, in parallel with the updated Housing Element, would continue, and an April 2021 EPS analysis of the plan detailed how proposed zoning changes to the downtown area would increase the number of maximum allowable developed housing units.

But will the suggested zoning updates projected for downtown Orinda help the City meet its housing goals, as well as serve



JEFF HEYMAN

Orinda Theatre Square is a hub of activity within the family-oriented city. Mixed-use and residential design standards will be established for the area through the efforts of the City's Downtown Precise Plan.

to revitalize the area?

Perhaps not, according to Orinda resident Nick Waranoff. "Orinda's downtown does

not need to be 'revitalized,'" Waranoff said. "Currently, we have very few vacancies. Existing businesses serve the needs of the residents and there is ample parking. Fancier dining and retail are available five minutes away in Lafayette."

The April 2021 EPS Development Feasibility Memo notes demolition and replacement of the existing commercial buildings in the downtown area "represent a significant financial hurdle" offset only by a redevelopment project that "also provides a large amount of additional, high value development."

In the Downtown Orinda Objective Design Standards presentation from November, 2021, building heights within the Downtown General and Downtown Core areas are projected an allowance of up to 55-feet at three unspecified key

[SEE REZONING page 8]



SALLY HOGARTY

Orinda Senior Village Foundation hopes to create housing opportunities for low and middle income seniors on the upper parking lot of the **Orinda Community Church**.

Library Gallery



ELANA O'LOSKEY

This budding student artist received an ambassador's ribbon at the Lamorinda Arts Council's 2018 exhibit. To find out what's in store at the 15th Arts Ambassadors Show this February, see the story on Page 7.

IN THIS ISSUE

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

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LIVE AT THE ORINDA / PET OF THE MONTH

Rhythm and Blues-Jazz Vocalist Freda Payne Celebrates Her New Album



COURTESY OF LIVE AT THE ORINDA

Dynamic rhythm and blues/jazz vocalist **Freda Payne** ("Band of Gold") is performing Feb. 20 at 5 p.m. to celebrate her new album, *Let There Be Love*. Check out a behind-the-scenes YouTube video of her recording session with singer Kenny Lattimore at www.youtube.be/8BG_jVg3wyc.

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

On Sunday, Feb. 20 at 5 p.m., the entertaining concert series "Live at the Orinda" will celebrate tunes from Freda Payne's recent album release, *Let There Be Love*. Known for her multi-octave vocal range, the rhythm and blues and jazz artist will be joined by her band of accomplished musicians. They include keyboardist Rahn Coleman of Sherman Oaks, bassist Daniel Fabricant and drummer David Rokeach, both of San Francisco.

Well known for her classic '70's hits, "Band of Gold" and "Bring the Boys Home," both of which went Gold, Payne started her career in jazz working with Quincy Jones, Manny Albam and Lionel Hampton.

Along with roles in film and television, Payne also starred in Broadway shows such as *Sophisticated Ladies*, *Blues in the Night*, *Jellie's Last Jam* and her own

tour de force portrayal of Ella Fitzgerald in *Ella: First Lady of Song*. This short 1970 clip of Payne singing "Band of Gold" (www.youtube.be/DtauQj65_4w) provides a glimpse of her talent and can be found here. "I'm excited to be coming back to Northern California to see my friends, fans and even some family. I'll be giving you all I've got," said Payne.

She travels to Orinda after finishing performances in Seattle at The Triple Door Feb. 5. Performing is what she's all about. Payne plans to sing some tunes pulled from her role of Ella Fitzgerald, which she has performed three times. *Broadway World* said of her performance, "Freda Payne pulled off a performance that some musicians half her age might find exhausting. The Lady is a ball of fire with an intensity that comes out in every musical story being told."

During the COVID lockdown, Payne worked with Mark Bego to write a memoir about her journey as a young singer from Detroit who traveled to New York City and beyond.

"I figured I'd better work on it while I can still remember everything," joked Payne, who will have signed copies of *Band of Gold, a Memoir* available the night of her

performance.

Payne lived a life alongside the "who's-who" of the show business world in New York City. In her memoir, she writes about Duke Ellington, Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Pearl Bailey, Omar Sharif, Quincy Jones, Liza Minnelli and Sarah Vaughn. She has toured the United Kingdom, Germany and Japan. Her compelling memoir is described as "a celebration of a glamorous life well lived."

Live at the Orinda has Michael Williams booking the talent for the popular series, which continues to offer top shelf music and vocals.

"The art deco décor is a gorgeous backdrop for an unforgettable evening of entertainment, and Ms. Payne will definitely make your heart sing," said Williams.

Visit www.orindamovies.com, call 925.254.9065 or stop by the box office at 2 Theatre Square for tickets. Season tickets are available as well as single tickets from \$50 - \$100. Mark your calendar for Sundays at 5 p.m. for Marilu Henner on March 6; Natalie Douglas on April 3 and Debbie Gravitte on May 1.

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

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Pet of the Month



CHICKPEA PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO

"Penny is our husky/shepherd-mix we got as a puppy from The Milo Foundation four years ago. She loves to run a blue streak off-leash. Her favorite haunts are Volmer Peak (Tilden); Black Oak Loop (Kennedy Grove) and Heather Farm Dog Park (Walnut Creek)," said Orinda pet-parent Allison Skidgel. "We couldn't imagine life without her."



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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the President
Volunteerism Strong in Orinda

SALLY HOGARTY



Volunteerism is at the heart of our community, and it's only fitting The Orinda Association (OA) celebrates the 20th anniversary of its Volunteer Center with a shout-out to local residents, many of whom go above and beyond to help others.

During this holiday season, over 600 coats were donated to the One Warm Coat program with Gail McIntyre purchasing \$1,300 worth of new coats at Costco to donate and delivering 25 bags of coats to a women's shelter in Concord. This year's program featured a collaboration among the OA, Orinda's Parks and Rec Department and the Orinda Teen Advisory Council. The teens picked up the coats from the OA office, sorted, counted and bagged them. Donations went to three different agencies. Cathy Goshorn, who runs the OA's Seniors Around Town program (SAT), also took 50 coats to a homeless encampment in Berkeley.

Goshorn recalled one encounter: "She was wearing only a blanket with nothing on underneath. This was when it was so cold. It was heartbreaking to see. I helped her pick out a long, warm coat, and she was beside herself. She was so happy."

And speaking of SAT, its slogan "It's more than a ride" has certainly been true this past year. SAT drivers and riders often become friends as they share life experiences driving to doctor offices, running errands to various places and undertaking other trips. Driver Dan Slaven, for example,



COURTESY OF THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION
Gail McIntyre delivered 25 bags of coats to a women's shelter in Concord as part of the One Warm Coat program.

upon discovering his rider was moving soon, showed up to help him move as well as build bookshelves for his new home at Orinda Senior Village.

With COVID and its many variants still raging over the holidays, the annual holiday luncheon for drivers and riders was cancelled, but that didn't stop SAT and its drivers from spreading holiday cheer. The group put together and delivered lovely holiday packages to riders, with many being asked in for tea and cookies and a nice long chat.

According to Goshorn, SAT is just as satisfying for drivers as for riders.

"I can't recall how many times I've had drivers tell me how grateful they are to be

[SEE MESSAGE page 6]



COURTESY OF THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION
Lisa Sernett (L) and Laurie Dunn (R), both drivers for Seniors Around Town, delivered cookies and much more to rider Judy White over the holidays. "We had such a nice visit with Judy," said Sernett. "She served us tea and ginger cookies!"

Pet of the Month!

Email a photo of your beautiful, amazing pet and The Orinda News Team will select and feature your pet in upcoming issues!



Email your pet's photo, name and info to editor@theorindanews.com

The Orinda Association

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

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

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

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EDITORIAL

Letters to the Editor

Private Roads and HOA's

In the Jan. 2022 issue of *The Orinda News*, Mayor Fay states both that Wilder's private roads are excluded from any program enabling private roads to gain "public" status and the City must work on this problem as "one community."

His rationale? Wilder's streets are "newer," "less costly" and have an HOA. His issue is solely one of cost (but in maintaining newer streets, Orinda would incur a lesser burden).

