



# THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis  
Volume 35, Number 11

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Delivered to 9,000 Households and Businesses in Orinda

12 Issues Annually  
November 2020

## Orinda City Council Virtual Debate Hosted by The Orinda Association

By ROWENA GONDEN  
Contributing Writer

A proposed sales tax increase, wildfire prevention and racism were among the topics that three candidates for Orinda City Council weighed in on last week in a virtual debate.

Mayor Darlene Gee along with City Council Member Inga Miller and challenger Latika Malkani are competing for two seats on the council.

The upcoming four-year term would be the second time Gee was elected to office – she initially was appointed to the council in July 2015 to fill a vacancy before running. Miller has served since 2016.

The Oct. 8 forum, shown via Zoom, was sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley and The Orinda Association, a nonprofit that helps to maintain the city's quality of life.

Dominating much of the discussion was Measure R, a proposed doubling of the

current ½-cent sales tax that is estimated to drum up \$2.4 million annually.

The measure also would extend the length of the tax from 10 years to 20.

Although the City Council only would decide how to spend the revenue after receiving advice from an oversight committee and the general public, it has targeted several priorities. These include clearing the community of vegetation that fuels wildfires, preparing for natural disasters and other emergencies, and maintaining public roads.

All three candidates supported the tax for the same reasons – it would supplement the limited amount of money the city has to spend on fire prevention and readying itself for emergencies by ensuring evacuation routes are in good shape, among other tasks.

Malkani, a 16-year resident, said she wants to use most of the revenue for this purpose as did Gee, who's lived in Orinda for 31 years.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Sponsored by The Orinda Association and the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley, the Oct. 8 forum features (top row) OA Board Member and hostess **Cindy Powell**, League moderator **Ann Flynn**, (bottom row) candidates **Inga Miller**, **Latika Malkani** and **Darlene Gee**.

The City needs to ensure its roads can handle an evacuation, added Miller, who moved to Orinda in 1980.

"We certainly have work ahead of us," she said.

Exactly which roads would benefit from Measure R remains to be seen, though.

Orinda has nearly 30 miles of private roads that, because they are not within gated communities, are used by the public at large.

Residents on those streets pay to have private contractors maintain them, whether through homeowners' association fees or [SEE FORUM page 20]

## Measures R and X Tax Increases

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK  
Assistant Editor

The Orinda sales tax rate will increase by one-percent (1.0%) if voters approve ballot Measures R and X Nov. 3. Contra Costa County and the City of Orinda are each seeking a .5% increase, effective April 1, 2021, and both will have a 20-year life. A simple majority is required for each, and all proceeds will be deposited into the respective general funds.

During a presentation at the Aug. 4 City

Council meeting, Finance Director Paul Rankin described funding and essential services needs for "fire fuel reduction and emergency planning, critical drainage improvements and continued public road maintenance," and a "proposed dedicated position to coordinate emergency and disaster response."

According to an impartial analysis of Measure R, City Attorney Osa Wolff writes, the tax "could be used for any municipal governmental purpose," and "the Measure does not bind the city to use the proceeds [SEE TAXES page 10]

### IN THIS ISSUE

News	
Business	17, 28
Fire/Police	9, 12
MOFD Board Race	5
Orinda Mini Park	13
Around Town	
Clubs/Meetings	19, 23
Events	10, 11, 15, 19
Galleries	25, 26
Residents	11, 14, 15
Calendar	27
Car Time	27
Classifieds	20
Editorial/Letters	6
Everyday Orinda	12
Funny Side Up	21
The Orinda Association	3
The Reel Less Traveled	24
Seasoned Shopper	13

## OUSD Has More Homework to Reopen Schools

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Executive Editor

In October, the number of COVID-19 cases in Contra Costa County reduced enough to move the county into the less restrictive red tier, allowing some indoor businesses to open with modifications. While a cause for celebration, the new designation also brings with it a myriad of plans and decisions to be made, especially for school districts.

The extent of that work became clear at an Orinda Union School District (OUSD) meeting held Oct. 14. A follow-up meeting [SEE SCHOOLS page 14]

### Joe Rubay For State Assembly, District 16



Joe with his wife Cindy and daughters Alexa and Nathalie

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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President  
PUBLIC FORUM AND FIRE SAFETY



CARLOS BALTODANO

I hope you have taken time to vote in this very important election. Besides the Presidential election, there are many propositions as well as the selection of two City Council Members on the ballot. Three City Council candidates squared off in a Zoom Candidates' night Oct. 8. The forum, sponsored by the Orinda Association (OA), featured the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley asking questions previously sent to *The Orinda News*. The nonpartisan League of Women Voters took sole responsibility arranging and selecting questions and ensuring they were not made public before the event.

We would like to thank the three candidates (Darlene Gee, Latika Malkani and Inga Miller) for sharing their visions and thoughts. We would also like to thank the organizer of the forum, Cindy Powell, and Ann Flynn of the League for moderating, asking the questions and monitoring the time for each candidate. It was a very productive, civil and substantive discussion.

The forum was followed by a Firewise presentation from Craig Jorgens, Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) board member. We are very proud of and thankful to all the participants, and the residents who viewed the event in real time. The questions focused on Orinda's sales tax measure (Measure R), support or non-support of state-wide propositions, the city's budget, fire prevention, downtown planning and the candidate's top priorities for the community. You can view the broadcast on Contra

Costa Television (CCTV), public access Channel 26, and on the Orinda Association website [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org).

The ratification process for the MOFD fire Code was completed Sept. 22. This took into account amendments from Moraga and Orinda to the 2019 Edition of the California Fire Code and the 2018 International Fire Code. Every three years, the fire code, as well as building codes, are updated to address new technologies and hazards. Local amendments can be made to these national and state codes if reasonably necessary to respond to local climatic, geological and/or topographical conditions.

Stricter guidelines, to address exterior hazards exemplified by huge wildfires throughout the state, have been implemented to address these concerns. Building code elements of the new code took effect Oct. 7. Some requirements relate to sprinklers being required under eaves. In addition, there is a new requirement for a fire inspection as part of any real property transfer. These new abatement requirements, including the removal of Juniper and bamboo within 10' of a road, can be viewed at the MOFD website, [www.mofd.org](http://www.mofd.org). Other fuel reduction requirements remain unchanged, except the next enforcement date has been changed to May 31 rather than June 15, 2021.

Please accept our wishes for a safe and happy Thanksgiving!

*Carlos Baltodano can be reached at [cbalt ldc@comcast.net](mailto:cbalt ldc@comcast.net).*

The Proverbial "Pandemic" Box Forced Us to Think Outside of It

By KATE WILEY  
Contributing Writer

COVID-19 has affected us all in ways we don't yet recognize or understand. COVID today is such a part of our vernacular; it's used as a verb, the butt or essence of jokes. The pandemic would've been enough, but Californians also suffered through devastating wildfires, debilitating air quality and inconvenient PG&E outages. Everyone experienced challenges this year and we've had to navigate the best we could. Loss was a big one for many, including financial security and not just for individuals and businesses, but for nonprofits too. Like many of you, the needs



HORATIO JUNG  
The 2020 Classic Car Show became a Car Tour with both drivers and volunteers wearing masks as they toured the Lamorinda area.

and demands of those we care for became greater this year, incurring more expenses with less financial stability. Your support is needed more than ever.

Hundreds of studies are taking place on the human toll of these events, and not just the extreme of losing loved ones, but the emotional, life-altering daily toll due to shelter-in-place, fear of the unknown, isolation and physical distancing. I could go on about the devastating effects – loss of life, loss of livelihood, loss of how we traditionally celebrate rites of passage such as proms, graduations, weddings and births, but as with all change – good or bad, new opportunities open. Human beings are resilient and we adapt, we think outside the box, and become creative, finding solutions to new problems or developing new workarounds. Sometimes it opens up another part of us, such as our compassion, gratitude or clearer vision.

Organizations operate similar to humans; they experience loss, fear the unknown and forced to alter the way they conduct business. Nonprofits, including The Orinda Association (OA) and its Seniors Around

[SEE OA page 10]

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: 254-0800  
[www.OrindaAssociation.org](http://www.OrindaAssociation.org)

The Orinda Association  
P.O. Box 97  
Orinda, CA 94563

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MOFD CANDIDATES

Race for a Seat on the MOFD Board

By CHARLEEN EARLEY  
Editor-in-Chief

What started out as a two-party race dwindled down to a one-party, unchallenged race and later switched back to two candidates again. The seat for the Moraga-Orinda Fire District 5 (MOFD) Board of Directors has been anything but boring, and Orindans have their work cut out for them in deciding for whom to vote.

While many ballots have already been mailed, there are still a fair number of votes yet to be cast, and the two candidates, Sharon McGinnis Girdlestone and incumbent Craig Jorgens, still have lots to say.

Jorgens leans on his business and technical background:

“MOFD, a \$30 million-a-year organization, needs proven management experience on its community oversight board. My 33

years as a business executive and technical background allow me to provide seasoned advice to keep MOFD financially sound, technologically advanced and represent the interests of Orindans, not outside special interests,” said Jorgens, father of two grown daughters.

Girdlestone, a mom of two boys and local business owner, initially dropped out of the race, stating the day she filed her paperwork to run she received news her father-in-law was terminally ill.

“We are from the U.K. and considered going there for the next few months,” she said. “I changed my mind at the urging of members from our Lamorinda Diversity Group and Lamorinda Families Group.

“Friends on Nextdoor started to send me posts that talked about ‘GoFundMe’s’ for the MOFD incumbent’s campaign that FireWise Council of Orinda posted on his behalf,” she added. “I realized that this might not be the friendliest race. Some people were very, very passionate about the incumbent in their posts -- so much so, that they have been emailing me privately.”

Since then, it’s been full speed ahead for Girdlestone.

“I will work with the MOFD board, not against them,” she said, offering more details of what that means exactly:

“Ideally, I would support increasing the fire prevention expenditure. At the present time, due to COVID-19 and uncertainty in the economic future, I would be extremely cautious in allocating additional funds for any programs,” said Girdlestone. “Fire prevention should be the priority, and a thorough review of all funds should be done to determine if funds can be used for prevention. The district has been successful in receiving grant funds from the state as well as private sources, and those should be explored to the fullest extent possible.”

Jorgens endorses more spending on fire prevention as well: “I believe the MOFD should focus more spending on fire prevention, while still efficiently providing state-of-the-art fire and emergency medical services.” He added, “And significantly expanding the free chipper program I introduced a few years ago from a Lake Tahoe Fire District would be a good start.

“[MOFD should] continue to develop and implement the next generation of technology, such as satellite monitoring of fire zones, that can automatically trigger evacuations,” Jorgens continued. “I started this process five years ago in work our HOA did with UC Berkeley professor John Radke, whose grad students built fire burn simulation models for North Orinda and his colleagues built fire sensors that MOFD deployed in the Briones wildlands.”

Jorgens, a 28-year resident of North Orinda, was born and raised in Spokane, WA, and credits his parents for being a strong, positive influence in his life.

“They provided a robust example of strong moral character and of significant community involvement,” he said. “My father was the chairman of the local school board, while my mother was president of the PTA and both were scout leaders and leaders in other civic organizations.”

Girdlestone, an Orinda resident with close ties to the community, said good relationships are key to getting things done.

“I have no experience or training in firefighting, but I have great relationships with many of our Lamorinda Families Facebook group that I own; we have 6800 members in it and we do lots of charity stuff and have great discussions. We also have great relationships with our local fire district,” she said.

“After experiencing a close call just feet away from our home on El Toyonal a few months ago, not to mention our friends in Los Angeles losing homes to fire, I have a very high appreciation for the work that



Craig Jorgens

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

our fire district provides our community.

“In the history of MOFD, there has been one woman on the board,” she said. “I will bring a new perspective if I serve. I will also bring transparency, honesty and will work to bring the community together, not divide it.”

Jorgens relies on his firsthand experience and community service.

He said he’s given back to the community ever since he retired as president of a large multinational satellite company. He also stated he’s served the last four years on the Orinda Infrastructure Committee, which oversees spending on Orinda’s 100 miles of public roads.

“While there, I introduced new paving technology capable of doubling the life of Orinda’s repaved roads,” said Jorgens. “I am also the president of my HOA, where I oversee the fire prevention efforts on 200 acres of open space and manage the maintenance on three miles of private roads. I

[SEE MOFD page 16]



Sharon McGinnis Girdlestone

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**NO**  
on  
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**WRONG TAX**

- Measure R is a **road tax masquerading as fire prevention tax**  
It’s a General Tax, which the City can use as it wishes for 20 years
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EDITORIAL

# Editorial

## Is There a Free Press in Orinda?

This was a question posed (and in some cases answered in the negative) in early October via Nextdoor. The ensuing discussion surrounded the placement of an ad in our October issue. With the Yes on Measure R ad in the front of the paper and the No on Measure R ad further back, it was concluded *The Orinda News* and, in particular, the editor had a secret agenda.

Sorry to disappoint the conspiracy theorists, but there was no payoff, no collusion.

The two ads should have been placed close to each other or, possibly, on facing pages. Unfortunately, this did not happen, and we missed the oversight during editing.

While *The Orinda News* is under no obligation to put opposing ads in similar locations, it has always been the policy to do so. Advertisers may request a specific placement, which we will try to accommodate. Or an advertiser may pay extra to have an ad on the front page (size limitations apply). Neither request was made by the folks placing the No on Measure R ad. Once the

October issue was published and mailed, the placement of the No on Measure R ad was brought to my attention. I immediately apologized to the group and promised better placement in our November issue.

We at *The Orinda News* work very hard to be impartial and objective in our stories and in our ad placements. Those of you who have submitted one-sided stories or vindictive ads know this to be true. During my 27 years with *The Orinda News*, I've refused to endorse one candidate over another or support any measure or proposition on the ballot. I feel strongly that our job is to present the facts and let our intelligent readers make up their own minds. As one respondent to the Nextdoor discussion said, "If *The Orinda News* was really trying to influence its readers to oppose your positions on private roads and Measure R, would it have printed over the past two years the many, many letters to the editor your group has submitted to them on these topics?"

Why indeed!

— Sally Hogarty, Executive Editor

## Letters to the Editor

### Re-elect Jorgens for MOFD

I support Craig Jorgens' re-election as Director of MOFD from North Orinda. As a professor and one of the founding members of the Center for Catastrophic Risk Management at UC Berkeley, I specialize in research that models the impacts of extreme weather events (such as fire storms) on our California landscape and built infrastructure.

I first met Craig over four years ago when my research team identified and used his Home Owners Association (HOA) in North Orinda as a test site for a wildland urban interface wildfire modeling system that we were developing. We chose Craig's HOA as he understood that one of the main steps to armoring a community against a firestorm was proactively managing the vegetated landscape.

Craig has been instrumental in developing Orinda's fire prevention efforts to reduce our risk of a catastrophic firestorm. He identified our community's needs and initiated the Free Wood Chipper program and voted to continuously fund it on the MOFD Board.

Craig fully understands that wildfires can only be controlled through prevention and not just suppression. Please vote to re-elect Craig Jorgens for MOFD Board.

— John Radke

### Re-elect Darleen Gee

When Darleen Gee called me four years ago to ask if I'd endorse her candidacy for the Orinda City Council, my immediate

response was "of course."