It is also, however, an issue of treating Wilder residents as second-class citizens. If only Orinda children in even-numbered houses could attend public schools that all Orindans pay for in order to save the cost of building a new school, would the tax-paying parents in odd-numbered homes not be second-class citizens?

Wilder residents are the only Orindans paying – in perpetuity – for maintenance of Orinda's Art and Garden Center [located in Wilder] and five state-of-the-art night-lit playing fields (all of which are rental profit-centers for the City) and also pay taxes for road maintenance, but are barred from receiving those benefits.

HOA's are only mechanisms for payment by individuals. Wilder residents pay taxes for benefits which they are barred by discriminatory local law from receiving and then pay again through HOA assessments.

If it is too "complicated" as the mayor says, to achieve equal protection under law through road dedication, then grant a local tax offset so that Orindans living in Wilder are not financially exploited. Otherwise, talk about "one community" is both false and insulting.

– Bob Finch

1,699 New Housing Units Absurd: Orinda Needs Local Control

As a long-term Orinda resident, and one who has participated in local government, it's past time for our local elected officials to ramp up the pressure for local Orinda control of housing, which over the years has been taken away by Sacramento. This would be an excellent project for our newly elected Mayor Dennis Fay and our Vice Mayor, Inga Miller.

Reference the recent memo from the Planning Department (Dec. 15, 2021, Winnie Mui), "Create Your Own Housing Plan!" ... "that would accommodate at least 1,699 housing units, the City's required Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) plus buffer." A goal of 1,699 new housing units in a city that is essentially built-out, is patently absurd.

Sacramento cannot continue to dictate these absurd requirements for Orinda. They are completely illogical and make no sense. Maybe team up with other cities. In any case, it's time for our City Council to

take corrective action. No longer should we continue to surrender to these ridiculous rules imposed by Sacramento.

– Chris Kniel

Nothing Wrong with our Current Orinda Downtown Plan

I see where Mayor Fay thinks our younger residents "want a more vibrant downtown." Here we go again; there is nothing wrong with our current downtown.

The shops and stores provide most of our basic needs for a town of our size. Over the years, we keep hearing of ways to link the two sides and to build residential above some existing properties to satisfy state housing mandates. Both are bad ideas.

The Theatre District (Casa Orinda to Wells Fargo, approximately three square blocks) is compact and totally walkable; the Village side is spread out and not conducive to walking. Unlike Lafayette, which combined with Moraga, has a population of more than double Orinda's and attracts shoppers from both cities, Orinda mostly relies on its own inhabitants to shop and use its services.

Four or five-story buildings are out of character with our small town feel and who is going to compensate current landlords if their properties are replaced. The City Council proved its reluctance to addressing change at even a minor level when it nixed the Montessori school at the site of Phair's Department Store (which still remains vacant).

– Dave Sullivan

Money Wasted on Creek

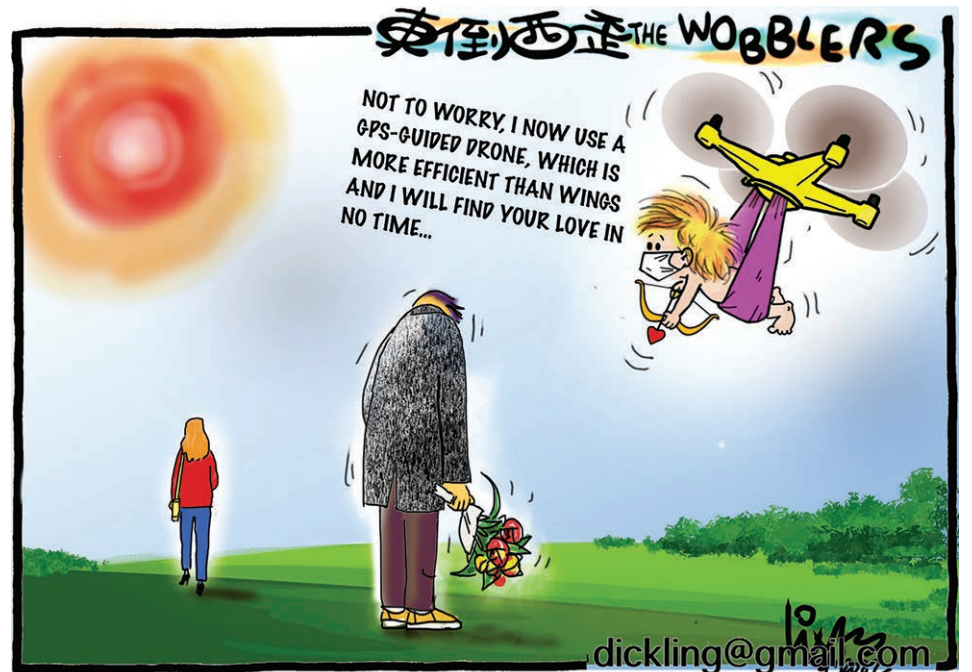
The story about Rebecca Bauer-Kahan (RBK) helping Orinda receive a \$125,000 state grant for the San Pablo Creek Pedestrian Trail missed an important part of the story: RBK, who actually lives in Orinda, at the same time secured a grant twice as large, for a safe routes to school program in Lafayette.

Your reporter should have asked RBK to explain why the creek is more important than safe routes to schools, and why Lafayette got twice as much money as her hometown of Orinda.

Also unexplained is how a grant for a "trail" can legally be spent on restoration of the creek flow as described.

A third issue not covered is that any change in the flow of the creek will require a submission to FEMA of a hydrology report to address whether there is an increase in risk of flooding. Even if there is none, the update will likely increase flood insurance premiums for owners and business tenants in the Village, which is in a flood plain. Their interests were not considered.

Finally, no restoration plan has ever been submitted to the Council for approval or even for a public hearing.



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	Page		Page
Automotive		State Farm, Bryan Silveira	2
Mash Gas and Food	1	State Farm, Kelly Sopak	14
Orinda Motors	12	Real Estate	
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Medical and Dental		April Matthews	16
Canopy Health	15	Murphy Team - Karen & Hilary Murphy	15
Dr. Brian Clark	13	Ann Sharf	14
Dr. Mary Smith DDS	14	Clark Thompson	6
Medicine Shoppe	9	Restaurants/Catering	
Nonprofit		Baan Thai	15
Boys Team Charity	13	Casa Orinda	10
The Orinda Association	3	Farmers' Market	9
Professional Service		Siam Orchid	7
5A Rent-A-Space	11	Zamboni's Pizza Company	7
Green Sheds	7	Retail	
Jeff Heyman Photography	14	McCaulou's	15
Kirby Carpet Cleaning	11	Morrison's Jewelers	2

The idea that a small handful of loud people, whose organization only receives contributions from about a dozen people per year, can exercise this outsized influence and obtain substantial public funding for a short stretch of a drainage ditch, is a failure of the democratic process.

– Nick Waranoff

DEI Does Not Support Reverse Racism

I wish to respond to the recent letter to the editor "Goal of DEI is to Replace Merit," as it had some factual errors.

I believe the author is confounding Affirmative Action with Diversity, Equality and Inclusion. Affirmative Action was a series

[SEE LETTERS page 6]

Correction

The Orinda News December issue listed an incorrect business spa phone number and website in the *Everyday Orinda* column on page 17 for Licensed Clinical Esthetician Aurea Fonseca-Geen. The correct spa phone number is 925.254.5575 and website <http://allaboutskincare.org>.

The Orinda News prints 9,000 copies and is published 12 times a year by The Orinda Association. The office is located at 26 Orinda Way (lower level of the Library). All rights reserved. The publication is sent out by direct mail (Permit #4, Orinda Post Office), distributed to key locations throughout the city and online at www.theorindanews.com.

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 Photographer.....Jeff Heyman
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The Orinda News

A Publication of
 The Orinda Association
 Mailing Address
 P.O. Box 97
 Orinda, California 94563
 Telephone: 925.254.0800

www.theorindanews.com



The OA is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

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

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

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

NEWS BRIEFS / POLICE

Around Town: Orinda News Briefs

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

Bank of America Officially Closes Orinda Branch Permanently March 22

Citing “a significant change in how clients manage their financial lives,” Bank of America officially will close the Orinda financial center and discontinue local ATM service next month. The Orinda branch was shuttered on a temporary basis in early 2020.

Customers were notified last November about the impending March 22 closure, according to Betty Riess, spokesperson for the bank. While the decision to close a branch permanently is never easy, she said, clients are “using digital and self-service platforms more and more for the most common transactions, while preferring to visit bank branches only for more complex financial needs.”



JEFF HEYMAN

Shuttered since early 2020, **Bank of America** is permanently closing the Orinda branch and ATM March 22.

Orinda residents will now need to leave town in order to “have access to our full-service financial center in Lafayette, which is about four miles away,” said Riess.

Bank of America, which owns the land and building at 31 Orinda Way, has not disclosed plans for the site’s future.

City Manager Receives Salary Increase from Orinda City Council

At its Jan. 11 meeting, the Orinda City Council unanimously adopted Resolution 02-22 to increase City Manager David Biggs’ salary, retroactive to the first of the year. The 3% increase of \$7,290 brings his new annual wage-base to \$250,290.



JEFF HEYMAN

David Biggs, city manager since April 5, 2021, received a 3% salary increase from Orinda City Council last month.

Sub-committee members Amy Worth and Dennis Fay, who were mayor and vice-mayor respectively at the time, performed the six-month salary review in October.

According to documents presented during the meeting, the 3% salary-increase “is equal to the last increase received by the Unrepresented Employees.”

“Based on our review and analysis, we are very happy with the work David has done for the City,” said Fay, who added the increase puts Biggs in the middle of wages earned by the city managers of neighboring Lafayette and Moraga.

Douglas Alessio is New Administrative Services Director for Orinda

The City of Orinda hired Douglas Alessio, a public service employee for the



POLICE BLOTTER

December 15 through January 15

Calls for Service

- Assault with Deadly Weapon: 1 incident
- Adult Missing: 2 incidents
- Burglary, Auto: 3 incidents: Charles Hill Rd., Bryant Way (2)
- Burglary, Residential: 6 incidents: Undisclosed (2), Crest View, Fleetwood Ct., Totterdell Ct., Beaconsfield Ct.
- Death Non-Criminal: 2 incidents
- Failure to Obey Officer: 2 incidents
- Forgery: 1 incident
- Fraud: 1 incident
- Grand Theft Vehicle Parts: 2 incidents: Irwin Way, Orinda Way
- Identity Theft: 3 incidents
- Interfering with Public Officer: 1 incident
- Medical/Hospital: 1 incident

- Outside Assist: 1 incident
- Petty Theft: 1 incident
- Petty Theft from Vehicle: 1 incident: Las Vegas Rd.
- Robbery, Strongarm: 1 incident: Irwin Way
- Shoplift: 1 incident: Camino Pablo
- Tow: 1 incident
- Vandalism: 3 incidents
- Vehicle Theft: 1 incident: Ivy Dr.

Arrest

- DUI Felony: 1 arrest
- Possession of Narcotics: 1 arrest
- Recovered Stolen Vehicle: 2 recoveries
- Warrant Arrest: 1 arrest

– Compiled by David Dierks
Assistant Editor

past 28 years, as administrative services director. Alessio replaces Paul Rankin who retired last year.

Alessio, age 53, recently worked with the



JEFF HEYMAN

Douglas Alessio takes the helm as the new administrative services director for the City of Orinda, replacing Paul Rankin.

City of Livermore, where he served for 12 years. He started as the finance manager and worked his way up to assistant city manager.

Early in his career, Alessio met Rankin, [SEE ALESSIO page 9]

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ROTARY

◆ MESSAGE from page 3

in the program, how fulfilling it is to them," she said. "When you give, you get."

When the pandemic first started and everyone was in lockdown, drivers could no longer take our riders to various appointments. Instead, they volunteered to shop for seniors and deliver groceries to their homes. This has continued with 15 to 20 volunteers still shopping for homebound seniors in addition to driving other seniors to medical appointments.

Our SAT drivers' generosity extends beyond the riders themselves. Frank Chooi was a SAT rider for six years, requiring rides to dialysis in Walnut Creek three-times a week. Many drivers became close to him and his daughter Liza, who had quit high school to care for him. One driver, Linda Martin, helped teach Liza to drive when she became of age. When Frank died Dec. 30, Liza was bereft. She had no family outside of Singapore and called the SAT office in tears. Goshorn helped Liza

gather her father's belongings from the skilled nursing facility where he died and put an email out to the drivers.

"We had so many respond – wanting to support Liza in a variety of ways," said Goshorn. "One driver helped her celebrate her 22nd birthday, which happened just a few weeks after her father's death. The drivers have become her community, giving her needed emotional support and friendship."

The OA would also like to thank those who have dropped off eyeglasses for the Lions Club recycling program and for those who have accessed our online list of volunteer positions elsewhere in the community. Thanks also go to those who volunteered for the Fourth of July parade and the Classic Car Show. Without your help, these events would never happen.

Together we can make a difference for so many people. For information about how you can volunteer, call 925.254.0800 or visit www.orindaassociation.org. For information on the SAT program, call 925.402.4506.

Orinda Rotary's Annual Crab and Pasta Feed Fundraiser Dinner Pick-Up

By MELISSA ROEDER
Contributing Writer

Orinda Rotary, in conjunction with long-time popular restaurant Casa Orinda, plans its Annual Crab & Pasta Feed for Tuesday, March 1. Each take-out dinner will include three pounds of freshly cracked crab, linguine with lemon cream sauce, fresh vegetables, sourdough bread and a dessert.

A complimentary craft beer will be offered with two or more orders. The price of \$70 includes a donation towards the Rotary Club's hunger relief initiative and other service projects in Contra Costa County.

Dinners should be ordered by Feb. 24 at www.orindarotaryfundraiser.org and picked up March 1 at Casa Orinda, 20



DAN GANNETT

The Orinda Rotary hosts their Annual Crab & Pasta Feed, partnered with Casa Orinda, with their drive-through dinner pick-up on Tuesday, March 1.

Bryant Way.

For more information, email orindarotaryfundraiser@gmail.com.

◆ LETTERS from page 4

of policies in higher ed and government that factored in ethnicity when considering enrollment and advancement in an effort to increase diversity in otherwise homogeneous fields or schools.

Affirmative Action, for however it might make people feel, was found to be legal by our Supreme Court in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306 (2003).

I also believe the author may have missed the point of the book, *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi. Kendi defines racism as any policy or law that creates inequitable outcomes between people of different skin colors and that people are not themselves inherently racist, but policies and laws can be.

Harvard Medical School admitted its first woman in 1957. Women were capable of becoming doctors before 1957, but the policy in place prevented women from attending the school.

The town where I grew up had red line policies in place preventing Blacks from owning homes in the town. The law was removed 50 years ago, but the town still has disproportionately low representation of people of color compared to surrounding areas.

DEI does not support reverse racism. Rather it supports acknowledging the policies and laws that make up our society and how those can create unequal outcomes.

– Jessica Cross

Becoming One Community

In the article *Dennis Fay Takes Reins as*

Mayor Effective Dec. 14, it was encouraging to read Mayor Fay's quote "A pilot program to gradually bring some of the older private roads into the public system is a possibility," and that he is interested in dealing with climate change.

One predicted effect of climate change is more severe storms, making Orinda's unstable landscape even more at risk for causing property damage. To this end, I would like to call on Mayor Fay and the City Council to add all significant drains to the incomplete drainage study - not just "public" drains on "public" roads.

All drains interconnected with the public system should be included, and if a drain carries water collected on a public road, it should be city-maintained, even if it is a culvert or gutter within a "private" road as:

1. It is unsound and unsafe, from an engineering standpoint, to study and maintain an interconnected critical system in a fragmented manner.

2. It is unfair to concentrate water and cast the liability selectively onto private road residents so that those on functionally identical "public" roads can pay lower taxes.

3. The cost to the City of "public water" damage litigation is not insignificant.

I agree that "we need to work on this as one community." In one community, all taxpayers can receive essential services, rather than a sub-class being denied road maintenance and selectively forced to directly repair public drainage. Let's truly become a community.