It was such an obvious choice on her part – and for the voters. Having known Darleen for over 20 years, I have no hesitation in throwing my full support behind her.

Her professional experience as a civil engineer coupled with her civic service on behalf of all Orindans make her the logical choice then and now. Her work on the council these past four years has shown what her friends have known all along.

Darleen is a smart, hard-working and a thoughtful decision-maker; she does her homework, asks the right questions and seeks to find common ground – all of which are the very attributes we need in civic leadership today.

Please join me in voting to re-elect Darleen Gee to the Orinda City Council.

— Pat Rudebusch

### Re-elect Jorgens to MOFD Board

We need Craig Jorgens to remain on the Board of the Moraga Orinda Fire District.

Craig understands that MOFD needs to serve the needs of Orinda and Moraga, including emergency medical response, fighting fires and reducing our exposure to wildfires.

Craig has a deep commitment to making our town more resilient to a wildfire. He understands the huge potential of new technology and has the right tech skills to understand how high tech can detect a fire and warn us. Craig used similar skills in his previous service on the Orinda Citizens In-



## List of *The Orinda News* Advertisers

	Page		Page
<b>Arts</b>		<b>Professional Service</b>	
Christian Ehrhorn Fine Arts	25	5A Rent-A-Space	19
<b>Automotive</b>		Green Sheds	15
Mash Gas and Food	1	Park Place Wealth Advisors	17
Orinda Motors	7	Professional Property Management	18
Orinda Shell Auto Care	28	Recycle Smart	26
<b>Beauty and Fitness</b>		State Farm, Kelly Sopak	10
CoreKinetics	24	<b>Real Estate</b>	
Nancy Henderson Personal Training	17	AG Realty	
Living Lean Exercise & Eating Program	17	The Gailas Team	3
<b>Cleaning Services</b>		Coldwell Banker	
Kirby Carpet Cleaning	22	Laura Abrams	15
<b>Dental</b>		Suzanne Toner Geoffrion	25
Dr. Mary Smith DDS	27	Shellie Kirby	24
<b>Educational</b>		Sotheby's	
Orinda Academy	24	Ann Newton Cane	27
Orinda Parks & Rec	28	Village Associates	
TC Tutoring	16	Shannon Conner	10
<b>Elections</b>		Dexter Honens II	23
Darleen Gee for Orinda City Council	13	April Matthews	9
Inga Miller for Orinda City Council	12	Murphy Team - Karen & Hilary Murphy	18
Orindans for Fair Road Funding	5	Ann Sharf	21
Joe Rubay for State Assembly	1	Clark Thompson	8
Safer Orinda Yes on R	11	Village Associates	2
Wilder Residents	9	<b>Restaurants/Catering</b>	
<b>Garden/Landscaping</b>		Baan Thai	20
McDonnell Nursery	4, 20	Casa Orinda	8
Tree Sculpture	21	Farmers' Market	18
<b>Medical</b>		Siam Orchid	23
Dr. Brian Clark, Psy.D.	14	Zamboni's Pizza Company	19
Medicine Shoppe	19	<b>Retail</b>	
United Healthcare - Elizabeth Colantoni	14	McCaulou's	22
<b>Nonprofits</b>		Morrison's Jewelers	4
The Orinda Association	3	Orinda Books	4
		Rechic	4

frastructure Oversight Commission, where he identified the potential of a new paving technique – full depth recycling – and led the city to adopt it, achieving both improved durability and reduced costs.

Craig is also a businessman who understands the need for clear objectives and financial/managerial reporting to ensure that they are met. On the MOFD Board, he identified major errors in accounting that have been corrected and has been a force for finding better ways for the district to achieve its goals.

Craig is exactly the representative we need on the MOFD Board. Please join me

in voting for Jorgens.

— Richard Nelson

### Why I Can't Vote for Measure R

Some local businesses and individuals are becoming insolvent. I refuse to vote their money right now into the Measure R tax increase, especially for this uncommitted-purpose general tax, in view of Orinda's ongoing course of unnecessary projects and numerous past projects completed with deficiencies or cost overruns during my 26 years living in Orinda.

Ironically, critical fire risk reduction [SEE LETTERS page 7]

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Letters to the Editor are printed on a space-available basis and should be no longer than 400 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](mailto:editor@theorindanews.com). Letters to Editor for the December issue are due Nov. 8.

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LETTERS

◆ LETTERS from page 6

escalation appears to me as being unnecessarily held back and used as bait to scare voters to pass this tax increase, with only a small portion of which is presently slated for fire. If the City Council were appropriately concerned, they would be using present revenues to step up fuel reduction right now. The city's general fund has grown by approximately 55%, to over \$10 million during the past four years and there is adequate existing money for urgently needed fuel reduction. For future fire needs, the city was urged repeatedly to float a fire-specific parcel tax, but they vehemently refused. Trickery and delay have no place when life safety is concerned.

Thirdly, the plan is to use most of the proceeds of the tax increase for public roads and drainage, based on a fragmented and incomplete plan. This plan is without data for most large drainage structures on private properties into which the city concentrates and channels water. The present plan continues to rely on select, unfortunate private residents – even some living on public roads – to individually shoulder the brutally concentrated cost of accepting the publicly collected concentrated water channeled through their properties. I find this selective forced subsidization by unluckily situated individuals unfair. I won't vote for any infrastructure tax until the city finalizes a drainage plan that includes private roads and other private drains through which the city is unfairly discharging publicly collected water into, without an easement.

We are in an economic crisis for some, and need to step back and help save our local businesses and unemployed residents. A business closed for nine months or running at 25% capacity, it takes years to recover. It is selfish for the city to callously barrel ahead with an aggressive tax increase, which in combination with the added increase if Measure X passes, will

be devastating to the less fortunate of us right now. Please vote no on R.

– Barbara Sacks

**Yes on Measure R**

When we moved to Orinda in 1973, it was not long after the county had completed restoring Camino Sobrante around the north side of Lake Cascade. That piece of road was neglected for the next 40 years! From a smooth roadway, it became something to avoid and that's the history of just one of the nearby roads that declined during those 40 years. I'm supporting Measure R this November because we really cannot let Orinda's infrastructure decline like this for the next 40 years.

– Ronald W Phelon

**Why I Oppose Measure R**

I oppose Measure R for many reasons, but foremost is my distrust of our city government. I have observed our councils for nearly 30 years. I have the following observations.

The councils always use "spin" to influence voting. A transparent government should not use marketing techniques. Using our fear of wildfire, should not be the means to pass a general tax that will be used predominantly on public storm drains.

The council does not ask the citizen's preference. Although the polling did consider extending the current ½ cent tax for only 10 years, someone decided to double it to one-cent for 20 years with no justification or explanation beyond - we think we need it.

The council does not hold meetings where dialog is allowed, to hear the citizens desires and explain the issues. Democracy requires all voices to be heard. Instead, the citizens are limited to a three-minute speech and questions raised are not answered. They thank you and move on.

There is usually no discussion or objections to flawed or questionable assertions in

a staff report, because council never challenges staff and the public comment precedes staff assertions. Even when citizens make reasonable alternative suggestions, these are not discussed. They are simply ignored as though never made.

Despite current "assurances," future councils over the next 20 years may choose to spend Measure R funds in ways we do not want. Past councils have spent our money on a variety of non-essential expensive projects at the expense of fuel reduction. Future ones will too, unless we prevent them. The current ½ cent sales tax does not expire until 2023 and the city could use these funds to provide fuel reduction and necessary infrastructure repairs for the next two years.

MOFD should do more too. The reserve fund has \$10 million and has increased by \$1 million for the last four years.

I am unwilling to make a 20-year commitment during a pandemic whose economic consequences are not yet known. Had the council proposed shorter taxes that could only be spent for specific purposes, I would have supported them. I summarize with – it's the wrong tax at the wrong time.

– Charles Porges

**Orinda Residents Should Vote Yes on Measure R**

My young family lives in the Orinda hills and each morning that I drive these windy roads with my two preschool aged children, I am reminded what dire need we are of increased fire mitigation to keep all of our families safe.

Wildfire prevention is urgently needed now more than ever because of years of growth buildup and Orinda's all-time high risk of fire danger. Measure R will devote the needed funds to fire fuel reduction, including an expanded chipper program and cleanup of overhanging branches and trees that endanger evacuation routes.

All Orinda residents will benefit from the

funds, including those on private roads. I've seen the terrifying pictures of other fires where trees fell and blocked roads and with these needed upgrades to keep our roads clear from unnecessary brush, we can avoid that disaster in our community.

For our families, our young children and the future of Orinda, let's vote yes on Measure R, providing badly needed funding for fuel reduction along roads and other measures to improve our chances of surviving a wildfire. Please, vote yes to help keep Orinda safe!

– Betsy Ream

**Measure R is Not What it is Being Sold As**

Measure R is a road maintenance tax, sold as a fire prevention tax. The city's plan is to ultimately spend 80-90% of this tax's proceeds to maintain Orinda's roads and storm drains. In the first four years, out of \$10 million in tax revenues, the city plans to only spend \$1.5-3 million on fire prevention. After that, even less!

At this time, in the middle of the worst pandemic in a century, along with the accompanying financial disruption, it is not prudent to embark upon a new 20-year, \$60 million tax plan. The existing sales tax is still effective for an additional two years. It is not expiring immediately as some claim. The existing \$1.2 million per year is twice what the city plans to spend on fire prevention. Additionally, there is another \$2 million available to the city from other taxes and fees, for critical road and storm drain repairs over the next two years.

Now is not the time to initiate a new 1% sales tax, which will be in effect for 20 years. We need a tax dedicated to fire prevention, which can significantly reduce the fuel load from our hills. A \$150 parcel tax would generate over \$1 million a year; twice what the city was going to spend from

[SEE LETTERS page 8]



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## LETTERS

## ◆ LETTERS from page 7

the sales tax. Also, the city would legally be required to spend it on fuel reduction.

It is far more judicious to invest in a short-term tax of three to five years. At that point, when COVID-19 and its economic effect have hopefully subsided, we can once again reevaluate the most crucial needs of the city. Many things change in 20 years and it is shortsighted to be locked into a long-term tax with little flexibility for future needs. Vote no on Measure R.

– Joan Daoro

**Keep Orinda Safe**

As I write this early in the second week of September, the midday sky is a scary orange and I can't see our neighbors' houses just a couple of hundred yards away. This is all due, of course, to the fires raging throughout Northern California. This scene is likely to repeat.

Orinda's Measure R is designed, in part, to do something by way of wildfire prevention. It is imperative that we come together as a community now to take action to alleviate the serious threat wildfires pose to all of us.

I'm sure the residents of Paradise would tell us that a small sales tax increase for wild fire prevention is something they wish they could have had an opportunity to pay a couple of years ago.

Let's not dither over the details.

Please vote yes on Measure R to help keep Orinda safe.

– Bill Judge

**Vote No on Measure R**

Despite the fact that the city council cannot legally say how the \$60 million – that would be raised by the Measure R 'general' sales tax over the next 20 years – will be spent, at a recent candidate forum, one city council member actually stated that this revenue will in fact be 'front-loaded' toward fire prevention and mitigation. This, despite the city's own 'Needs Report' showing that the vast majority of the funds would be used for purposes other than fire safety – which 'Needs Report' this candidate actually termed "misinformation" at the candidate forum!

The Measure R sales tax measure is placed on the ballot as a "general" tax; as such, it would only need a majority vote for approval. The Measure R sales tax, which would double the sales tax rate and live on

for 20 years, had been masquerading as a fire safety measure, but all along, has also been masquerading as a "general tax."

Not only has the city council apparently changed its collective mind on use of funds, but also any statement making this changed plan publicly known, will once again run counter to this tax being a "general tax."

I hope the city council, and all subsequent city councils over the next 20 years, don't change their minds once again, when what is needed right now is a true fire safety tax that all Orindans can count on.

What the city is asking for is a 20-year year blank check so that it, or a subsequently elected city council, can decide that some other use of your money is more important.

When it comes to the city council's real intentions, note that it has been almost 30 years since the Oakland/Berkeley hills firestorm, and the city has spent virtually nothing on fire safety or fire preparedness during this period. Actions, or lack thereof, speak louder than spoken and changing intentions.

I am voting no on Measure R and I am asking you to do the same.

The city does not need this new, doubled 20-year sales tax right now – in the middle of the worst pandemic in a century with unknown economic repercussions – especially since the city currently has a multi-million dollar fund on hand and our present sales tax, currently generating revenue, doesn't expire until March 2023. This is the wrong tax at the wrong time. Vote no on Measure R.

– Bob Finch

**Join Me in Voting Yes on R**

My family has lived in Orinda since the 1970s, and the weather today is much different than it was at that time. Summers were cooler and foggier; rain started earlier and lasted longer. Now we are faced with hotter and drier conditions and consequently, much longer fire seasons.

We need to invest in preventing fires by dealing with our excessive fuel loads. Measure R will give us the resources to improve our wildfire safety; it will provide funds to reduce flammable vegetation, to create firebreaks, and to ensure safe evacuation routes.

Measure R also will provide funds to repair our aging storm drains (remember the Miner Road sinkhole?) as well as to maintain our roads. In just a few years,

Orinda has successfully upgraded the condition of our roads. The city council has demonstrated its ability to use funds wisely and to get the job done.

We must protect this well managed investment by providing funds to maintain the roads we just repaired. Please join me in voting yes on Measure R.

– Joyce Hawkins

**Show Me the Plan**

The 20-year Measure R sales tax is a "general" tax, meaning allocation of the \$60 million dollars accrued over the next 20 years from this tax will be used at the discretion of the city council. This is a doubling of the previous general tax, which is still good for two more years – so my first question is, why do we need this tax this year?

Something about this tax does not smell right to me.

While our Orinda City Council has the possibility of a complete changing of the guard every two years, we in fact have a few entrenched members who have to-date, allocated almost no significant funds to fire prevention. This, in spite of a "heads up" from the Oakland fire 29 years ago, and of the fact that over a decade ago CalFire designated a major portion of Orinda a very high fire hazard severity zone. We are breathing the smoke from fires burning in areas not different from ours.

The obvious (and kindest) answer to "why this year" is that money is needed to initiate fire prevention measures. So why didn't the council start eight years ago when we voted in a general sales tax, or three years ago when the Tubbs fire killed 22, or two years ago when the Camp fire killed 86, or at the beginning of the summer when MOFD discontinued the chipper program, using the \$100,000 per month, the existing sales tax generates? The city can use this tax for whatever it feels most important, such as roads, storm drain maintenance or fire safety measures. In spite of clear warnings and smoke from current fires nearby, our city council has spent virtually none of this tax (we all pay) on fire safety.

There is no guarantee, no transparency of intent and especially no history showing us that doubling the sales tax will be spent in any particular area, much less fire safety.

I am voting No on the Measure R sales tax this year.

– Rose Anne Critchfield

**Vote Yes on R**

The fire danger in Orinda is real. Already millions of acres in California have burned, lives ruined and lost and property destroyed. And it's only the beginning of the fire season.

Measure R is a one-half cent sales tax increase to one cent (25-cents on a \$50 purchase) to continue the much needed fire risk reduction, street maintenance and preparation for emergencies and disasters. Food and medicine are exempt.

Fire risk increases home insurance premiums and could even make fire insurance unavailable.

We all recall the terrible fire that destroyed homes and property just over the hill in Oakland. Don't let that happen here. Vote yes on R.

– Jack D. Wickware

**Please Vote No on Measure R**

We strongly urge our fellow Orinda residents to vote no on Measure R.

This sales tax would be right in the middle of this current pandemic and a likely longer term of an economic downturn and recession. People are losing their jobs and struggling to pay their bills and local businesses are facing grave uncertainties. Any sales tax should be limited to only the very critical and important need.

Measure R is not a fire prevention tax. It is proposed as one, but Measure R covers wildfire risk reduction, emergency preparedness, storm drain repair, road maintenance and other city services. And there's no clear spending plan.

Furthermore, the city's 20/21 budget shows a reserve of \$10.5 million, including \$3.5 million in unspent sales tax revenue and only \$500,000 for fire prevention, unless we vote to double the sales tax revenue to \$2.4 million through Measure R.

The city can and should do a better job of developing a more meaningful spending plan of its current resources to allocate needed resources for fire prevention.

Orinda passed a sales tax in 2012 that expires in 2023. Measure R would extend it to 2041 and double it. And guess what? There will be no voter review as to how the money is being spent.

– Rupa and Sunder Joshi

**Yes on Measure R**

I am writing to say that my husband and myself are in favor of Measure R. It is a modest sales tax (1%) that will do so much for Orinda. It renews the expiring sales tax used to repair the roads and adds another 1/2 cent.

This sales tax will do many things for Orinda. It will help to maintain the roads now that they are repaired, improve wildfire safety for the first few years by controlling brush and vegetation growth, and also it is slated to repair aging storm drains to prevent flooding and sinkholes.

The sales tax does not occur on groceries and medicine, so it reduces the burden on residents on fixed incomes.

Please join us in supporting Measure R. It will be used for making Orinda safer, which is something all of us can get behind.

–Bob and Cheri Etheredge

**Vote Yes on Measure R!**

Please join me in supporting this essential ballot measure and providing for a safer Orinda. Just eight years ago, Orinda voters

[SEE LETTERS page 9]



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## LETTERS / POLICE

## ◆ LETTERS from page 8

approved a modest increase in the sales tax rate to fund repairs to Orinda's deteriorating roads. This critical funding source has helped complete road improvements on time and on budget, but is set to expire.

Measure R renews the expiring voter-approved sales tax and increases the rate by a half cent (50¢ on a \$100 purchase) to provide locally-controlled funding for local needs to include: improving wildfire safety by controlling hazardous brush and vegetation throughout Orinda; and protecting neighborhoods, schools, fire stations, roads and bridges from wildfire by maintaining defensible space.

It also repairs aging and collapsing storm drains to prevent flooding, sinkholes and maintain safe evacuation routes. It improves disaster preparedness by enhancing emergency communications, early alerts and evacuation planning, as well as maintaining roads to minimize future costly repair.

This very modest tax is incredibly valuable in ensuring the safety of our community. Please vote YES on Measure R!

– Dean Orr

## Yes on Measure R

As a member of the Board of Directors of the Contra Costa Taxpayers Association, I pay a lot of attention when a sales tax increase is on the ballot. So when I heard that Orinda wants to increase the city sales tax from a half-cent to one cent, I did research.

I learned that Richmond and Antioch already have a one-cent sales tax. So does Moraga where many Orinda residents go to shop at TJ Maxx, and to the nursery and the hardware stores.

The cities that have kept a one-half cent sales tax are the cities with lots of retail shopping centers, unlike Orinda. I learned that Orinda receives the sales tax income when an Orinda resident buys a car, even though the car dealership is located outside of Orinda.

It only makes sense to keep that sales tax inside Orinda, where it can be put to use improving our storm drains, enhancing fire safety and keeping our local roads repaired.

I think Orindans know best when it comes to tax issues impacting Orinda, and I am voting yes on Measure R for a safer Orinda.

– Joe Fitzpatrick

## Measure R and MOFD Election!

I have personally seen the destruction of wildfires in California. The melted pools of metal of all that remain of a car, bottles of wine exploded and shattered on a leveled suburban plot in Coffey Park, the remnants of a wedding celebration interrupted by wild fire, the coroner's van parked at a pile of ashes that was once a home and workers sifting through the ashes tragically looking for bone fragments, the remains of a resident who could not flee the advancing wild fires.

I had an awakening as a journalist as I photographed the devastation and it came home to me that these disasters could happen to my family and me. I quickly became active in our neighborhood Firewise organization, attended city council meetings, and became immersed in the world of MOFD when I heard our fire chief articulate the issues of wildfire in Orinda. What a rude awakening.

We Orindans need to choose wisely in this upcoming election; we need to be seriously informed. I am supporting yes on Measure R and the MOFD incumbents Craig Jorgens and John Jex for the board.

John and Craig have fought for the interests of homeowners and residents. They both supported the summer chipper

program, while three of the other MOFD board members voted no, quashing this important program to eradicate dangerous fuel load. These other board members also voted no to increasing the fire prevention budget despite a surplus of money.

We love our first responders, and we need community members and supporters of wildfire prevention like Craig and John who also have experience reading sophisticated MOFD balance sheets to make sure more funds go to fire prevention now!

I believe that a yes vote on Measure R will make funds flow quickly for fuel mitigation in Orinda. A half-cent more on a purchase is worth knowing that my family is safer today than we were last week.

This is a critical election for Orinda and Moraga wildfire safety. Let's keep our community safe and vote as if our lives depend on it.

– Ken Light

## Measure R is NOT a Road Tax

Measure R is a general tax and by law, cannot be specified. The plan stated by the city council and the campaign literature numerous times, which by law can state the intended use, is to front-load fire prevention for the first five years, keeping road and storm drain work to a minimum. As the need for roadwork increases and the need for heavy-duty fire prevention decreases, priorities would be rebalanced. We have written assurances from Mayor Gee and Councilmember Fay and support from the other council members. A citizen oversight committee will ensure the revenue is spent as intended. The opposition doesn't acknowledge this critical fact. Check out saferorinda.org to read how the tax will be used.

As we see, breathe and read every day, wildfire is an increasing threat. As a result the homeowner's insurance market is collapsing. Insurance companies are looking at entire neighborhoods and towns. And they are looking at the infrastructure to determine the potential for wildfire survival. Measure R is actually an integrated fire prevention plan that will give us some ability to fight back against the insurance companies.

There are two opposing groups to Measure R: the no-tax people and the private roads people. I cannot comment on the no-tax people's position. I have spoken with the private road people extensively. They want a 5-year parcel tax, which would raise just over \$1 million per year, resulting in less work in the early years than the sales tax can accomplish and provides no ongoing revenue to maintain the initial fuel reduction. A special election would be required at an extra cost to the city. Because property taxes are collected and distributed

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## POLICE BLOTTER

September 13 through October 10

## Calls for Service

911 Hangup: 19 incidents  
Accident Property: 4 incidents  
Alarm False: 63 incidents  
Burglary, Commercial: 3 incidents  
Burglary, Residential: 2 incidents  
COVID-19 Violation: 1 incident  
Disturbance Domestic: 2 incidents  
Disturbing the Peace: 2 incidents  
Evading an Officer: 1 incident  
Failure to Obey: 2 incidents  
Fire/EMS Response: 1 incident  
Firearms Response: 1 incident  
Fireworks: 1 incident  
Grand Theft: 5 incidents  
Harassment: 6 incidents  
Hit & Run Misdemeanor: 2 incidents  
Identity Theft: 3 incidents  
Juvenile Disturbance: 1 incident  
Litter: 1 incident  
Loud Music: 2 incidents  
Loud Noise: 2 incidents  
Loud Party: 3 incidents  
Medical Hospital: 4 incidents  
Mentally Ill Commit: 3 incidents  
Neighbor Dispute: 1 incident  
Ordinance Violation: 6 incidents  
Outside Assist: 25 incidents  
Panhandling: 2 incidents

Patrol Request: 41 incidents  
Petty Theft from Vehicle: 1 incident  
Phone Harassment: 1 incident  
Possession of Dangerous Drugs: 1 incident  
Public Assembly Check: 11 incidents  
Public Nuisance: 4 incidents  
Reckless Driving: 8 incidents  
Revoked License: 1 incident  
Security Check: 75 incidents  
Service to Citizen: 114 incidents  
Shots Heard: 1 incident  
Tow: 2 incidents  
Traffic Hazard: 9 incidents  
Unauthorized Possession: 1 incident  
Vandalism: 2 incidents  
Vehicle Theft: 2 incidents  
Verbal Dispute: 3 incidents  
Walk Through: 14 incidents  
Welfare Check: 14 incidents

## Arrest

Warrant Arrest: 3 arrests

– Compiled by David Dierks  
Assistant Editor

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

periodically, that money won't show up until December 2021 at the earliest. Why go to all this extra trouble when this general tax would be more comprehensive, raise more money and make it available faster?

The private road people know very well that a general tax cannot be specified; yet they insist on calling it a road tax. They have attended all the city council meetings when the intended purpose of the tax was

stated. They say they cannot trust the city council, but the half percent general tax we currently have has been spent on roads, exactly as the city council promised.

– Melanie Light

## Vote Yes on Measure R

There seems to be some misunderstanding regarding Measure R on your ballot [SEE LETTERS page 18]

## Wilder Residents are Orindans Too

95% of Wilder residents oppose the commercial facility at 1 Wilder

City staff recommended and the Planning Commission voted against residents wishes

Looking forward to City Council's support at appeal!

## GIVING TUESDAY

## ◆ OA from page 3

Town program, also experienced loss. We experienced loss of revenue sources and freedom to provide services and events that we have in the past, but we never lost sight of our mission and purpose.

Everything we do, such as create and print *The Orinda News*, organize and execute the July 4<sup>th</sup> parade, host public forums, provide free transportation for seniors, collaborate with our community partnerships on the Classic Car Show and celebrate Orinda volunteers, involves masses of people participating, planning and gathering. They all require what we can't do right now; bring people physically together in planning and celebration. So we adapted, we thought outside the box; we made it work and we hope for good results.

The first major event impacted was our annual Citizen of the Year and Wm. Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Awards dinner. How do you adequately celebrate the achievements of individuals' unselfish works when we can't publicly acknowledge and give thanks to them? We still have to figure this out, but for now, it's postponed.

Another major event was our July 4<sup>th</sup> parade. The OA Board had to cancel the parade and activities, and this would have been year 37. The committee tried to get the community to celebrate together – but apart. It was creative, just not the same. We'll be back even stronger in 2021, The Orinda Association's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

The third major event impacted was the Orinda Classic Car Show in partnership with Orinda Motors, which is the annual fundraiser for Seniors Around Town and other local nonprofits. The dedication of Bill Waterman, Diane Lautz, John Vanek of Orinda Motors and the entire car show committee made it a safe, community fundraiser. They thought outside the box and created the first Orinda Classic Car Tour, livestreaming the event, capturing

the essence of attending the tour in person, talking with the car owners, hearing their stories, learning their sources, connecting with a shared passion for automobiles. Attended in person by close to 100 drivers, virtually seen by hundreds, with potential to be shared by thousands on YouTube. We will be back Sept. 18, 2021.

The Volunteer Center and *The Orinda News* remained open Monday-Friday as an in-person community contact, continued publishing and mailing the newspaper, albeit working from home, in the office and through countless Zoom meetings. We all became more tech-savvy!

Public forums will be livestreamed this year, maybe reaching more citizens than the traditional town hall in person style. We will be back in 2021.

Seniors Around Town had to temporarily suspend its transportation for seniors program, but immediately adapted and replaced it with one providing grocery and errand shopping with home delivery and reassurance calls connecting seniors with a friendly voice to help reduce isolation and depression. The Volunteer Emergency Support Program (VESP) was also created, staffed and mobilized. Meeting the needs of 70 seniors, providing more than 275 volunteer hours. Transportation services resumed in June, with shopping service and reassurance calls continuing on now through wildfire season.

This holiday season there are more people in need everywhere. Find the organization that touches your heart and give generously. These nonprofits did not stop doing their good works during the pandemic, in some cases they risked their lives to continue serving or they adapted as needed and worked even harder to meet their constituents' needs. We didn't go away, in many ways we got better.

*Kate Wiley can be reached at [oa@orindaassociation.org](mailto:oa@orindaassociation.org).*

## Holiday Season Kicks Off with GivingTuesday, December 1

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK  
Assistant Editor

It started as a simple idea, choosing a dedicated day to encourage people to do good. Created in 2012, GivingTuesday, observed the Tuesday following Thanksgiving Day, has grown into an annual, global day of charitable giving. Circle Dec. 1 to help a neighbor, make someone smile or support charities of your choice with financial contributions.

If charity begins at home, look no further than Orinda and/or to charitable organizations which serve this community. Local nonprofits serve our seniors, support the arts, clean the creeks and maintain public open spaces. A few of the familiar, perfect targets for your generosity, include Friends of Orinda Creeks, Friends of the Orinda Library, Lamorinda Arts Council, Mindful Littles, Orinda Starlight Village Players, The Orinda Association, The Orinda Community Foundation, The Orinda Park and Recreation Foundation and the Food Bank of Contra Costa Solano.

Consider in-store or online purchases from local, family-owned businesses and



KATHY ENZERINK  
Lending a helping hand, sixth grader **Luke Keevey** comes to the rescue of **Joana Muriel**, who was trying to navigate opening the door at Sanvitalia.

take-out or dine-in meals at Orinda restaurants. Generous tipping will bring an instant smile as will buying a little something extra to support our retailers. Buying gift certificates and donating to local GoFundMe accounts are alternative GivingTuesday ideas.

Hold a door open for someone. Give a wave of thanks to drivers as you cross the street. Buy a bouquet of flowers, then give one stem each to strangers until they're given out. Everyone has something to give.

*Kathy Enzerink can be reached at [kathy@theorindanews.com](mailto:kathy@theorindanews.com)*

### ◆ TAXES from page 1

for any particular city services, facilities, or programs."

Proponents and opponents of Measure R have spent several thousand dollars urging voter support. Some hot-topic points-of-view from campaign advertising and social media outlets include the following:

#### Vote YES on Measure R:

It will double annual revenue to \$2.4 million dollars.

It will improve wildfire safety and maintain defensible space.

It will maintain safe emergency evacuation routes.

It promotes long-term planning with 20-year tax rate.

It exempts groceries and prescription drugs from the tax increase.

Its flexibility allows the community to steer funds where needed most.

Its strict, fiscal accountability can be confirmed by Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission.

#### Vote NO on Measure R:

It's vague – the sales tax revenue goes to the General Fund, not a specific purpose.

Its alternative could be a 5-year parcel tax generating \$1.1 million per year, dedicated to fire prevention.

It is "a road tax masquerading as fire prevention tax."

It does not include privately-maintained public roads and storm drains.

It adds a half-cent sales tax to what's already in effect until April 2023.

It's a tax increase slated to be in effect for 20 years.

It's the wrong time to double a sales tax in the middle of a pandemic.