– Joel Libove

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VISUAL ARTS

Orinda Art Scene

FEBRUARY IN THE ART GALLERIES AT THE ORINDA LIBRARY AND WILDER



ELANA O'LOSKEY

Heartwarming Art Gallery at the Orinda Library 15th Arts Ambassadors Show

The Lamorinda Arts Council (Council) presents K-8 student artwork from Orinda and Moraga schools as part of the Arts Ambassadors (AA) exhibit in the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library during February.

Orinda student artwork will be displayed Feb. 1 – 15; Moraga student artwork will be on display Feb. 15 – 28. Due to COVID-19, there will not be a public reception to award AA ribbons. Rather, David Wilson, art educator at Del Rey Elementary in Orinda, will award ribbons to students who have submitted artwork to the gallery in their school classrooms. In Moraga, visual arts educator Moose Wesler will do the same for K-8 students in their school classrooms. To learn more about AA 2022, visit www.lamorindaarts.org/student-exhibits/.

Wilson is the organizer of K-8 Orinda student artwork submitted for the 2022 AA exhibit.

“The art teachers in Orinda are thrilled to have students’ work up in the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library. It has been a challenging few years for our students, families and staff. Art has been a beautiful refuge for our students,” said Wilson. “As art teachers, we have been moved and delighted by the creativity and joy that our young artists have brought to their work in our classes. We are amazed and moved by what they have created.”

Wesler, who also teaches visual arts, animation and video, not only organized the artwork from K-8 Moraga students, but is a longtime supporter of the Council’s AA program.

Wesler also teaches printmaking at the Center for Community Arts in Walnut Creek and has exhibited her prints in the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library.

“I think that these years of COVID-19 have shown us how important art is to people. Folks in lockdown hungered for movie theaters, plays and museum visits. Teaching art online, as I did, was a release for many of my students,” she said. “They were able to use the time to create in a relaxed atmosphere, away from the ongoing stresses. My admiration for the creativity of children continues; and each assignment brings out the individuality of every

student. That’s what I love to see.”

AA 2022 is a colorful way to provide the public with an overview of the visual arts programs in Orinda and Moraga schools. As you can see by the photo, the delight with which K-8 students accept their AA ribbons is sure to warm the hearts of anyone who witnesses it.

AA, which began in 2006 and has gone through many iterations since, has been encouraged, expanded and supported by organizations such as the former Educational Foundation of Orinda, Lafayette Partners in Education, Moraga Education Foundation, local parents, school districts, art educators and students, as well as the Council.

The Council expressed its thanks to Wilson and Wesler for their dedication keeping art alive for young artists, especially during COVID-19.

To learn more about the Council, visit www.lamorindaarts.org. This exhibit runs Feb. 1 – 28 during normal Library hours in the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library at 26 Orinda Way. Hours are Mon. – Thur., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Fri. – Sat., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., closed Sundays. The Library is closed Mon., Feb. 21. Call 925.254.2184 for more information about the Library, or visit www.ccclib.org. Email the curators with questions at galler@lamorindaarts.org.

Wilder Gallery: Valerie Corvin’s “Whispers of the Heart” Contemporary Art

The Lamorinda Arts Council invites you to view Valerie Corvin’s virtual exhibit at www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries through Feb. 28. You will discover she has added new abstract work to her January exhibit. In-person viewings can be arranged by emailing Curator Aniston Breslin at wildergallery@lamorindaarts.org.

Corvin says she has been inspired by Arshile Gorky, who said, “Abstraction allows man to see with his mind what he cannot see with his eyes. Abstract art enables the artist to perceive beyond what is tangible, to extract the infinite out of the finite. It is the emancipation of the mind. It is an exploration into unknown areas.”

Corvin described her resulting process of creating abstract art: “I build layers of marks, first bold dark marks, and then

[SEE WILDER page 11]



ELANA O'LOSKEY

(L-R) Top row, volunteer art educators **Larysa Larson** and **Moose Wesler** and 2019 Moraga School District Superintendent **Bruce K. Burns**. Bottom row, seven elementary school girls and boys showing off their Lamorinda Arts Council Arts Ambassadors award ribbons for their artwork on display in the Feb. 2019 Art Gallery at the Orinda Library.

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CONTINUATIONS

◆ REZONING from page 1

locations.

The City of Orinda's Planning Director Drummond Buckley clarified on Jan. 10 that the City staff was no longer recommending a 55-foot height limit for the theatre block and that the planned revitalization was about creating a mix of residential and retail downtown.

Resident Waranoff mentioned concerns about the ability of local, decades-old restaurants located within the outlined DPP plan to adapt to the changes, due to "moving costs and higher rents in the new buildings."

As reported by *The Orinda News* in June 2020, the results of a resident survey conducted by Orinda's Planning Department showed a general dissatisfaction with the existing layout of the downtown area, including a lack of mainstream retail, grocery options and parking.

"It's not going to be automatic," Buckley said about the changes described in the DPP. It would be years before things change, he said, and hopefully existing businesses would be able to make the move when property changes happen.

The City of Orinda has listed a total of 151 units projected for the downtown area, with the DPP proposal looking to rezone the Downtown Office to Downtown General, allowing residential use of 25 dwelling units an acre.

The current Downtown Commercial allows residential use at 10 dwelling units an acre as part of a mixed-use project. The DPP would seek to also rezone this area to

Downtown Core, allowing the mixed-use residential density to increase to 30 dwelling units an acre.

Planning Director Buckley emphasized the housing goals that align with Orinda's Downtown Precise Plan.

"Our hope is [for] a mix of affordable and market rate units that would be constructed over time," he said.

Council Members Work on 6th Cycle Housing Element

As 2022 begins, the City of Orinda is preparing the public draft of its 6th Cycle Housing Element, which is expected in the spring. Among the discussed locations – 1,359 allocated units, 1,699 in total with a 25% recommended buffer – are potential housing sites located on Orinda church lots and on school district land. Very low- and low-income allocations represent 587 of the units.

The City's update to its Housing Element and zoning, as a part of its general plan, is due to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) by Jan. 31, 2023. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) adopted the final Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) plan in mid-December for Bay Area jurisdictions, which runs from 2023 to 2031. Updates to the Housing Element are required every eight years in California.

"The City Council will have the option of meeting the RHNA by allowing more residential uses downtown in addition to potentially rezoning other sites, such as churches, outside of downtown," Orinda Planning Director Drummond Buckley

Food Bank Donations

The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano has a donation food bin located at the Orinda Library rotunda, which will be available year-round.

Serving nearly three million meals monthly, the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano are "focused on nourishing our neighbors today and advocating for a hunger-free tomorrow."

To help those in need, place non-perishable food items in the bins. For more information, visit www.foodbankccs.org.



SALLY HOGARTY

said on Jan. 10.

Buckley mentioned that the state-required Housing Element update is being processed concurrently with the City's Downtown Precise Plan (DPP). The city has estimated the DPP's planning horizon as roughly 27 years, extending from 2023 to 2050. Two new downtown zones, Downtown Core and Downtown General, are proposed in the plan.

According to the ABAG's RHNA webpage, the number of allocated housing units is the result of surveys the organization collected to inform development in a jurisdiction. Orinda's 5th Cycle Housing Element, which ran from 2015 to 2023, had a RHNA allocation of 227 total units.

The Bay Area RHNA needs, as determined by the HCD, currently total 441,176 housing units. Many of these are above-moderate income, numbering 188,130 units.

The City has listed four possible RHNA sites located on church parking lots in Orinda, which would need to be rezoned for housing. Also listed as properties that could potentially undergo rezoning to allow for residential, and possibly higher density use are ones owned by the Orinda Union School District and Acalanes Union High School District.

The City of Orinda has released a Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which lists Jan. 4 to Feb. 3, 2022 as the public review period for the DPP and both the Housing Element and Safety Element updates.

The notice acknowledges that changes in city zoning could cause increases in density and height. The EIR is anticipated to analyze potential impacts to issues such as air quality, noise, tribal cultural resources and greenhouse gas emissions.

Site inventory for the Housing Element

is a process that includes multiple steps to identify potential new residential sites that can be developed within the eight-year planning period.

Identification of sites that can accommodate low and very-low income units is one step in the site inventory process, as is the analysis of site capacity and the identification of non-vacant sites.

Non-vacant locations and their redevelopment potential are discussed during site inventory. The determination of adequate sites establishes that if 50% of the lower-income RHNA is on non-vacant sites, the City will provide solid findings that the current use will likely be discontinued during the planning period.