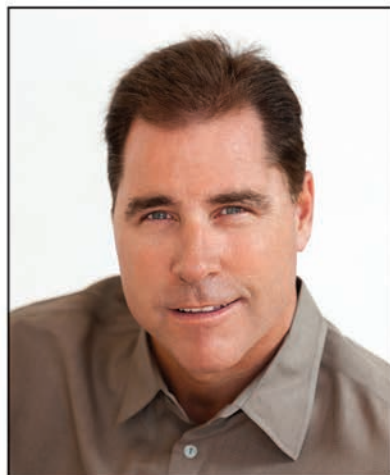
If Measure R does not glean a simple majority of votes Nov. 3, the existing .5% City sales tax remains in effect until April 2023, and a new or revised proposal can be placed on the November 2022 ballot to become effective when the current rate expires. The same scenario applies to Measure X, the Contra Costa County .5% sales tax increase proposal.

Mail-in ballots must be postmarked no later than Nov. 3, or may be deposited 24/7 in the ballot box in front of City Hall at 22 Orinda Way.

*Kathy Enzerink can be reached at [kathy@theorindanews.com](mailto:kathy@theorindanews.com)*

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CITY MANGER / VETERANS

# Third Time is the Charm for Retiring City Manager Steve Salomon

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Executive Editor

The old adage “the third time is the charm” certainly applies to Orinda City Manager Steve Salomon, who announced his retirement effective Jan. 7, 2021.

This is not Salomon’s first retirement. In September 2013, after serving the City of Visalia for 17 years, Salomon retired and planned on some quality time with his wife Kathy. In November, however, he went to work for a consulting firm. In 2015, he once again retired.

“I didn’t intend to work anymore but a year later, the City of Benicia asked me to be its interim city manager and I accepted,” said Salomon.



SALLY HOGARTY

Orinda’s City Manager **Steve Salomon** has resigned effective Jan. 7, 2021. The search for a new city manager will soon begin.

As his position in Benicia was coming to an end, Salomon received a job offer as Orinda’s interim city manager. With the experienced Salomon in place, the City began an extensive search for a permanent city manager. The search, conducted by Peckham and McKenney, did not yield a candidate as strong as Salomon and in

2017, the City Council made him the official city manager.

“I have enjoyed working with the Orinda community. Residents are very involved and people care a great deal about this place,” said Salomon. “Orinda also has a high quality of political volunteers. You don’t find that in many places where the city council, the various committees and the school board, who are all volunteers, give so much and are so knowledgeable.”

Salomon also praised city staff for hard work on such projects as the Miner Rd. sinkhole, the Art and Garden Center, Wilder Fields, road improvements and the Parks and Rec program.

“Our Parks and Rec Department was working at the highest level in the history of the city when COVID-19 hit. It’s been a challenge for all our staff, but morale is high and turnover remains low,” Salomon said.

In August, Salomon announced his retirement for the third time. Hopefully, the third time is really the charm for this public servant of more than 45 years.

“Steve Salomon is one of the most outstanding public managers in California. Orinda was so fortunate to have received the benefits of his tremendous experience, perspective and talents during his tenure here. It was an honor and a joy to work with him,” said former Mayor and current Orinda Vice-Mayor Amy Worth.

Salomon looks forward to spending more time with his three adult children and three grandchildren, soon to be four. He’s also ready to do a lot more hiking, biking and kayaking with his wife. The two hope to include more traveling in the future.

*Sally Hogarty can be reached at [sally@theorindanews.com](mailto:sally@theorindanews.com).*



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

(L-R) **Nancy Boren, Mary Carrillo, Vanessa Crews** and **Terry Lucido**, members of the Acalanes Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), will coordinate the Wreaths Across America Ceremony at the Lafayette Cemetery on Dec. 19, honoring 290 veterans buried there.

# Acalanes DAR Chapter Places Wreaths on Veteran Graves

By TERRY LUCIDO  
Contributing Writer

Each year millions of Americans come together to remember the fallen, honor those who serve and their families and teach the next generation about the value of freedom. This gathering of volunteers and patriots takes place in local and national cemeteries in all 50 states – most recently as – part of National Wreaths Across America Day.

There are 290 veterans buried in the historic Lafayette Cemetery, and this is the first year the cemetery has participated in the National Wreaths Across America Day. Local members of the Acalanes

Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) are raising funds to place a wreath on each veteran’s headstone. To sponsor a wreath, or to donate, please visit: [www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org/CA0565](http://www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org/CA0565).

Mary Carrillo, Orinda resident and regent of the Acalanes DAR Chapter explained, “We are coordinating with the local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8063 (VFW) to have a color guard and bugler at the ceremony. Our members and volunteers will place a wreath on each veteran’s headstone, with each veteran’s name said out loud. Please help us place wreaths on all 290 gravesites by sponsoring a wreath at just \$15 each.”

[SEE DAR page 21]

# DON'T PLAY WITH FIRE: IT'S NOT WORTH THE RISK

WE TEACH OUR CHILDREN NOT TO PLAY WITH FIRE AND NOW IT'S OUR TURN TO FOLLOW THIS COMMONSENSE ADVICE.

## JOIN US AND VOTE YES ON R!

**Community Leaders**

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Steve Glazer, California State Senator, SD-7 & Former Mayor, City of Orinda  
Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, Assemblymember, Sixteenth California Assembly District  
Darlene Gee, Mayor, City of Orinda  
Amy Worth, Vice Mayor & Former Mayor, City of Orinda  
Dennis Fay, Councilmember, City of Orinda  
Nick Kosla, Councilmember, City of Orinda  
Inga Miller, Councilmember & Former Mayor, City of Orinda  
Latika Malkani, Councilmember Candidate, City of Orinda  
Laura Abrams, Former Mayor, City of Orinda  
Joyce Hawkins, Former Mayor, City of Orinda  
Bill Judge, Former Mayor, City of Orinda  
Bobbie Landers, Former Mayor, City of Orinda  
Tom McCormick, Former Mayor, City of Orinda  
Dean Orr, Former Mayor, City of Orinda  
Sue Severson, Former Mayor, City of Orinda  
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Allan Tabor, Former Mayor, City of Orinda  
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Julie Rossiter, Former Board Member, Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees  
Pat Rudebusch, Former Board Member, Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees

**Chris Severson**, Former Board Member, Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees & Current Board Member, Acalanes Union High School District  
**Riki Sorenson**, Former Board Member, Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees  
**Pam West**, Former Board Member, Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees  
**Sarah Butler**, Board Member, Contra Costa County Board of Education & Former Board Member, Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees  
**Jud Hammon**, Chair, Orinda Citizens' Infrastructure Commission  
**Abe Mintz**, Committee Member, Orinda Finance Advisory Committee  
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**Susan Anacker**, Board Member, Orinda Firewise Council  
**Rachel Duclos**, Board Member, Orinda Firewise Council  
**Lucy Talbot**, Board Member, Orinda Firewise Council  
**Thomas D'Amato**, President, Orinda Chamber of Commerce  
**Chris Laszcz-Davis**, Board Member, Orinda Association & Lamorinda Presents  
**Bill Waterman**, Former President, Orinda Association & Chair, Orinda Fourth of July Parade  
**Robert W. Burt**, Director, Orinda Community Foundation

**Community Members**  
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Susan & Andres Anacker  
Sandy & Dave Anderson  
Kathie Bain & Andy Norell  
Cindy & Brad Barber  
Sandy Barnett  
Carol Benninghoven  
Jocelyn & Dave Bennion  
David Bonneville  
Nancy Booth  
Dick Burkhalter  
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**Ellen & Joffa Dale**  
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Ali Drasin  
Dan Detzner  
Peter Dinkelspiel  
Ethan Elkind  
Lisa & Peter Engstrom  
Natalie & Dennis Fay  
Marcia & Kevin Fick  
Virginia & Joe Fitzpatrick  
Jan & Dr. Robert Formanek  
Jeri & Herb Foster  
Shannon & Steve Fuller  
Kellyn & Glen Gagon  
Eric Gee  
Darlene & Dennis Gee  
Jean Gibson  
Jill & Simon Gibson  
Gayle & Steve Goldman  
Dulcinea Grantham & Michael Linscheid  
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Tish & Steve Harwood  
Peter & Helen Hasselman  
Eva & Charles Heath  
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Jackie & Bruce Horwitz  
Ellie Huffnagel & Terry Murphy  
Susan & William Hurrell  
Garren Ingleby  
Elisabeth Jewel  
Marlene & John Jex  
Lisa & Craig Jorgens  
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Amy & Tom Worth

\*Partial list. Titles are for identification purposes only.

To join our growing list of supporters and find more ways to get involved, please visit [SaferOrinda.org](http://SaferOrinda.org)

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FIREWISE / EVERDAY ORINDA

# Moraga Orinda Fire District Updates



COURTESY OF THE MORAGA ORINDA FIRE DISTRICT

This new chipper purchased by MOFD will help remove excess fuel from properties.

By MELANIE LIGHT  
Contributing Writer

With 2020's lengthened fire season persisting, positive news has emerged from the Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) and Orinda neighborhoods as the community moves to eliminate excess fuel from properties. These developments anticipate a much stricter fire code enforcement which goes into effect Jan. 1, 2021, with completion of mitigation on local properties required by May 31, 2021. There are now new requirements for building permits pulled with the city after Oct. 7.

MOFD's wildly popular free chipper service started again Oct. 5. With new equipment, it will run until June 1, when the fire prevention staff begins conducting inspections and enforcement of the fire code. Only three homeowners in a neighborhood are required to participate in the service, but the program's availability provides a great opportunity to round up

as many neighbors as possible because, as district personnel emphasize, "no one's property is safe until everyone's property is mitigated for wildfires."

MOFD's staff advises neighborhood groups should collaborate and organize since "once the chipper visits a neighborhood it won't return any time soon. So, it's important to plan the event well." In addition, the service will give priority to Firewise neighborhoods and areas with a large number of participants.

To request the chipper, contact the MOFD Fuels Mitigation Staff at [chipperprogram@mofd.org](mailto:chipperprogram@mofd.org) or call 925.258.4599. Be sure to confirm information at [www.MOFD.org](http://www.MOFD.org) about what can be chipped, how to stack and other critical information, because the chipper won't take material which doesn't comply. In that case, disposal would be up to homeowners.

The North Orinda Shaded Fuel Break project is finishing with the removal of

[SEE FIREWISE page 18]

# Everyday 😊 Orinda

## Orinda: The Musical

MIMI BOMMARITO



The viral Tik-Tok musical parody "Fighting in a Grocery Store" inspired me. I'm convinced. We need "Orinda: The Musical." I hope Ron Pickett will agree to direct.

Seriously, we could make it really funny. Who couldn't use a laugh right now?

Just imagine –

As the curtain rises on the iconic Orinda Theatre neon marquis, our opening number explains how this little town has always been a great place to live, but since the COVID-19 pandemic has everyone working from home, folks are ditching San Francisco and flocking to Orinda in droves. With no more commute, suburban life is looking extra perky. Homes are selling like Nation's cheeseburgers. Maybe we title this one "Bye Bye BARTie" or "East Bay, My New BAE."

Next, we segue into how the hordes of newcomers need to understand, in no uncertain terms, our school budgets, like Carol Baskin's tigers, are hungry, lip smackin' beasts with an insatiable appetite. Orinda's stellar public schools are not stellar because of a magic funding fairy. The tigers ate her a long time ago, but no one can prove it.

We need a number about the absolute necessity of generously donating to the "One Orinda" campaign. Maybe some a cappella harmonizing with "If you're gonna live here, you're gonna give here. Baby, are you gonna give here. Mmmm Mmmm, better drink that Kool Aid cuz the Carols are watchin' you."

During this scene we could also work

in some humorous dialogue about if somebody "knows somebody" (and, in this town, somebody *always* knows somebody.) Could we get our hands on some early COVID-19 vaccinations and auction them off as a school fundraiser? Seriously, I've personally seen people pay staggering amounts of money for homemade chocolate chip cookies baked by former elementary science teacher Karlen Harriman. I can only IMAGINE what parents would fork over for a CDC-approved, sneak-preview vaccination.

Then we should probably add a number about the second-best thing to a spicy reality television show: Nextdoor.com. If forced to spend additional time indoors due to dangerous air quality, check out some of the "spirited banter" which takes place among neighbors. Mr. Rogers would be in tears. I'm not quite sure why, but Nextdoor seems to really ignite some anger issues, quite the platform for venting. Maybe a moony love ballad, something like, "When our eyes meet — walking down our street — will you wish you were a ghost — for calling me a *brainless idiot* in your latest post?"

Then should we squeeze in a sub-plot about the private road controversy? Maybe a small group of neighbors try to build a toll booth on their private road; and charge all visitors and Amazon delivery trucks? Hey, it works for the bridges.

All this controversy — but I'm told it's what puts butts in seats. Perhaps now is the right time to slide in a saucy little number

[SEE EVERYDAY page 21]

# Vote to Re-Elect Inga Miller

Orinda City Council

### JOIN LEADERS IN ENDORSING INGA MILLER

**STATE SENATORS**  
State Sen. Steve Glazer  
Retired State Sen. Don Perata

**CONTRA COSTA BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
Supervisor Candace Andersen

**ORINDA CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS**  
Mayor Darlene Gee  
Vice Mayor Amy Worth  
Councilmember Dennis Fay  
Councilmember Nick Kosla

**ORINDA UNION SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS**  
President Cara Hoxie  
Vice President Liz Daoust  
Board Member Carol Brown  
Board Member Jason Kaune  
Board Member Hillary Weiner

**ACALANES UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
Board Member for Orinda, Chris Severson

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
Board Member Sarah Butler

**COMMUNITY LEADERS**  
Toris Jaeger, Naturalist  
Carlos Baltodano, President of the Orinda Association  
Dick Burkhalter, Orinda Rotary  
Chris Laszcz-Davis, Lamorinda Presents  
Gene Gottfried, CERT, retired MOFD Board Member

**FORMER MAYORS**  
Laura Abrams  
State Sen. Steve Glazer  
Joyce Hawkins  
Bill Judge  
Bobbie Landers  
Tom McCormick  
Dean Orr  
Victoria Smith  
Sue Severson

*"Inga cares about our Wagner Ranch Nature Area and our creeks. She is a needed seasoned leader and conservationist dedicated to fire risk management, downtown development and recycling that keeps our environment in mind"*  
—Toris Jaeger, Naturalist

*"The working relationship between our city and schools is so important and Inga nurtures that relationship to make our youth a priority."*  
— Cara Hoxie, Orinda Union School Board President

*"Inga leads with compassion for her fellow Orindans and a dedication to balanced decision-making that is thoughtful and considers the long-term goals of this City she loves so much."*  
—Amy Worth, Orinda Vice Mayor

Dedicated • Thoughtful • Balanced

Paid for by Inga Miller for Orinda City Council 2020 FPPC # 1388379 www.IngaForOrinda.com

MINI-PARK / SEASONED SHOPPER



MAGGIE BOSCOE

Proof of concept for the downtown Orinda Mini Park, created by Orinda resident and artist, Maggie Boscoe, a Lamorinda Arts Council board member and chairperson of the Artify Orinda program.

## Orinda's Mini Park, the "Entrance to Orinda," in Limbo

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

What has happened to Irene Moylan Ingram Smith's dream of the Orinda Mini Park which she brought into being in 1974? Located at the corner of Camino Pablo and Brookwood, it was seen as the "Entrance to Orinda" complete with sparkling fountain, colorful flowers, verdant bushes, tall trees, walkways and benches. Today, the fountain is empty. A few straggling flowers and bushes remain, the trees have been cut down, trash is littered about, but the strong, structural elements remain. Smith recently wrote our Mayor, Darlene Gee, seeking answers.

Gee said: "I am a very big proponent of the redevelopment of the Mini Park and have been frustrated that we have had to delay it. The main reason is that the property belongs to PG&E. The long-term lease is coming to an end and needs a new solution. PG&E is trying to decide if they

want another long-term lease, or whether they want to sell or donate the property to Orinda. This doesn't seem that difficult a decision, but the firm has recently emerged from bankruptcy so that their processes and approvals are slow. They have told us it might take several years to come to a conclusion as our Mini Park doesn't have a very high priority.

"Secondly, the COVID situation has impacted the city staff because of the challenges of a more remote work environment. So, things have moved a little slowly. Again, the park doesn't have the highest priority."

Gee said the City Council recently decided it did not want to spend more money on the new design until there is resolution with PG&E. The city will continue maintaining the existing vegetation until the property issues are decided.

Smith said the park certainly doesn't present a very good impression now as

[SEE PARK page 22]

### Seasoned Shopper

#### Abundant Fall Availability

BARBARA KOBSAR

Your Orinda Farmers' Market is open year-round! The market continues to operate every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. through the holidays and into 2021.

Fill your basket with fresh fall produce, including pomegranates, persimmons, apples, squash, peppers, grapes and root vegetables. Be sure to pick up fresh baked goods, eggs, dried fruits, preserves, honey and nuts to complete your shopping list.

#### Harvest Nuts

Celebrations may be limited this year, but traditions remain strong. Harvest nuts are ready to eat fresh and to use in stuffings, soups, salads and baked goods. Almonds, walnuts and pistachios are packaged and ready to go, and in-the-shell nuts will also make a short appearance.

To maintain freshness, store nuts in a refrigerated, airtight container. Shelled nuts store three to four months, or freeze them for up to six months. Unshelled nuts keep twice as long as shelled ones.

Toasting greatly enhances the flavor and aroma of nuts. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Spread whole or cut up raw nutmeats on a baking sheet and drizzle with a small amount (one to two teaspoons) of oil. Stir and toss with a spoon to coat evenly. Place in oven and roast for five minutes. Next, remove from oven and stir to move the outer nuts to the middle and the middle nuts to the edges of the pan. Return them to the oven and check again after three minutes. Return them to oven for a few minutes if necessary, or until the nuts are lightly browned and smell "nutty." Nuts go from almost-done to overdone in less than a minute; keep your eye on them!

#### Honey and Cheeseboards

Welcome to Pete's Gold Honey, a local family business from Concord. Hives in Concord, Lafayette, San Ramon and Walnut Creek supply the liquid honey for the farmers' markets in Orinda and Walnut Creek. Other specialties from Pete's include honeycomb and bees wax candles.

Create your own cheeseboard with fresh ingredients from the market. Gather an assortment of fresh fruits (apples, grapes), dried fruits, nuts, dips, honey, preserves and bread to arrange on a board with your favorite cheese and salami. Your guests

[SEE SEASONED page 16]



JILL NASRALLAH

Jill Nasrallah, with her kids Shadia and Charles, set up a table each week at the Farmers' Market with their homemade honey. Their business is a family affair.

## Re-Elect Darlene Gee to the Orinda City Council

I am proud of my City Council contributions and the progress we have made in repairing our roads, delivering City services more efficiently, and adding new community facilities.

To learn more about my continued priorities and goals for Orinda, please visit my campaign website at: [darlenegeeforcouncil.com](http://darlenegeeforcouncil.com).



### INFRASTRUCTURE

- ✓ Maintain and enhance the roads and drainage rehabilitation momentum the City has achieved over the last seven years.
- ✓ Develop long-term maintenance plans that are financially secured.

*"Darlene has been a significant contributor to our progress and success with Orinda's roads and drainage rehabilitation. Her expertise and commitment to improving our infrastructure is why we need Darlene on the City Council."*

**Terry Murphy**, Former Chair  
Orinda Citizen's Infrastructure Oversight Commission

### PUBLIC SAFETY

- ✓ Maximize fire prevention and fuel mitigation efforts in Orinda - working closely with our Fire Chief.
- ✓ Increase emergency services planning, interagency coordination, and state legislative efforts for fire protection funding and insurance.

*"Darlene's initiation of a joint subcommittee between Orinda, Moraga and MOFD has furthered our fire prevention coordination. She has demonstrated a real commitment to protecting our community."*

**Craig Jorgens**  
MOFD Director, District 5

### DOWNTOWN

- ✓ Complete the Downtown Precise Plan, including well-grounded economic analysis studies.
- ✓ Advance communications with downtown property owners to facilitate opportunities.

*"Darlene Gee and Inga Miller have followed through on their promises with their support of high priority for downtown improvement. They deserve our endorsement again in 2020."*

**Arran Schultz**, Chair  
**Tom Trowbridge**, Former Chair  
OrindaVision

# VOTE DARLENE GEE

Paid for by the Committee to Elect Darlene Gee for City Council 2020, FPPC 1428111

STUDENTS / SCHOOLS

# AAUW-OML Announces Girls4STEM Webinars

By LYNDA LEONARD  
Contributing Writer

The American Association of University Women Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch (AAUW-OML) is offering a new webinar series specifically for high school girls called Girls4STEM. This series introduces women working in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields to girls who at this stage of their lives are making choices about what courses to take in high school and considering potential careers.

Finding opportunities to learn from working professionals can be challenging. This program provides a wonderful, accessible way to learn about a STEM career and to ask questions of real women telling

the story of their journeys to their careers. They share insights on their specific area of study as well as their experiences in pursuit of a career in historically male-dominated fields.

These webinars are a wonderful way to maintain interest in STEM fields and boost girls' confidence in pursuing these careers.

The first webinar, "Refinery 101," is Sunday, Nov. 8 at 3 p.m., and features Christy Tormey, BSE in mechanical engineering from Duke University. After an internship at the Chevron Oil refinery, she was hired by the company and is now an operations specialist. Find out what a day in the life of a refinery engineer is like. Her favorite part of the day? "Suiting up in Tyvek and a respirator and climbing through columns and furnaces."

The next webinar is "Engineering with a Purpose," with Adrienne Johnson Nov. 22, at 3 p.m. She is a civil engineer who earned an award in 2017 for designing a "Net Zero Building," and was named one of the "Top 20 Women to Watch" by *Engineering Systems Magazine*. Dec. 8, Deb Martin, with a BS in microbiology and a Certified Industrial Hygienist, will present a webinar on her career from the lab to taking safe and sustainable consumer products to market. She will be followed Jan. 13, 2021, by Dr. Rosalie McGurk, astrophysicist, who will talk about her education and career path and how to make a spectroscope.

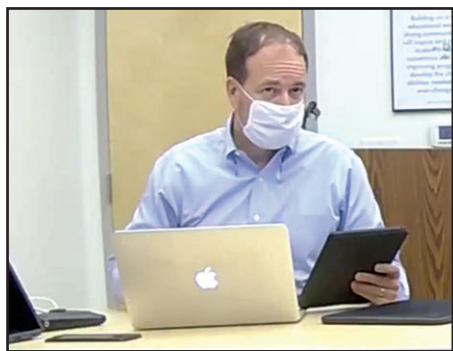
The webinars are free. This series is made possible through a grant from the Bettelheim Family Foundation. To learn about [SEE AAUW page 19]



CHRISTY TORMEY  
Christy Tormey will present "Refinery 101" in the first webinar on Sunday, Nov. 8 at 3 p.m.

## ◆ SCHOOLS from page 1

is scheduled for Oct. 26. The Oct. 14 meeting, which lasted five hours, presented and discussed a host of possible contingencies and preparations to help students learn, whether at home or in person, and to keep students, teachers and staff safe.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

OUSD School Board Member **Jason Kaune** is shown on a Poly Studio Camera at the Oct. 14 board meeting. The board was trying out the new technology as a possible way to stream in-person learning lessons to students viewing from home.

Keeping on top of any COVID-19 outbreak is a top priority for all concerned. To that end, Kenneth Nunes of Frontline Education outlined a plan in which his company would provide a streamlined health management system including paperless COVID-19 compliance, health screening, contact tracing and safety training. An important element to re-opening classrooms.

Dr. Sara Edwards, associate professor of sports medicine at UCSF and parent of OUSD students, shared her vision of "as safe an environment as possible for the return to school." Dr. Edwards introduced three companies which perform free-of-charge COVID-19 testing on a weekly

basis. The companies deal with insurance and third-party billing. The testing turnaround time is 24-30 hours. "If we could set up testing like this, we could have it at several of our school sites for students, parents, teachers and staff to use," said OUSD Board President Cara Hoxie.

Another important piece of the puzzle is the Community Compact. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Carolyn Seaton introduced the draft compact outlining guidelines for responsible behavior by all stakeholders before in-person instruction could take place. Board Member Hillary Weiner said the draft will be presented for review and refinements to parents and teachers.

"Teachers, students and administrators have to work together and adhere to health and safety protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We are collectively responsible for the common good of our local community and our greater world," said Seaton.

The school district also debuted a new Poly Studio Camera that could help with at-home learning by live streaming classroom activities. The hybrid learning plan OUSD adopted in July did not include the new camera and its learning possibilities. The original hybrid plan envisioned students attending in-person classes Tuesday – Friday, with each class divided into two groups of approximately 10-12 students. One group would attend class from 8 – 11 a.m. while the other group had independent study at home. In the afternoon, the second group would attend class from noon – 3 p.m. with the first group working on assignments from home. The plan necessitated teachers having two sets of three-hour classes. In addition, students who chose not to attend

in-person classes would continue with distance learning.

"We are concerned about our teachers and how hard they are working. With the Poly Studio Camera, students at home could watch what was happening in the classroom, and the teachers wouldn't have to teach the lesson twice," Hoxie said.

Teachers, however, had several apprehensions about the camera. Charles Shannon, president of Orinda Educators' Association, felt privacy issues were at stake while teacher Michele Stiller noted how difficult it would be for teachers to simultaneously teach virtually and in person. "It wouldn't be beneficial to students," she said.

Recent surveys of students, parents, teachers and staff members added new data to the mix as board members determine the best plan going forward. OUSD received 1,467 responses from elementary parents representing 1,393 students. The majority were in favor of returning to a version of in-person learning, with 13.1% preferring to stay with distance learning. Of those in favor of in-person learning, 78% wanted students back in school as soon as possible and 21.7% preferred to begin after the winter break.

In the teacher/certified survey, 96% of OUSD employees responded with 50% of classified staff responding. The teacher/certified category was almost equally divided (52.4% and 47.6% respectively) between students continuing in the distance learning model through 2020-2021 and students returning in the hybrid model this school year. Classified staff felt more strongly about continuing distance learning (51.3%) rather than returning to the classroom (35.5%) with 13.2% not having a strong opinion one way or the other. For complete survey results, go to [orindaschools.org](http://orindaschools.org). Access Oct. 5 board meeting agenda details for student/parent survey and Oct. 14 board meeting agenda details for teacher/staff survey.

"We need to be creative and innovative," said Hoxie. "There are so many details that need to be worked out before we can return to any kind of in-person learning. This is a conversation among teachers, students, parents and staff. We need to focus on solutions and keep talking to each other."

Weiner said, "We hope to make a decision soon, but it's tremendously hard with parents, teachers and staff divided."

Seaton added, "We want to provide the best education we can for students. Regardless of how strong your distance-learning model is, we know the best education we can provide is in person."

According to Seaton, students served by the Special Education program will still be supported through their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) with any needed services during independent learning time.

If the Contra Costa County has an increase in positive COVID cases and moves back into a higher tier, schools would not necessarily close. The county's safety section allows schools in a section of the county without an increase to remain open. If Orinda doesn't have an increase in cases, schools could remain open. It's also possible just one classroom or one school could be closed.

"We don't want a situation where we have to go back and forth – open school, close school. We're doing all we can to maximize safety and have a thoughtfully orchestrated plan," said Seaton. "Some parents are concerned and feel distance learning has been detrimental to their children, while others don't want their children coming back to school until there is a vaccine. We won't be able to please everyone."

The OUSD board met again Oct. 26 to review updated plans for reopening. Information on the Zoom meeting can be obtained at [orindaschools.org](http://orindaschools.org).

Sally Hogarty can be reached at [sally@theorindanews.com](mailto:sally@theorindanews.com).

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SENIORS

# To Grandmother's House We (May or May Not) Go

By MIMI BOMMARITO  
Staff Writer

Common Sense. Creativity. Courage. Perhaps we should approach the upcoming holidays with these words in our back pocket, to guide us in our planning.

The traditional Thanksgiving holiday is chock-full of all the COVID-19 "No-No's:"

\* Time spent traveling in crowded airports and airplanes;

\* Family members of all ages and vulnerabilities; some who diligently quarantine, and some who do not;

\* Indoor gatherings in crowded living quarters with recirculated air;

\* Laughter and loud, projectile speaking so that Aunt Sukey can hear you ;

\* Hugging, kissing and cheek-pinching (the innocent, Grandma variety, let's hope);

\* Shouting matches, if you are a "football rivalry" type family;

\* Shouting matches, if you are a "political rivalry" type family;

\* Shared food everybody touches, like dips and cheese trays;

\* Accidental drainage of someone else's wine glass (wine charms assume one can remember what charm was originally assigned — am I the cable car, the fedora, or maybe I was the ladybug?);

\* Furry sweaters (Yes, you read that cor-

rectly. Furry sweaters shed and get stuck in one's lip balm, forcing a constant touching of the face).

Some of us will throw caution to the wind, deciding that it is a crucial priority to reunite with family. Others will opt for pressing the pause button and look forward to some delayed gratification post-vaccine. Some might be relieved to use the pandemic as a convenient excuse to hibernate. Others might divide a large family, meeting in smaller sub-groups instead. There is no right or wrong way in the year we all will long remember 2020.

Creative Orindans offered some clever takes. Kiley Fillinger, 25, account manager at Bloomberg suggested a family Zoom conference call, where everyone piles their plate in their respective homes and plops down in front of their laptop, to munch and converse as if all were gathered at the table. If you can ignore the tendency to critique yourself chewing and muffling a burp or two, this tradition might be a keeper, as nobody is stuck with the mountain of fine china to hand-wash later, after the cold gravy has adhered to the plates like Super Glue. In all seriousness, the Fillingers have a relative currently undergoing tedious medical treatment with a compromised immune system, so this will undoubtedly be a prudent yet festive choice. But if it were me, I would remind the group I would seek immediate revenge on anyone posting screenshots with dark-meat turkey grease on my face, or picking spinach casserole out of my teeth.

Catherine Pines quipped, "Hmmm. Does scheduling two kids for oral surgery that week count as news?" Since some family resides in Pennsylvania and some in Florida, the Pines opted not to travel or expose their elderly relatives. With her kids' diminished chewing capabilities, Pines wisely saved herself a lot of extra work in the kitchen.