The Housing Element also aims to determine whether it contains suitable and available land to meet the need of housing for each income level. The presence of sufficient capacity to accommodate RHNA is also examined. In the absence of adequate development sites, a program containing an inventory of potential rezoning sites is mandated to be created.

An early January internal article from the City of Orinda, covering updates in city development projects and goals, states that the City's housing sites inventory is currently in development.

"We are soliciting public feedback about which sites [will be chosen for the Housing Element] with a 'Housing Plan Challenge,'" said Buckley.

The Housing Plan simulation tool can be accessed at <https://www.planorinda.com/> involve. Residents can use the interactive site to create a balanced plan that can be submitted to the City. The Plan Orinda page also allows residents to subscribe to email notifications pertaining to Plan updates.

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

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BARBARA KOBSAR

Farmers' markets offer something fresh all year long, and the fresh is focused on what's in season.

The cooler months of winter and a shady spot in summer can produce all sorts of radishes, from small, round and red to roots resembling carrots or miniature turnips.

Winter or long-season radishes, often referred to as daikon or Oriental radishes, take from 60 to 90 days to mature. White daikon, the most prevalent, resembles a large carrot without the frilly greenery. It offers a subtly sweet and slightly spicy flavor. Toss chopped daikon into stir-fries or slice thinly and pickle the daikon to add a little bite to sandwiches.

Spring radishes are referred to as short-season radishes since they grow and mature in as little as three weeks. If you have a young budding gardener, be sure to plant a row of radishes. Watching the seeds sprout from the ground in as little as three to four days is fascinating to a child, and the end results are quick and tasty! There is another lesson to learn if the radishes bolt – the little

white flowers are edible too!

Most common of the spring radishes are the small, globe-shaped, red-skinned types. Check out farmers' markets for other unique varieties, including the oblong, white-tipped French Breakfast and the Easter egg radishes with multicolored red, pink, violet and white skins.

Watermelon radishes hide stunning beauty under their creamy white-colored skin. Slice thinly to reveal bright, circular striations of light and dark pink – perfect in salads, sandwiches or sushi. My favorite pairings with this beautiful radish are fennel, apple, goat cheese and white fish.

Radish greens are edible and make a delicious pesto to use in pasta dishes, pizza or soups. In a food processor or blender combine three cups tender radish greens (packed, washed and dried), two finely chopped garlic cloves and 1/3 cup slivered almonds or pine nuts. With the food processor running, drizzle in 1/3 cup olive oil and pulse until combined. Add 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese and pulse briefly. Add additional



BARBARA KOBSAR

Once-a-year Easter egg radishes are crispy, delicious and beautiful.

olive oil if needed to make a thick sauce consistency. Season with salt and pepper.

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

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

◆ ALESSIO from page 5

who was working for the City of Dublin at the time, while an auditor with a CPA firm.

"Paul's organizational skills certainly made my segue to Orinda an easy transition," said Alessio.

A resident of Concord, Alessio said he was looking for a different challenge and "Orinda was one of the few places for which I would have left."

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



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MIMI BOMMARITO

The COVID Chronicles, like many blockbusters, lost its allure by the fourth iteration. COVID Uno stopped the world in its tracks, a riveting, controversial nail-biter. COVID: The Delta Dawn – a mildly entertaining sequel, bland and rather predictable. The Omicron Returns is downright tiresome, yet still quite popular – somehow, everyone's seen it. Weary audiences agree: no one wants a fourth, unless it features Porky Pig sputtering, "Thaaat's All, Folks!"

Thanks to this never-ending pandemic, my social life remains in constant need of defibrillation paddles. Reclusive habits have formed. I watch entirely more television than I prefer. It makes sense that my favorite commercials are the "Unbecoming Your Parents" spots for Progressive Insurance, because "Parenta-Morphosis"

– their fictional concept of new homeowners turning into their parents – describes exactly what's happening to me as I wait out this virus.

I needed to Google which insurance company these hilarious spots promoted, and I'm still not really sure of the tie-in between young adults adopting their parents' annoying behaviors and buying homeowner's insurance. But those are the client's problems. Happily for the couch potato, these spots deliver some laughs. Especially the one about placing too many throw pillows on a couch. My own Mr. Couch-Potato-Head desperately hopes I'll take that mockery to heart.

Additional scenarios include: visiting the airport, where the victims are scolded for carrying paper tickets; parking in a stadium

[SEE EVERYDAY page 13]

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CALENDAR / CLUBS

On the Calendar in February

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

International Film Showcase will screen the French film, *Black Box* in February (date and time not available at press time.) A brand new aircraft crashes and a dedicated black box analyst works to determine the cause. To order tickets, go to: www.OrindaMovies.com. Proof of vaccination (two shots) and a current ID will be checked at the door.

Orinda Books Gallery features Lisa Gunn landscapes and still life with a variety subject matter from restful water retreats and animals to winter fruits; persimmons and pomegranates.

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

1 **Orinda Rotary**, together with Casa Orinda, Annual Crab & Pasta Feed \$70 Pick up at Casa Orinda, 20 Bryant Way, Orinda, March 1. Order by Feb. 24 at www.orindarotaryfundraiser.com. Info. at orindarotaryfundraiser@gmail.com. See

article p. 6.

Art Gallery at the Orinda Library - 15th Arts Ambassadors exhibit of K-8 student artwork from Orinda schools Feb. 1-15 and K-8 student artwork from Moraga schools Feb. 15 -28. See article p. 7.

Art Gallery at Wilder - Valerie Corvin Contemporary Art - Held Over. View Corvin's abstract art in her online gallery or by requesting a personal viewing. All COVID restrictions observed. See article p. 7.

High School Visual Arts Competition Registration - Deadline is midnight, Feb. 22. Cash awards, merit citations and online public exhibit. Hosted by the Lamorinda Arts Council. For information and application, visit www.lamorindaarts.org/vac. Questions? Call 925.359.4490.

AAUW-MOL STEM Conference registration begins. Go to <https://bit.ly/3AbfE27>. See article p. 13

3 **Orinda Books Pat's Book Club** will meet to discuss *We Run The Tides* by Vendela Vida. 11 a.m. The book is available at Orinda Books. Call 925.254.7606 or email info@orindabooks.com.

4 **First Friday Forum** presents *Life of Scup-tress, Ruth Asawa* with Marilyn Chase. 10 a.m. See article p. 16.

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

7 **Troop 303 Orinda**. Open House. Open to Girls and Boys. 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Holy

Shepherd Lutheran Church, 433 Moraga Way, Orinda. See article p. 14.

15 **AAUW MOL** scholarship application deadline. Go to oml-ca.aauw.net, or at school counseling offices. See article p. 13.

19 **Chiller Diller Theatre** presents *The Time Machine* 9:30 p.m. Orinda Theatre. Visit www.orindamovies.com, or www.facebook.com/orindatheatre. See article p. 14.

20 **Orinda Theatre** presents *Live a the Orinda!*

with Fredya Payne. Beginning at 5 p.m. See article p. 2.

24 **Boys Team Charity Orinda**, a volunteer service charity, prospective member meeting; for information email Maya McBride at mayamcbride@hotmail.com. Feb. 25 to Mar. 7, submit a prospective membership application online at btcorinda.org.

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

Club Meetings in February

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

American Association of University Women-Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch (AAUW-OML) hosts a general meeting via zoom with California State Senator Steve Glazer, who represents the 7th District including Lamorinda, the San Ramon Valley and the Tri-Valley communities. The zoom meeting begins at 9:30 a.m. with Senator Glazer speaking at 10 a.m. A link to the zoom meeting can be found at <https://oml-CA.aauw.net>. The meeting is free and open to the public.

Community Gentle Yoga, via Zoom, Mondays and Thursdays 9-10 a.m. Contact Gaby Mozee at gcmooze@gmail.com.

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

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

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

Lamorinda Meditation Community. Mondays and Thursdays, 10:30 - 11:25 a.m., through Zoom. All levels and philosophies welcome. Contact Gaby Mozee at: gcmooze@gmail.com.