Wendy Bond predicts this will be the first year she and her husband will not spend Thanksgiving with their now-collegiate



PATTI O'BRIEN

Dr. A. O'Brien and granddaughter Julia O'Brien model unique and creative ways to minimize airborne particles of COVID-19 at family gatherings.

daughters. "The girls plan to stay at school over Thanksgiving break and then come home for winter break in December." Colleges favor this plan, as it minimizes spread, so most likely the girls will have plenty of other students nearby in the same situation. If anything, this scenario could provide extensive entertainment, as parents walk their fledgling chefs through the process of roasting the turkey and whipping the mashers.

Linda Watts Bakshi also worried about the young adults away at college: "We typically celebrate 'Friendsgiving' with five or six families who all have college students. We're not quite sure if this is the wisest move this year. Maybe we will have them all take COVID-19 tests." Some universities will close their dorms in December, forcing many students to return at Thanksgiving and remain home until January.

Orindans who were polled agreed that taking guests' temperatures at the door would be awkward as well as potentially a waste of time, as many are asymptomatic.

When asked how her family might spend the upcoming holiday, beloved educator Terry Schrittwieser predicted, "Whatever

[SEE HOLIDAYS page 23]

# Free Services for Orinda Seniors

By KATHRYN ISHIZU  
Contributing Writer

Are you a senior living in your own home and trying to remain independent? If so, did you know there are several wonderful service organizations which offer free support to non-driving seniors? Giving up the car keys is tough, but sometimes it's the right decision for you and for the people with whom you share the road, but it does not mean giving up your independence. There are organizations that will do the driving for you, grocery shop for you and bring you hot meals. All of these services are free.

Seniors Around Town (SAT) has been operating in Orinda since 2005. It offers the gift of a ride to seniors who are no longer driving. The SAT program offers ease of use, no cost to riders and door-to-door transportation to all eligible Orinda

senior residents. Orinda volunteer drivers, using their own vehicles, provide rides to medical appointments, errands and social events in the Lamorinda, Berkeley and Walnut Creek areas, Monday through Friday, between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. This wonderful organization is supported by volunteers and donations. For more information about how to get rides, register to become a volunteer driver or donate for the cause, email seniorsaroundtownorinda@gmail.com or call 925.402.4506.

Normally, Lamorinda Village is a member-based (nonprofit) organization which supports seniors with volunteer handymen, drivers, computer techs, etc. to help with specific issues. During this pandemic, it opened its shopping/pharmacy delivery service to all seniors in Lamorinda to help them shelter from the coronavirus.

Though restrictions are relaxing to a degree for the rest of the community as counties meet various markers, 80% of deaths from COVID-19 strike those older than 65. This means minimizing contact with people is still a primary concern for older adults until there is a vaccine. To date, Lamorinda Village volunteers have shopped and made more than 1,200 deliveries. Along with delivering groceries, Lamorinda Village has partnered with Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) to connect non-driving seniors with trained volunteers to help transport them during potential evacuations. If you would like help with either of these services, contact Lamorinda Village at info@lamorindavillage.org or call 925.283.3500. Volunteers and donations are welcome.

For more than 50 years, Meals on Wheels – Diablo Region has improved the lives of vulnerable seniors living in Contra Costa County by delivering nutritious meals and wrap-around services which allow seniors to remain in their homes, safely and with dignity. The organization's original flagship program nourishes frail, socially isolated

[SEE SENIORS page 19]



KATHY ISHIZU

Lamorinda Village volunteer Jenny Parker and her daughter Brooke deliver groceries to an Orinda senior.



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*Wishing all a Healthy and Safe Thanksgiving!*

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## PEACE OF MIND

## Products We Buy Hoping Never To Use During These COVID-19 Times

By KEN HOGARTY  
Contributing Writer

While refilling my emergency kit, scrambling for sanitizer, searching addresses for that Clorox acquaintance, finding suitable masks, realizing bald men should wear hats during Zoom get-togethers and washing veggies as if they were baby bottoms, I realized I've bought many things hoping never to use them. COVID-19 purchases and reflection time invited me to inventory my buying history.

Countries, of course, buy things they hope not to use. At least, I trust nations aren't clamoring to use weapons of mass destruction, stockpiled as deterrents. Still, I can't see dropping off old warheads or plutonium in a donation kiosk at a suburban strip mall. Businesses also snap up unwanted assets to eliminate competition.

### ◆ MOFD from page 5

have also served on the MOFD Board for the last four years."

Jorgens pointed to some of his accomplishments on the MOFD Board: "They include uncovering \$23 million double-counting of assets on MOFD's books and fighting to correct it; hiring a terrific new fire chief who is proactive, innovative and prioritizes prevention; being a founding member of the Orinda FireWise Committee, dedicated to making all of Orinda safe from wildfires through outreach and education about prevention; and helping to identify and implement new, early fire detection and automated evacuation alert systems."

I pay for a myriad of insurances: health, house, car, pet, etc. I hope to use none, except for the occasional check-up. Wildfire and earthquake coverages are almost mandatory for some California homeowners who dread their actual use as much as urban dwellers fear having to use their rental insurance. Life insurance is, like my cemetery plot, my personal extended warranty. Then again, I've never looked forward to using an extended warranty sold with a new car or refrigerator.

My zinc lozenges I bought in early March, hoping never to use, might, if I'm fortunate, sit in a medicine chest forever. That's not the same as the Costco goods I stockpiled before the curtain dropped. Think of purchases and consumption during so-called normal days of yore. Did you buy bandages or medicinal products wanting to use them? I can't picture telling your pharmacist, "Can't wait to use this

His promise to his community is about being proactive: "Leveraging my technical background and industry relationships, I will continue to be instrumental in identifying and supporting the deployment of advanced technology for early fire detection and automated triggering of evacuations."

Girdlestone talks about why she decided to run for office in the first place, and ultimately, remain on the ballot: "My plan was to be transparent and learn as much as I could in order to work with the MOFD Board," she said. "I am not in this for any reason but to work with our board to make our community safer. We love MOFD."

Charleen Earley can be reached at [editor@theorindanews.com](mailto:editor@theorindanews.com).



CONTRIBUTED GRAPHIC

migraine medicine." Umbrellas bought, hoping for inclement weather? Tire chains because you anticipated the fun of putting them on in a white out? Reading glasses, hoping your eyesight worsens? Pay a lawyer or accountant a retainer because you were looking forward to problems? My fire extinguishers aren't in my house because I'm anticipating using them any more than

### ◆ SEASONED from page 13

will love it.

Enjoy and stay well.

The Orinda market is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Orinda Way in Orinda Village. More information is available at [cccfm.org](http://cccfm.org), [facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket](https://www.facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket) and [Instagram@OrindaFarmersMarket](https://www.instagram.com/OrindaFarmersMarket) or you can call the market hotline 925.431.8361.

Barbara Kobsar sells her Cottage Kitchen jams and jellies at the JAM STAND at the Saturday Orinda market and the Sunday Walnut Creek market. She is also president of CCCFM (Contra Costa Certified Farmer's Market) Association Board of Directors.

I'd buy a new rack of casino chips hoping to use up before an unceremonious exit.

Your own list? That bigger-sized pair of pants or bathing suit bought as "embarrassment insurance" before vacation? Does that generator sit outside your house because you hope to show off to the neighbors during an electricity black-out? Buy a hangover cure because you revel in the discomfort that demands it? Toilet plungers? Pepper spray? Marine radios? A weapon solely for security? Items in your emergency kits and Go-bags?

We buy security systems, alarms and locks, but, if we're sane, we hope they're never required. We even pay for classes to learn expediciencies such as the Heimlich Maneuver we hope never to utilize. Course, many students take, and presumably somebody pays for, math, hoping they'll never have to bust out. And speaking of youngsters, sharing lists might really get your attention: A college senior smiled when I asked what she buys but hopes never to use, blushed a bit, and offered, "Plan B."

Ken Hogarty can be reached at [kenhogarty@gmail.com](mailto:kenhogarty@gmail.com).

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FITNESS

# Fitness Trainers Keeping Orindans Fit During COVID-19

By CHARLEEN EARLEY  
Editor-in-Chief

We've all heard the jokes and have seen the memes about gaining the COVID "19" pounds during this pandemic, but how are we supposed to stay fit when everything around us is telling us to stay put?

Even with the newly lifted shelter-in-place sanctions, we're still cooped up in our homes, sitting through long Zoom meetings and staying indoors because the air quality index is in the double-digit zones, again.

Well all is not lost, thanks to our local gyms and fitness trainers, who have pivoted their business models to reflect the new not-so-normal lifestyles we've all, unwillingly, accepted these past eight months.

Zoom workouts, much like watching Jack LaLanne or Suzanne Somers – remember them – have kept many businesses in business.

"Like all other things in life right now, we had to go virtual, and I think we did a phenomenal job with it," said Jami Edgell, manager and trainer at Anytime Fitness in Theatre Square. "It was nothing any of us had experience with, but we researched it, and we were able to get our virtual classes up and running within two weeks."

Their idea to go virtual literally went viral and connected people across the United States.

"We offered all of our classes for free not only to members, but the entire community, and even across the nation," Edgell added. "We had members getting their friends and family on the East Coast to take a class with them. It was a way for them to connect, regardless of distance."

Sheena Lakhotia, a 12-year personal trainer and nutritional planner who does body composition analysis and teaches spin classes, created a safe environment for her clients, in addition to using Zoom.

"[I allow] one person at a time, 30-feet away, masks and gloves," she said. "I also

have a HEPA air filter in my gym, and I am also on Zoom. I train most of the time on Zoom and some of the time at the gym. I am providing weights for people who need them at home since they are difficult to buy right now."

She said gyms are trying to figure out how to reinvent their businesses by providing a safe and valuable service within the new landscape.

"I am glad that I can offer my services during this difficult time, when people need fitness and health the most," she said.

Carolyn Mueller, owner of CoreKinetics in Orinda, formerly in Walnut Creek, said her business has graciously survived during this pandemic because she dipped into her rainy-day funds; however, she did add Zoom to her services as well.

"I have reached out to my Zoom clients, and that worked!" said Mueller. "Of course, it is not the same as being in the studio."

With a recent green light to reopen her studio with limitations, Mueller said her clients are ecstatic about the news.

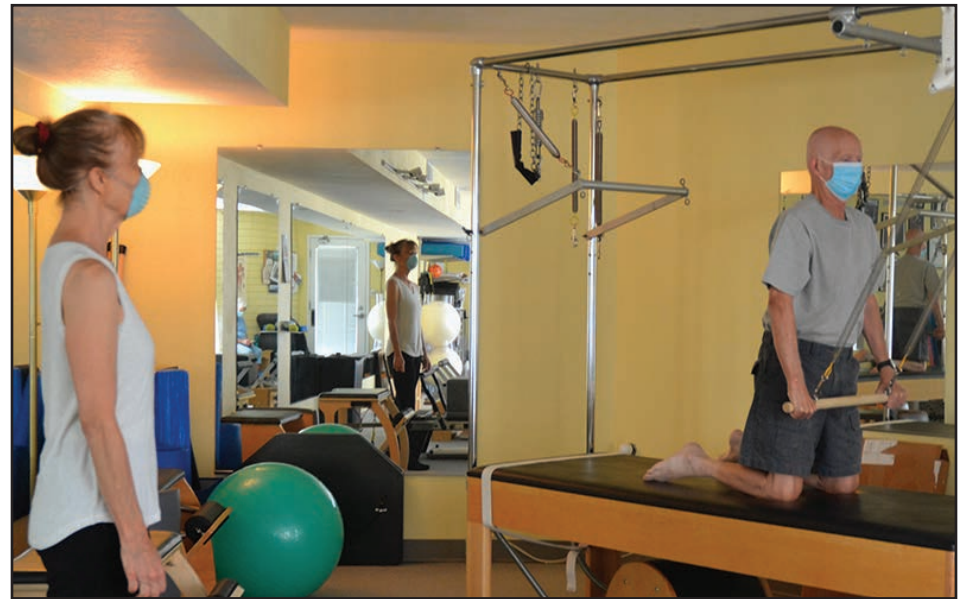
"My Zoom clients are so happy, as well as the clients who didn't do Zoom!" she said. "Zoom was good for a while, but there's nothing like being in the same room at the same time. The important thing is the corrections to the body that help clients find their center. We can't do that online."

Mueller offers advice to those who don't have gym or studio memberships.

"Walking and running is always good exercise, and they can do that anywhere. There are so many wonderful trails in this area!" she said. "Those two things, combined with Pilates stretches, strength and alignment for the whole body, is a very good health regime."

Tristan and Tiffany Tool of Orinda, personal trainers who purchased their gym in June of 2019 – now called In Forma Integral Fitness – spent most of their time upgrading it. Then the pandemic hit.

"We have had less than 10% of our normal revenue in the last six months. The state has put protections in place that inhibit a landlord from evicting a tenant,



SALLY HOGARTY  
Carolyn Mueller of CoreKinetics helps Earl Flage do his workout on the trapeze table, known as the "cadillac" by her clients because it feels so good.

but once those protections are lifted, we will owe upwards of \$60,000 in back rent," said Tristan, who is a third generation Orindan.

Like many others, they've offered virtual training.

"We've been offering Zoom classes since the end of April, and we've had a small percentage of our membership participate in those, though most have found that Zoom isn't as engaging or have had technical issues," he said. "So, it isn't ideal."

"We've also been able to do some limited outdoor training, but we haven't had a ton of traction with that either, as our client base has found it difficult to stay engaged without the equipment they are used to," Tristan added.

So, the Tools decided to think outside the box and try crowd sourcing by creating a GoFundMe campaign to keep their dream alive.

"We hope to get the word out there about what we do and what we're trying to do with the gym and the community here in Orinda," said Tristan. "It is part fundraiser to help us meet our financial obligations and, as mentioned, it is part marketing to get the word out about us: what we're trying to accomplish and the dream we're trying to build. We're also hoping that donors will be

interested in becoming members."

The GoFundMe page can be found at [www.gofundme.com/informa](http://www.gofundme.com/informa).

For Lakhotia, and all the trainers and gym owners in Orinda, their passion for keeping themselves and their community fit and healthy is strong.

"I love helping people to achieve something that they always believed they couldn't do. I love to hear their cholesterol has dropped significantly, they are no lon-

[SEE FITNESS page 24]



SALLY HOGARTY  
Anna Fields (R) trains at Living Lean fitness center under the watchful eye of founder Sheena Lakhotia (background), who keeps her clients safe by coaching the workout from across the room.



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VISUAL ARTS

◆ LETTERS from page 9

in the upcoming election; what it is and is not, what it does and does not do, plus why we need it.

Approving it will remove the existing ½ cent sales tax measure previously approved by the voters and replaces it with a 1-cent sales tax. It is neither a parcel tax nor a bond measure. When you make a taxable purchase in Orinda the tax you pay will increase by ½ cent. That does not seem like it will generate much funding to use, except when you buy a “big ticket” item in another city (like a new car) the tax paid comes back to Orinda for our use. The previous ½ sales tax increase generated about a million dollars plus per year and is how we had the funds to start fixing our public roads. Then two bond measures passed and repairs began in earnest.