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

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

Meetings are held at the Veterans Memorial Center, 3780 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. For information: www.lamorindasunrise.com or lamorindasunrise@gmail.com. Meetings: Feb. 4 - Teresa Onode, member of the Moraga Town Council, will speak on "A Moraga Vision," its history, beauty, strengths, challenges, future possibilities. Feb. 11 - Club member Don Jenkins will talk about ways and means of donating to Rotary, whether to the club's endowment foundation or to Rotary International. Feb. 18 - Club

assembly, chairs of committees report on activity progress for the 2021-2022 year. Feb. 25 - Eve Birge, executive director of White Pony Express, will discuss activity of the local nonprofit that distributes food and other goods to the needy within Contra Costa County.

Montelindo Garden Club, membership open to all. Feb. 18, landscape designer Katie Creighton presents *Early Bloomers - the Harbingers of Spring*, email montelindogarden@aol.com to learn if the meeting is via Zoom and to request a link. For more information, visit www.montelindogarden.com. Programs are free and open to the public. 10 a.m. via Zoom; 9 a.m. if in-person at the Lafayette Library, 3491 Mt Diablo Blvd, Lafayette.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Orinda Masonic Lodge #122 F&AM. 9 Altarinda Road, Orinda Masonic Center. 925.254.5211.

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


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

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

Orinda Teen Advisory Council for information [SEE CLUBS page 14]

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MIRAMONTE WELLNESS

Miramonte Wellness Center Supports Students During Pandemic

By ANIA KEENAN
Staff Writer

The sound of boiling water plays over soft pop music and the rustle of papers. Grabbing a disposable cup, you notice on the side of each cup is a handwritten motivational quote. You pour your tea and return to your spot on one of the many couches that take up the center of the Miramonte Wellness Center. After a year of distance learning, the Wellness Center has become an increasingly popular resource for students and staff transitioning back to more

“regular” schooling. The Center aims to provide students “individual counseling services, support and affinity groups, short cool down visits, lunch time activities, first aid and health supplies,” as stated on its page on the Miramonte website. Within a quick walk around the Center, located in the middle of the Miramonte campus, one encounters a wide variety of resources available to students – from stacks of meditation coloring books to gender exploration kits. At the front desk, near the entrance to

the Center, sits Ellen Zapalac, the Wellness Intake Specialist, who works with students to determine the types of care or resources that will best suit them. According to Zapalac, the Center has seen a substantial increase in the number of students using resources, especially independent counseling, since the return from distance learning. Zapalac related the increase to the recent cultural awakening around mental health and the trauma of living through a global pandemic as a teenager, a particularly vulnerable time period for most.

According to Wellness Coordinator Andie Nishimi, the reason behind the increased demand for mental health services coming out of the pandemic is multifaceted. First, she cited disturbance to daily life and routine. Second, the disruption of “normal” adolescent development by “interacting with peers or having the opportunity to act independently, nourishing freedom and exploration.” Finally, she pointed to how the shared trauma of living through a pandemic may have shifted familial structures.

“When a teenager is upset and seeks the help of a trusted adult, but that adult does not have the capacity or the skills to help calm down a distressed teenager, the teen gets stuck in a cycle,” said Nishimi. Both Zapalac and Nishimi expressed excitement students were taking advantage of the Center’s resources, as well as positive feelings about the road ahead.

According to Nishimi and Zapalac, the Center also manages educational work-



ANIA KEENAN
The **Miramonte Wellness Center**, located in the center of the school campus, is home to several clubs, resource centers and the Miramonte Student Union.

shops for students on topics ranging from sexual health to suicide prevention. Both cited workshops as an area where the Wellness Center will continue to “grow and expand,” affirming they are “excited to explore new topics.”

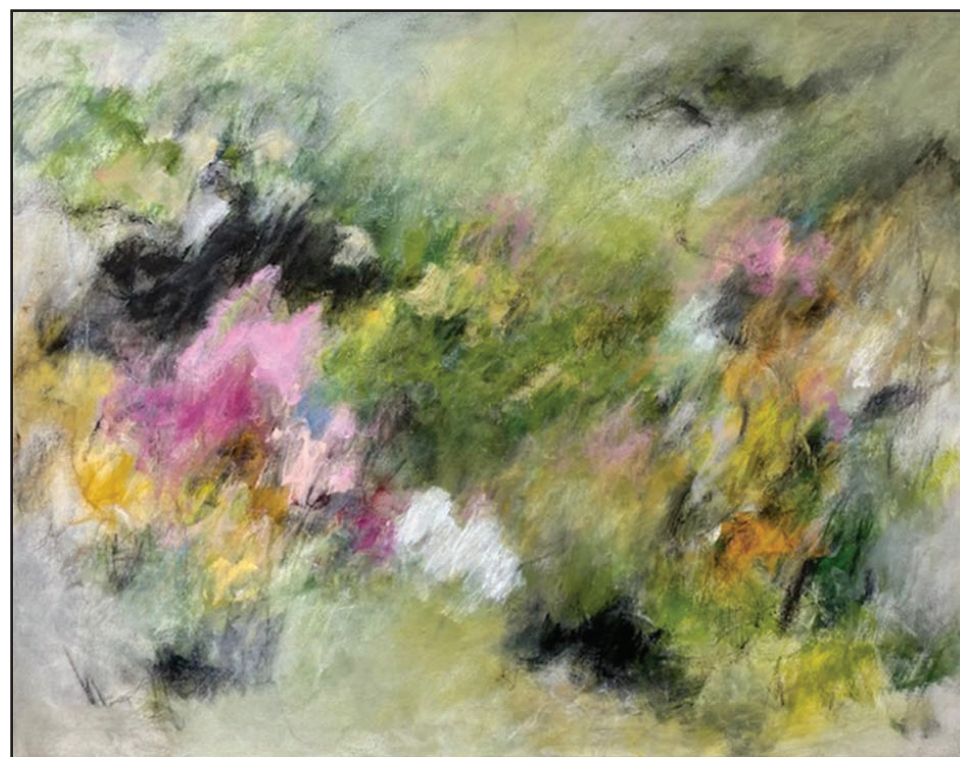
Nishimi proudly affirmed the transition the Miramonte community has made concerning mental health while saying she hopes awareness will continue to grow in the future: “The Wellness Center is not just a place you go when you need help or are in a crisis,” she said. “I hope people can start to see that wellness is more about empowerment for everyone.”

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

◆ **WILDER** from page 7
colorful shapes and a variety of lines to create a sense of history and a composition that communicates a sense of natural and unique forms from nature.” Corvin added, “The ultimate outcome of my process is artworks that give the viewer feelings that uplift and resound.” Corvin first responded to her love of art by earning a Master’s Degree in Museum Administration. She worked in that field before pursuing studio work. She managed the visual arts program at the Piedmont Center for the Arts for eight years and currently a trustee of the Oakland Art Museum. Her fine art studies, initiating two decades of painting since, began at California College


of the Arts. She exhibits regularly in the Bay Area and beyond. Keep up with her at www.valericorvin.com and on Instagram at [valerie_corvin_abstracts](https://www.instagram.com/valerie_corvin_abstracts). The Wilder Art and Garden Center is located at 20 Orinda Fields Way. The exhibit runs Feb. 1 – 28 and is virtual because the building is not open due to COVID-19 restrictions. Viewings by appointment with Curator Aniston Breslin can be arranged by request at anistonbreslin@berkeley.edu. Questions? Call the Lamorinda Arts Council at 925.359.9940.

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




COURTESY OF VALERIE CORVIN
When I view *Summer Meadow*, Corvin’s 30” x 40” mixed media on canvas, I am swept into a thousand colors hidden inside any summer day. What do you see?

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ORINDA AQUATICS



FRED STAMBAUGH

Thanks to **Orinda Aquatics'** commitment to safely return its swimmers to the water, the team was able to continue providing opportunities for members to excel.

Orinda Aquatics' Staff Supports Athletes Through Pandemic Years

By **ANGIE ZENER**
Contributing Writer

Persistence, discipline and unwavering commitment to athletic excellence are the pillars for training at Orinda Aquatics (OA).

Started in 1995, OA is known as one of the top smaller swim teams in USA Swimming. Over its history, OA has produced numerous Olympic trial and national level and top collegiate swimmers. With a strong tradition of success, OA has been able to fulfill its commitment to develop high-character and high-performing swimmers through collaboration, flexibility and adaptability.