The repair plan/program is a success and by the end of this 2020 construction season, we will have taken the roads from “failed/poor” to “very good,” with some “excellent.” By this time next year, all the bond money will have been spent doing what was promised: fixing roads and the shallow drains under them.

Why do we need another tax, even one as modest as R?

During the review of the plan, two problems became apparent: first, there was no funding for maintenance of the work done, and second, no funding to repair and replace the deep drains under the main roads – like Miner Road – add to these the need to fund fire fuels mitigation to help prevent the kind of disaster that has become too common in California the last two years.

Measure R provides a stable source of funds (about \$3 million plus) to address all three of the above needs. We have made a significant investment of over \$53 million in the infrastructure and quality of life of our city and now it is time to protect our investment. Vote yes on Measure R!

– Terry Murphy

◆ FIREWISE from page 12

troublesome Monterey pines and other trees of concern at the Sleepy Hollow Swim and Tennis Club, Wagner Ranch Elementary School and along Happy Valley Road. MOFD Chief Dave Winnacker said, “This will provide additional anchor points from which firefighters can make a stand in the event of a fire coming out of Briones.”

The Sleepy Hollow Neighborhood Association (SHNA) received a \$10,000 grant from the Diablo Firesafe Council to work with MOFD for tree trimming and vegetation removal along the major evacuation routes in their neighborhood. For properties which are not up to code (trees trimmed 3’ back and 15’ up), MOFD will mark the trees where they will be trimmed and a licensed arborist will do the work.

SHNA representative Carol Brovelli said, “Now, more than ever, people believe that the threat of wildfire is real and that we all need to do our part to prepare our neighborhoods. People want to do their part and be good neighbors.”

The SHNA has a block captain system which communicates to and educates the 450 property owners to make their homes better prepared for a wildfire. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Many property owners immediately offered to remove the hazardous vegetation. In two different instances, the property owners removed trees overhanging the road within 24 hours of being told of the hazard.

Brovelli added, “The impact of this grant extends well beyond the \$10,000 award. Neighbors are walking their contiguous properties together and agreeing on what they can do to make their properties collectively better prepared for a wildfire. In another instance, we had volunteers who have agreed to help an elderly neighbor remove her juniper, clear vegetation and trim trees six feet up. Not only are we removing fire fuels, but it’s building community.”

New requirements for building now include the following additions to the code:

Combustible ground cover banned (to include mulch and bark) within 2’ of struc-

### Artify Orinda’s New Installation



ANTONIO ARROYO

(L-R) Orinda artist **Kath Balamuth** and Lamorinda Arts Council Board Member, chair of the Artify Orinda program, and Orinda resident **Maggie Boscoe**, invite people to view *San Pablo Reservoir*, Balamuth’s original 44” x 30” artwork in front of 59 Moraga Way in the Theatre District.

tures. A list of approved ground cover is available on the MOFD website.

At least a 1’ air gap between the ground and lower portion of bushes, privets and other decorative plants within 2’ of structures.

Increased vertical clearance for trees above roofs from 5’ to 6’.

Increased vertical clearance for trees from 5’ to 6’ above the ground and surface fuels.

Removal of Eucalyptus and Monterey pine within 6’ of structures.

An exterior fire hazard inspection for real property transfers required. Sellers should

self-report compliance, and realtors will check property status.

Removal of juniper and bamboo within 10’ of a road by the end of 2023.

Learn how to become a Firewise group at MOFD’s website, or contact the Orinda Firewise Council about its “Getting Started” sessions, which cover the steps and offer the experience of other folks who have gone through the organizational process. Contact Joyce Arnon, the Member Liaison at jarnon@aol.com.

*Melanie Light can be reached at melanie@melanielight.com.*

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## Orinda Dining Opportunities



KATHY ENZERINK

Friends at **Miramonte High School**, these juniors met for ice cream on a very warm Saturday afternoon. Except for this photo, they wore masks and stayed physically distanced when not devouring their ice cream from **Loards Ice Cream and Candies** across the street.



KATHY ENZERINK

**Preston Phillips**, with his parents **Carol** and **Michael**, visiting from their home in Vallejo, always enjoy a meal at **Europa Hofbrau** when they come to Orinda. “I love the food here,” said Michael Phillips.

Europa, along with several restaurants at Theatre Square, offer inside dining on a limited basis while maintaining outdoor options.

Orinda

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ROTARY

# Fab 5 Rotary Clubs Make Huge Impact Locally and Internationally

By TOM BLACK  
Contributing Writer

Known as Rotary's "Fab 5," four Lamorinda clubs plus one in Rossmoor, boast one of the highest concentrations of memberships in the Bay Area with 263 members. Lafayette Rotary leads with 67 members, followed by Lamorinda Sunrise (63), Orinda (51), Rossmoor (45) and Moraga (37). True of all 33,000 worldwide Rotary clubs, each of the Fab 5 clubs sponsor service programs, both locally and internationally.

The following summary of activity and service programs gives a sense of the good the organization provides for communities:

**Orinda Rotary**, with President Ken Jew at the helm, was founded in 1949. Service projects include: support of local businesses during the pandemic; aiding Orinda public schools via teacher video tutorials; supplying volunteers to the Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano; working on Fishing Day at San Pablo Reservoir for the Oakland Boys and Girls Club, organizing track and field competitions for Orinda elementary pupils; conducting an annual Easter Egg hunt at Orinda Community Park and donating 500 PPE medical gowns to local hospitals.

Orinda Rotary's international support includes ongoing participation in Rotary International's Polio Plus Eradication program; funding dental clinics in Kenya; providing street lighting in Haiti; and donating transportation and equipment for an orphanage in rural India.

In non-pandemic times, club members meet Wednesdays at noon at the Orinda Country Club. Until further notice, the club meets via Zoom, as do the other four clubs. For more information, visit Orinda Rotary at [www.OrindaRotary.org](http://www.OrindaRotary.org).

**Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**, led by cur-

## ◆ SENIORS from page 15

homebound seniors by delivering a hot meal every day. Recent reports recognize loneliness and social isolation as damaging health as much as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. This daily delivery serves as a wellness check to ensure the isolated senior has someone to talk to and stays safe. If you are housebound and would like meal delivery, or if you'd like to support this program and make the deliveries, contact Meals on Wheels – Diablo Region at 925.937.8311.

We are lucky to live in an area which values and supports those aging in our community.

*Kathryn Ishizu can be reached at [kishizu@lamorindavillage.org](mailto:kishizu@lamorindavillage.org).*

## ◆ AAUW from page 14

the specifics of this new program for girls, including the profiles of the presenters, and to register for a webinar, visit the AAUW-OML website at [oml-ca.aaup.net](http://oml-ca.aaup.net). You can also visit the Girls4STEM Instagram page.

The American Association of University Women advances gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. The Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch sponsors STEM-related community outreach projects, including Tech Trek and the STEM Conference at Saint Mary's College for middle school girls and Girls4STEM for high school girls.

*Lynda Leonard can be reached at [lyndaleonard@gmail.com](mailto:lyndaleonard@gmail.com).*

rent president Conrad Breece, was founded in 1987. Local service projects include deployment of the HOME Team, founded in 2010 by club member Hays Englehart. It provides free-of-charge, minor home-repair services to seniors. Other ongoing local projects include restoration of San Pablo Creek and support of Family Harvest Farm in Pittsburg.

A highlight of Lamorinda Sunrise's International projects is Polio Plus, with service projects in Guatemala, Tanzania, Sierra Leone and Mexico.

Of note, member Mark Roberts, an Orinda resident and past Orinda Citizen of the Year, is Governor of Rotary District 5160 for 2020-2021. The District comprises 73 clubs in Northern California, with a combined membership of 3,142. Lamorinda Sunrise has celebrated two previous district governors from its ranks: George Chaffey and Susan Wait.

In non-pandemic times, club members meet Fridays over breakfast at Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa. For more information, visit [www.lamorindasunrise.org](http://www.lamorindasunrise.org).

Founded in 1946, **Lafayette Rotary** has Mary Lou Till as its president. For its service agenda, the Lafayette chapter supports youth performing arts at Stanley Middle School via sponsorship of the annual free Concert at the Res; homeless programs in Oakland and Concord; the Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano and Meals on Wheels.

International service funds Polio Plus, school libraries in Afghanistan and various hunger, water and other programs aimed at abatement of sex slavery.

Club members meet Thursdays at noon via Zoom. For more information, visit [www.RotaryLafayette.org](http://www.RotaryLafayette.org).

**Moraga Rotary**, whose current president is Brian South, was founded in 1967. Its local service projects include, most notably, full funding of the All-Access Playground at Moraga Commons. The facility, opened to the public in 2018 at a cost of \$350,000, was covered by private donations. Other projects include scholarships for Campolindo High School and Saint Mary's College students; running Field Day for third, fourth and fifth graders in Moraga; supporting efforts at Monument Crisis Center; working at Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano and donating library books to Juvenile Hall. The club is currently working on two Moraga school projects: Donating medical kits to all 110 classrooms and furnishing exterior security



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

(L-R) **Hays Englehart**, Asst. District Gov, **Jann Oldenburg**, Rossmoor, **Ken Jew**, Orinda, **Mary Lou Till**, Lafayette, **Conrad Breece**, Lamorinda Sunrise. Missing is Brian South of Moraga and Steve Elefant of Rossmoor.

cameras to all campuses.

International service includes Polio Plus; school projects in the Congo; construction of a playground in Ladrillera, Mexico; reconstructive dental services for children in Kenya and wheelchair donations to groups in Mexico.

Of note: Moraga Rotary has had two members serve as Rotary International president, the late Stan McCaffery, and Cliff Dochterman, a resident at Moraga Royale Assisted Living Center and still a club member. The Club meets Tuesdays at noon via Zoom. For more information, visit [www.MoragaRotary.org](http://www.MoragaRotary.org).

**Rossmoor Rotary**, founded in 1965, has co-presidents, Steve Elefant and Jim Olson. Rossmoor's service projects include support of Rotaract International Club at Las Lomas High School and not fewer than 15 other local, community-based charities.

In addition to Polio Plus, other international service projects encompass water sanitation projects in Ethiopia and Honduras and support of libraries and an eye clinic in Zambia.

Club members also meet at noon on Wednesdays via Zoom. For more information, visit [www.RossmoorRotary.org](http://www.RossmoorRotary.org).

Rotary International (RI) has been a major player in the campaign to eradicate polio worldwide. Since becoming involved

in 1979, RI has contributed in excess of \$500 million toward this cause. To date, nine billion doses of polio vaccines have been administered worldwide, sparing an estimated 220 million children from contraction of the deadly disease. Polio has been officially wiped out in all but Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Guests are welcome at all club meetings. For details, contact the individual club via websites noted above.

*Tom Black can be reached at [editor@theorindanews.com](mailto:editor@theorindanews.com).*

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## AROUND TOWN / CLASSIFIEDS

## ◆ FORUM from page 1

some other means. Many of them want the city to take over the cost of upkeep. Others, however, who live on public thoroughfares, oppose the idea.

The friction extends to storm water drainage as well, with some property owners taking the city to task over allegations the runoff from public streets is going into their private drainage systems.

Given the hefty price tag of a conversion, Gee said making every private road the city's responsibility should be put to a citywide vote.

And that's why Miller isn't a fan of the notion, saying transferring all private roads to the care of local government would require "tremendous public investment – a very, very large number."

She said she would prefer considering the handoff on a case-by-case basis, singling out those private roads that might satisfy the legal requirement of providing a public benefit.

Malkani called the situation a "hot mess," but one Orinda no longer can ignore. She suggested the city include private roads in its next survey to get a realistic estimate of repair and maintenance costs so future discussions of the problem would be based on facts, not speculative amounts.

She also proposed revising Resolution 59-18, an update the city made in 2018 to a policy describing the criteria residents on private roads must meet to alter the status of those streets.

The rules are now so stringent that it's all but impossible for a private road to become public.

Malkani noted Gee voted against the resolution but Miller was a proponent.

Candidates were asked why the city isn't going after a tax dedicated for a specific purpose instead of Measure R, which cannot be earmarked for particular reasons.

After all, the moderator noted, 86% of residents named fire prevention as their primary concern, even before thousands of wildfires erupted around the state this summer.

The city conducted the January survey to get a sense of whether voters would renew the existing ½-cent sales tax or vote for a larger one over a longer period of time.

Gee explained a general sales tax is easier to obtain because it only requires a simple majority vote to pass; a parcel tax, by contrast, needs a two-thirds approval to succeed.

In addition, it's thought Measure R would generate more revenue than a parcel tax would, she said.

As to why they're backing a new sales tax in the middle of a recession and pandemic,

candidates said it's too risky to wait until the current one expires in two years.

If a proposed sales tax on the Nov. 2022 ballot were to fail, the city, by law, would have to wait another two years – this time without any additional money coming in – before it could try again.

Candidates were less enthusiastic about Measure X, a countywide ½-cent sales tax designed to shore up the county hospital and neighborhood health centers as well as fund fire services and help for needy families such as early childhood education.

Acknowledging Orinda is "quite a bit different from the county at large," Gee echoed Malkani's comments when she voiced reservations about the measure because sales taxes are harder on lower-income households.

Miller, on the other hand, said she backs the proposed sales tax.

Candidates were asked whether the city would pay to ensure uninterrupted operation of the Chipper Program, a brush-clearing service Moraga-Orinda Fire District suspended in mid-June for nearly four months to focus on eliminating fire hazards around residents' homes.

Malkani said she wasn't privy to why councilmembers did not subsidize the program but noted the cost would have been minimal. If MOFD doesn't provide continuous service next summer, the city should pick up the slack, she said.

Miller emphasized the city and fire district are two separate agencies and said Orinda needs to be conservative given its small amount of unrestricted funds. Still, she suggested it might be able to help the fire district if Measure R passes.

The prospect of the city pitching in didn't, however, sit well with Gee.

"Quite frankly, I believe [MOFD] let go of their responsibilities to help with fire prevention," she said, adding the fire district has more money than the city to keep the service going.

"Our reserves are critical," Gee said.

Without them, she said, the city wouldn't have been able to fix the Miner Road sinkhole, which closed the thoroughfare in both directions and ruptured two sewer lines following heavy rains in January 2017.

Candidates also offered their thoughts on how to bring more stores and denser housing – apartments, condominiums or townhomes – to Orinda's downtown to increase the city's taxable income, instead of placing an additional burden on residents.

Currently, there are only a few dozen housing units for seniors near the business hub, and the city's zoning laws allow for such limited residential construction that

## Amazon Prime Trucks Taking Over Orinda?



SALLY HOGARTY

Amazon truck on Valley View.

With the deadly duo of COVID-19 and risky air quality, even more people seem to be opting for the relative safety of ordering products and food online for home delivery. Orinda resident **Sasha Peterson** and her daughter noted over 20 Amazon Prime delivery trucks in approximately a 10-minute time frame at 2 p.m. on a Monday afternoon. "What is going on? We are, of course, frequent Amazon users, but this seems insane," wrote Peterson. "We did not expect they would be creating so much traffic in our small town." The above trucks were spotted on Valley View and Moraga Way, respectively.