In March of 2020, when California was placed under strict stay-at-home orders, OA knew its tried-and-true rigorous year-round training of daily workouts, almost monthly meets, mental preparations and

team-building would be disrupted.

OA's staff and volunteers began working immediately with experts and facilities to develop plans to return athletes back in the water safely. In June 2020, the team began training again with many new protocols in place - fewer swimmers per lane and individualized equipment use.

That was the first hurdle.

The second hurdle was to provide swimmers critical opportunities to compete in sanctioned meets in which swimmers earn "official times."

To this end, Director and parent Jane Healy described the detailed and hard work required: "Our team worked collaboratively and constantly with the governing body and our home facility to adjust our meets for COVID-19 safety compliance."

She explained, "We installed social distancing measures - from marking where swimmers would rest, to how they line up

before the starting block. We also required swimmers to wear a mask to the starting blocks, place it with their belongings in a garbage bag while they raced, then re-don the mask before exiting the start area."

As a result of hard work and collaboration, the team held its first sanctioned intrasquad meet Feb. 2021.

Co-head Coach Don Heidary reemphasized the mission to his staff and thanked them for the innovative ways they found to deliver coaching. "It was very important for us as a staff to not only stay connected to the kids, but to keep them connected to the sport," said Heidary. "In the 10 weeks that we were out of the water, we maintained virtually daily contact via Zoom meetings, newsletters, character issues, video review, inspirational guest speakers and team-building."

Heidary added, "We were very fortunate

to have access to the Soda Aquatic Center early in the pandemic, when many clubs around the country could not utilize a facility. The training through 2020 was invaluable on several fronts as kids could connect with their peers, alleviate some of the mental strains and pressures that accompanied that period and set themselves up for athletic success in 2021."

The persistence of the organization, along with the athletes and their families' flexibility and adaptability, provided the athletes with one and a half years of almost uninterrupted daily workouts, sanctioned meets in 2021 and opportunities to connect with team members.

For more information about Orinda Aquatics, visit www.orindaaquatics.org.

Angie Zener can be reached at zenerfam@gmail.com.

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STUDENTS

AAUW-OML STEM Conference and Webinars for Students

By DENISE BURIAN
Contributing Writer

AAUW-OML (American Association of University Women - Orinda, Moraga, Lafayette) will present its 5th Annual STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Conference for middle school girls, Saturday, March 19, at Saint Mary's College.

The STEM Conference will be an in-person, hands-on event, where the girls will attend three workshops given by professionals working in the fields of science, technology, engineering or math.

The goal is to ignite girls' passion for STEM careers through hands-on experiences and interaction with positive role models. Registration begins Feb. 1.

There will also be a program for parents of registrants from 8:45 a.m. to 11 a.m. The keynote speaker will be Nina Horne, co-founder and CEO of Alden, a company focused on helping parents and teens build happy, loving families and lives of compassion and meaning.

All participants during the conference will be required to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination prior to participation, and masks will be required during all indoor activities. AAUW-OML is partnering with Saint Mary's College and Techbridge Girls to present this conference. For more information, visit <https://oml-ca.aauw.net/stem-conference/>.

AAUW-OML is also sponsoring two Girls4STEM webinars for high school girls. "Why Studying Materials Science is Like Playing Tetris" will be presented by Maritza Sanchez, BS., MS, Ph.D. Candidate at UC



COURTESY OF AAUW-OML
AAUW-Orinda, Moraga, Lafayette (OML) presents their 5th annual STEM Conference for middle school girls on Saturday, March 19, at Saint Mary's College. Registration begins February 1.

San Diego. Sanchez, who was awarded the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers National Graduate School Role Model Star Award, maintains that "Materials science is the foundation to everything because everything has a surface." The webinar will be held Sunday, Feb. 6, at 4 p.m.

On Sunday, March 6, at 4 p.m., Sheryl Mordo, P.E., B.S., in Civil Engineering from UC Davis, will talk about her career path from math classes in high school to a career as a construction project engineer and manager at Intuit, one of the world's largest business software companies. Along the way, she also enjoyed an internship at DisneyWorld.

For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/3fDZtkF>.

◆ EVERYDAY from page 9

lot, where the victims debate what time to leave the football game before they've even entered the stadium; and a trip to the mall, where they are coached not to make corny, predictable wisecracks about discounts for ripped jeans.

I would like to furnish another example – and no, I'm not going to alert the advertising agency to my "clever idea," since that constitutes a perfect Parenta-Morphism – people who create ridiculously large text groups. This, by itself, is a huge no-no, but what makes it worse is when no one knows any other. Nameless strangers who appear as an infinite collection of numerals. The only time this might be acceptable is in an emergency. But God help you, in my world, if you form this extensive group to send a cartoon and then several of your nameless cohorts blow up my phone with polite commentary. Deduct five more friendship points if my phone buzzes me awake at 5 a.m. over this. Be warned: I'll get even.

An equally annoying cousin of this infraction is addressing *within a group text* only *one* person in the group. For example, imagine six childhood friends who live in different cities. Indeed, there are many valid reasons for a group text: reunion planning, moral support and gossip. However, when two have gathered for lunch, yet continue to text the *entire* group messages like "At the table in the back, next to the window," followed by, "Parking now, there in a jiff..." We don't need to hear it! Unnecessary messaging universally forces us to conjure unkind thoughts, like wishing the perp would step in a mud puddle or forget to zip her pants. Love the one you're with; text the one you're with. Hipper habits for 2022.

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

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AAUW-OML Awards Community Service Scholarships

By CAYO MARSCHNER
Contributing Writer


The Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch (AAUW-OML) of the national organization American Association of University Women, will award three Community Service scholarships to graduating women from Campolindo, Miramonte and Acalanes High Schools.

Three similar scholarships will also be awarded to High Potential Program (HPP) participants in Saint Mary's College. HPP participants are all first-generation college students.

Students are encouraged to apply for these scholarships by Feb. 15. Application information is available at the branch website oml-ca.aauw.net, or at school counseling offices.



COURTESY OF AAUW-OML
AAUW members met with Pat Rudebush, owner of Orinda Books, to discuss the February book sale at Orinda Books, which helps fund the organization's scholarship program. (L-R) Cayo Marschner, Linda Bochte, Pat Rudebusch and Bonnie Fend.



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Happy New Year and Please Continue to Stay Safe by Following Health Recommendations




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SCOUTS / FILM

Scouts to Host 2022 Open House

By CHARLEEN EARLEY
Editor-in-Chief

Scouts BSA Troop 303 Orinda Youth will host an open house event Feb. 7 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, 433 Moraga Way.

Troop 303 is the only girl and boy group in Orinda and Moraga. At the open house, attendees will learn about scouting. The troop offers leadership, outdoor, safety, mentoring, water sport skills and more.

Monthly meetings are Mondays at 7 p.m. Scouting is from the spring of 5th grade through high school.

For more information, email Molly, molywilsonhome@gmail.com, Amy, amystuffmann@gmail.com or visit <https://bit.ly/34SasVm> to apply.

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



COURTESY OF BSA TROOP 303

Troop 303's annual whitewater rafting camping trip, June 25-27, 2021, afforded the 20 scouts who attended the chance to earn the whitewater rafting merit badge, camp for two nights, and have fun with their friends and leaders.


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THE REEL LESS TRAVELED
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TOM WESTLAKE



Of the 28 days we are allotted for February, there are at least two during which you should spend at the Orinda Theatre. For this month, the two major offerings that are not current first-run movies are truly well worth taking time to enjoy. Flipping a figurative coin, I choose to write about what the International Film Showcase will be showing first.

The importance of sound in movies cannot be overstated, not only for the audience but also as a plot device. Two great examples of this are *The Conversation* (1974) and *Blow Out* (1981), both of which detail the intricacies and importance sound recordings play in our lives.

Now, *Black Box* can be added to this subset of the paranoid thriller. It covers much the same ground. The central character here is Mathieu, whose job is to analyze and interpret recordings taken from black boxes, those devices aboard all aircraft that airlines use as a means of record should the very worst happen.

The disaster in question here involves a new type of plane that crashes, killing 300 people. It is Mathieu's sorry task to find out exactly what went wrong. Being highly skilled at his job, he notices certain peculiarities with the recording, and here is where the drama begins.

Mathieu finds himself alienated from just about everyone close to him when his search for the truth is stymied at every turn. From then on we, the audience, are left not knowing where or how it will resolve. Stories like

these are always enthralling, and organizers Efi Lubliner and Jo Alice Canterbury hope you will come to the Orinda to find out how it all plays out. No firm dates have been set at press time, so make frequent visits to <http://internationalshowcase.org> for trailers and further information.

Next on the list is the ever-growing in popularity, Chiller Diller Theatre. This month is something of a departure from the usual fare: this film is actually good. *The Time Machine* has several distinguishing features, not the least of which is its director. George Pal, known for his special effects wizardry, spearheaded this film, and it turns out he's just as good with direction as he is with movie magic and attention to detail.

Typically, historical accuracy is often the first casualty in films like this, but all the periods represented (even the fanciful future ones) look as if a fair amount of research went into imagining them. Released in 1960, the film takes a pointed, slightly conservative jab at the prevailing attitudes of the time, but this should in no way discourage you from seeing this minor masterpiece. It shows at the Orinda Theatre Feb. 19. For further information and show times, visit www.orindamovies.com.

So now onwards towards March, but in the meantime, remember to always veer towards those wonderful images made from light and sound, since that's where the reel magic lies.

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

◆ CLUBS from page 10

mation, email Recreation Coordinator Matt Delmartini at mdelmartini@cityoforinda.org.

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

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

Road Runners. Runners meet 5:45 a.m.

Tuesday at Papilion (67 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette), Wednesday (Gepettos 87 Orinda Way), Thursday (SiSi, 910 Country. Club Drive, Moraga) and Friday (Starbucks, 470 Moraga Road, Rheem). Contact John Fazel, runmnts@prodigy.net.

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

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CAR TIME

CAR TIME

FORMULA 1 2021 SEASON, THE BEST ONE IN A LONG TIME?

XAVIER ESTRADA



The 2021 Formula 1 season has come to a close after its final Grand Prix in Abu Dhabi. The season was filled with numerous ups and downs, along with controversy, literally all the way to the last lap of the season.

Something that hasn't occurred in the sport since 1974 found both championship rivals Max Verstappen (Red Bull Honda) and Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) equal in points (369.5) coming into the final race.



DAVID DIERKS

Romak Iron Works 1998 Swift 008 Formula Atlantic car featured at the 2018 Orinda Classic Car Show.

Verstappen, the young and upcoming driver, had an early lead in points that would determine the champion during the season. Reigning 7 time World Champion

Hamilton, determined to break the record for most World Titles this season, caught up so that the standings went back and forth between the two until the last race.

Both teams pushed the limits all season long. Mercedes has dominated with its drivers every year since the rule change dictating the move to a turbo hybrid era was introduced in 2014. Red Bull Honda had not won a World Title since 2013 with Sebastian Vettel. Red Bull Honda, leaving F1 this year, gave its all to win another title since its last one came in 1991 with legendary Ayrton Senna and a Honda Marlboro McLaren.

Red Bull Honda re-entered the sport in 2015 with McLaren, but the two "divorced" at the end of 2017, both unhappy with subpar results. Red Bull Honda, during that time, was seen as the worst engine of the entire paddock. It wasn't until after 2018 when Red Bull Honda partnered with Toro Rosso (Alpha Tauri) that Red Bull started to win grand prix races again, triumphing over Ferrari and Renault engines to become Mercedes' main competitor.

It all came down to the wire in the last

grand prix. A race that favored Mercedes came to a finish that was controversial, exhilarating, and emotional after a safety car was deployed and brought back in on the last lap.

Hamilton was in P1 on worn-out, hard compound tires, while Verstappen was P2 after Red Bull Honda gambled with a pit stop, putting him on newer soft compound tires. It paid off. At the restart, it didn't take long for Verstappen to pass Hamilton and clinch his First World Championship Title, with Red Bull Honda leaving Formula 1 on a high note as the only team with its driver to defeat Mercedes in the turbo hybrid era.

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

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FIRST FRIDAY FORUM / FINANCIAL NEWS

Life of Sculptress Ruth Asawa Highlighted in First Friday Forum



COURTESY OF MARILYN CHASE

Book author **Marilyn Chase**, a UC Berkeley lecturer, presents the inspiring story of Ruth Asawa Feb. 4 at 10 a.m. at the First Friday Forum.

By **BOBBIE DODSON**
Staff Writer

Fountains and hanging wire sculptures define the work of San Francisco artist Ruth Asawa. Marilyn Chase, UC Berkeley lecturer, presents the inspiring story of Asawa and her rise to fame from a farmer's daughter to a celebrated sculptress for the First Friday Forum webinar presentation Feb. 4 at 10 a.m. Registration is required.

Born in 1926, Asawa, with her family, spent time during World War II in an internment camp in Arkansas where she learned to draw. She attended the groundbreaking art school at Black Mountain College and went on to create her iconic urban installations.

In a richly visual volume, with over 60 reproductions of Asawa's art and archival photos of her life, *Everything She Touched: The Life of Ruth Asawa*, Chase documented the artist's transformative touch, most notably in turning wire, the material of the internment camp fences, into sculptures.

The author mined Asawa's letters, diaries, sketches and photos as well as conducting interviews with those who knew her to tell this amazing story.

Chase is a graduate of Stanford University, with honors in English, and UC Berkeley with a master's degree in journalism. As a reporter, columnist and senior special writer at *The Wall Street Journal*, Chase covered tech and medical science for 30 years. This is her second book.

Asawa was a mother of six in her 59-year marriage to architect Albert Lanier. She died in 2013. Her works grace the deYoung, Getty, Whitney, MOMA and many more museums and galleries across America.

Her remarkable life story offers inspira-

tion to artists, art lovers, feminists, mothers, teachers, Asian Americans, history buffs and anyone who likes a good underdog story. Also, the book will be useful to those interested in Asian American culture and history.

To register for this webinar event, *Everything She Touched: The Life of Ruth Asawa*, visit lopc.org/first-friday-forum.

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

FINANCIAL NEWS

MORE ATTENTION TO PRIVATE MARKETS

DAVID BORN, CFA, CFP



Private market investing activity has been growing for years across asset types. This is partially a logical reaction to the regulatory and investing landscape. It also looks like an overheated market.

Investors can now buy private company stock on AngelList, EquityZen or Forge. They can buy a slice of a Picasso or Banksy on Masterworks.io. There are plentiful crowdfunding platforms for private loans and real estate deals. There now exists a platform for purchasing partial ownership in baseball cards.

This massive growth is partially explained by regulatory changes supporting private markets with better tax benefits and expanded crowd funding rules. Inflation has helped by effectively lowering the net worth and income hurdles to qualify as an Accredited Investor, a definition that allows one to participate more broadly in private markets.

The same time period has not been so kind to public markets. Regulations stemming from the dot com bubble, Enron and the real estate collapse have brought the cost of going and staying public higher. The implications of failing to meet public company regulatory guidelines increased this past September when companies with deficient public disclosures were effectively barred from active trading. Approximately 2,000 erstwhile-public companies were affected.

Meanwhile humungous amounts of capital have made it easier for companies to stay private. The acceptance by endowments and pension funds of venture capital as an investable asset class has led to an

explosion in venture funding. Add massive growth in private equity capital and many companies now have financing options to stay private longer.

The composition of money managers has diverged in private and public markets, leading some to worry about negative selection bias in companies that do choose to go public. These concerns stem from the public market prevalence of index funds that buy everything and blank check companies that must deploy hundreds of millions of dollars or return the funds to investors.

That has led some investors to think private markets skew towards better opportunities.

Some recent experience supports this notion.

For example, Bay Area companies such as Uber and Lyft still trade below private market valuations years after going public. The vast majority of companies that recently went public via blank check mergers (also known as backdoor IPOS) now trade well below their initial price.

For all their differences, there is one common element of growth in private and public markets: the individual retail investor. But the track record of retail investors brings a Marty Zweig quote to mind: "The markets will always do whatever they have to do to screw over as many people as possible."

Be cautious if you consider joining the masses.

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

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