KATHY ENZERINK

Amazon Prime driver makes a delivery on Moraga Way.

developers typically don't find projects cost-effective.

Nonetheless, Gee thinks churches could be part of the solution if they were to allow the city to build on a portion of their parking lots, a number of which are very large.

Another long-term possibility might be using some of the acreage dedicated for parking at the Bay Area Rapid Transit station in town, she said.

Miller, who serves on a City Council sub-committee tasked with devising a plan to revitalize the downtown by allowing higher-density residential construction, also wants a greater diversity of housing in the area so people could live in smaller units near stores and restaurants.

"[They] want to downsize and be close to resources," she said.

Asked how the city could incorporate inclusivity into its hiring practices and police training, Miller said she didn't have a ready answer, but added she's been saddened by neighbors who have told her about racism they've experienced. "It's important ... for everyone to feel welcome," she said.

"A community is happier when everyone feels respected," said Malkani.

The city has started teaching employees about implicit bias – attitudes and behavior people adopt unconsciously – which is something she had suggested last year, Malkani added.

Police are receiving additional training from the sheriff's office, said Gee, who noted city employees are actually a more racially diverse group than the city overall.

"We want everyone in Orinda to feel part of the community," she said.

The one-hour debate will be rebroadcast on CCTV Channel 26 at times have yet to be announced as well as on The Orinda Association and City of Orinda websites.

Rowena Gonden can be reached at [editor@theorindanews.com](mailto:editor@theorindanews.com).

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FUNNY SIDE UP

Funny Side Up

Cooking is a Waste of My *Thyme*



CHARLEEN EARLEY

It started out fun, but then things got fuzzy. I wanted to make a meal I often order at one of my favorite restaurants (yes, Mexican) called tortilla soup.

Well, to cut right to the cheese, I mean chase - you know it's been a long time since you've cooked when you can't even find the cheese grater. Worse yet, when you can't remember what the cheese grater looks like.

This has nothing to do with memory loss and everything to do with cooking blues, because I know what a grater looks like, I just couldn't remember what *mine* looked like.

In my case, it takes up way too much of my time, cooking that is.

For me, it's off to work by 8:30 a.m., Yabba-Dabba-Doo time is 5 p.m. (sometimes midnight), then home to feed the horses (two overgrown dogs really, with big appetites and even bigger ... never mind) then phone interviews for impending articles and more writing until 10 p.m., well let's just say hello fast food via my ATM card. Sleep fits in there somewhere between today and tomorrow, I'm just not sure where exactly. Now who hid the ladle?

I always tell everyone when I *do* cook, my stove thinks a new tenant moved in. At

this point, I can't make out if it's the onions making me cry or just the cooking.

I pour myself a glass of Chardonnay - this always helps. Truth be told, I cook just fine, and I receive my fair share of compliments when I host a dinner (key word: *when*).

I love to watch the Food Network cooking shows on Saturdays (how does Giada De Laurentiis stay so thin anyway?), and my obsession with Tupperware is off-the-charts. The wine is taking effect and I begin to search high and low (mostly low) for that new mini white Tupperware strainer with a practically noir look on my face.

What throws me off is my inexplicable love for buying and collecting kitchen-related relics, such as vintage half aprons with tie backs, vintage hand-held eggbeaters, salt and pepper shakers (I have more than 200 sets, seriously) and all-things Tupperware. Can we say "burp?"

Tortilla soup is almost done. So is the bottle of wine. But how could tortilla soup possibly take five hours to make? With no time left to read Bill Clinton's book "*Giving*," I plop on the couch and contemplate how it feels to be "receiving" no soup (because I'm full of wine) and wonder if I fed the horses yet. Can we say nay?

Kitchen is a mess and take-out would've only cost no more than two Abe Lincolns (hello Taco Bell), so why all the culinary fuss?

I'm thinking cooking is just not my thing.

I'm much better at putting words together than food, where the only things left on the floor and counters to clean-up are extra words, sentences and Oxford commas I didn't need.

By the way, I finally found the cheese grater. It was tucked neatly away in my sock drawer.

Charleen Earley can be reached at [editor@theorindanews.com](mailto:editor@theorindanews.com).

Help Our Veterans

The Lafayette War Veterans, Inc., which includes members from throughout the area, has seen an elimination of revenue since COVID-19. To maintain its building in Lafayette as well as help various veteran causes, the organization has started a GoFundMe account. All donations are tax-deductible. Go to [gofundme.com](http://gofundme.com) and select Lafayette War Veterans, Inc. or send a check to P.O. Box 501, Lafayette, CA, 94549.

Political Commentary or Just Vandalism?



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"Recently, the Orinda Police Department has been receiving a significant number of complaints from the community, regarding the theft and vandalism of political signs from all of the City Council candidates and both sides of the Measure R campaign," said Police Chief David Cook. "I urge you to support your choice and vote on Nov. 3. however, please leave the political signs posted in the approved public areas and on private property alone."

◆ EVERYDAY from page 12

about avoiding local restaurants if you and your partner are feeling a bit scrappy. In other words, if an argument is brewing, and, let's face it, during this crazy pandemic we are all ready to unleash at the slightest provocation, maybe it's best to avoid the local restaurant scene. Why? Because any time you dine out in Orinda you must be mentally prepared. You will bump into at least eight acquaintances and will need to remember names. And it's very difficult to remember names and politely inquire about their kids or their aging parents when you are preoccupied with scoring your points and winning your argument with your partner. I dunno, I'm envisioning edgy, metal lyrics like "*I wanna drill a Fourth Bore in your skull right now, but I can't because too many people are watching us fight.*"

And we've only scratched the surface... How about depicting the struggle to identify acquaintances while wearing masks in the grocery store, maybe a rappy number which repeats "*What? Sorry, I didn't catch that,*" the bane of masked conversation . . . finally replying to what you *think* you heard, which may or may not have been what was said. For example, "*I lost my job*" and the reply, "*IKR, this truffle dip is AMAZING!*" Maybe some clever way to work in "*At least we're not worrying about coffee breath anymore.*" Mint sales are down, a rich vein of parody here.

But we're running out of time, and pandemic life has fried our attention span. So perhaps we wrap up with all the young adult Orindans who completed their education and launched their careers but are still forced to live at home with their parents to save money because rent in San Francisco is outrageous. They channel all their frustrations into a rousing, high-energy dance number and ballad. Imagine this passionate solo:

*"I appreciate the roof or'head, and all the meals for free,  
but I can't be your Personal Uber, Mom, convenient tho' it may be.  
Don't tell me this is what folks do when they are Empty Nest,  
Your Book Club should wrap up by ten; you're old and need your rest.  
Remember this tomorrow, Mom, tho' my office is in my room,  
I can't 'go grab lunch' or 'walk the dogs' when I take a break from Zoom."*

The finale will be something grand, something TBD which draws the entire cast together in unison. Maybe aliens, maybe penguins - I'm still working on it because just like a Broadway musical, somehow, some way, this show has to end on a high note with all the good feels. No encores for 2020 though, pul-lease!

Mimi Bommarito can be reached at [editor@theorindanews.com](mailto:editor@theorindanews.com)

◆ DAR from page 11

Orindan Louise Diracles added, "Remembrance wreaths are a beautiful tribute to local veterans and a wonderful way of honoring those who sacrificed so much to protect our freedom."

Vanessa Crews, DAR member from Orinda, recalled a recent trip to the American Cemetery in Normandy, France. "I stood among thousands of crosses marking the graves of fallen patriots of World War II and felt overwhelmed with grief and gratitude for the supreme sacrifice these men and women made for the freedoms I enjoy today. It's an honor to participate with Acalanes DAR members and Wreaths Across America to sponsor wreaths for our veterans in the Lafayette Cemetery."

National Wreaths Across America Day is Saturday, Dec.19. The Lafayette Cemetery is located at 3285 Mt. Diablo Blvd. The free event is open to all people unless COVID-19 restrictions hold sway. The ceremony begins at noon. Please visit [www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org/CA0565](http://www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org/CA0565) for safety regulation updates.

For more information, contact Terry Lucido at 650.804.2564, [tlachenb@aol.com](mailto:tlachenb@aol.com), or visit Acalanes DAR at [www.AcalanesCaliforniaDar.org](http://www.AcalanesCaliforniaDar.org).



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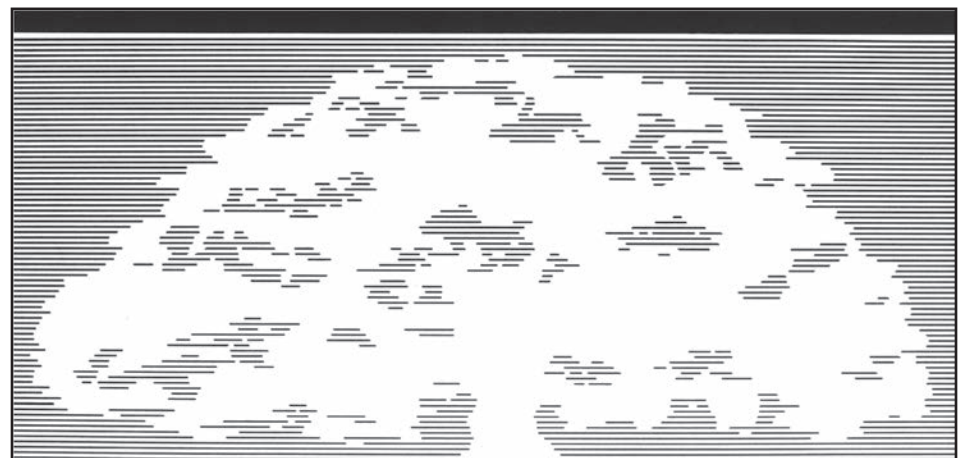
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AROUND TOWN

◆ **PARK** from page 13

Orinda's entrance. She recalled, "As a young housewife and activist, I had the idea to convert the former ugly parking lot surrounded by chain link fencing to a lovely landscaped park. This first impression of Orinda wasn't a pretty sight," Smith said. "I got permission from the Orinda Chamber of Commerce, which leased the land, to give up the lease so I could negotiate directly with PG&E. Fortunately, they agreed Orinda could lease the land provided maintenance could be supplied. That's when the county stepped in to offer maintenance. This all happened before Orinda was incorporated.

"Over a period of two years everything came together, but not without the whole community's help with money, labor, donations, professional and moral support. Civic organizations in Orinda which included The Orinda Association, Orinda Rotary, Orinda Lions, Orinda Park and Recreation District, Orinda Garden Club, Orinda Woman's Club, Montelindo Garden Club, dozens of volunteers and even the Boy Scouts provided help. It took a village to make it a reality and change the face of Orinda."

It was, however, the dedication of one woman who had a vision of what could be done to bring it to fruition that made it happen. Irene Smith was awarded the first William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental award in 1974 by The Orinda Association.

Former Mayor Bobbie Landers remembers Smith also persuaded PG&E to exchange the huge Eiffel Tower of power lines to the single pole seen now. At about the same time, a book was published about the worst entries to cities and towns, and Orinda made the Top Ten before the park was established. "It would be nice to actually have a more welcoming entry to our

community that befits the friendly feel of Orinda. I'm hoping," Landers said.

Yes, there is hope, but also impediments. Orinda's Park and Recreation Director, Todd Trimble, explained: "In Oct. 2018, a new plan for the Mini Park, designed by Gates and Associates of Walnut Creek, was approved. The Orinda Community Foundation agreed to provide \$200,000 toward its construction. PG&E, however, couldn't agree on the terms of a lease."

He continued, "In the meantime, \$25,000 is earmarked to do some things and the first priority is to fix the irrigation system. It has leaks, one under a sidewalk and the backflow needs repair. Then we can proceed to spruce up the area."

Trimble said the fountain was shut down four or five years ago because of the drought and will be replaced with a so-called waterless feature, two or three granite columns which have a slight flow of water trickling down them. The trees were cut down a few years ago because they interfered with transmission lines.

"Right now, the plants that remain are watered by hand. We have a contract with a maintenance company and will try to keep it looking better until the new design can be implemented," said Trimble.

The dedicated members of the Montelindo Garden Club (MGC) provided maintenance and upgrading of the park from 1996 to 2014. Past President and Board Member Katie Creighton said, "This



Known as the "Entrance to Orinda," plans for sprucing up the Crossroads Mini Park are underway, however much rides on PG&E for direction. SALLY HOGARTY

included 2,000 hours of work and \$8,000 in plants, mulch, bulbs and outsider labor from the club's funds. We also provided about 360 hours of professional design time as we developed a landscape plan to reconfigure and revitalize the plantings after the expected removal of redwoods by PG&E. This plan was presented and approved by the City Council in 2011, but before it could be implemented it was put on hold because of planning issues with PG&E. The club continued to maintain the park until 2014 when it became, logistically and financially, impossible to keep going given

the constant need for upgrading plants and mulching and the reduced support from the city."

So, the answers to Irene Smith's question about Orinda's Mini Park are complex. For now, with the funds provided, some revitalization of the park should be occurring. When PG&E decides how to handle the property, a beautiful transformation might take place so the park will be a most welcome "Entrance to Orinda."

*Bobbie Dodson can be reached at bobbiedodson@comcast.net*

**Best Bartenders in Town Vie for Bragging Rights**

■ **The Art of Mixology Winners Are...**

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK  
Assistant Editor

As with many events since March, the annual Art of Mixology was an online, virtual competition with winners announced last month. The largest annual fundraising event for the Lamorinda Arts Council, in-person tastings and samplings morphed into Mixology Cocktail Kits. Turning recipes from the five finalist bartenders into delicious cocktail kits, every ingredient was included for purchase, except the alcohol.

Bartenders mixed their craft cocktails for the Zoom audience Oct. 16, when the winners were announced.

Hailey Coder, an amateur mixologist, won First Place for her Two Faced cocktail, taking home a trophy plus \$500 cash. Sadé Stamps took Second Place, for which she



Art of Mixology Cocktail Kits were sold in front of Theatre Square by (L) Ani Breslin, Mixology Committee member and Denise Nomura, Lamorinda Arts Council President. KATHY ENZERINK

received a certificate and \$300 cash. Third place, awarding a certificate and \$150 cash was won by Ben Dimond. Mike Whipple, placing fourth, received a certificate and \$100 cash.

Brian Gamble, an amateur mixologist, won the coveted Audience Award with his recipe for Fall'ifornia Dreamin'. He received a trophy and \$200 cash.

Two Faced, by Hailey Coder, A refreshing concoction with a kick is made with El Mayor Tequila, mixed with the contrasting flavors of jalapeno and pineapple, cranberry and lime and rimmed with something dif-

ferent on each side.

Fall'ifornia Dreamin' by Brian Gamble, features St. George Breaking & Entering American Whiskey, combined with the taste of apple, St. George Spiced Pear Liqueur, chocolate and cozy spices.

"Videos of each mixologist making their drink is available on our website," said Denise Nomura, co-chair of the event and president of the Lamorinda Arts Council. Visit [www.LamorindaArts.org](http://www.LamorindaArts.org).

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

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**CITY/FIRE MEETING SCHEDULE**

Most meetings are held via Zoom. Please contact directly.

**City Council.** For November only, Nov. 10 and Nov. 17 at 7 p.m. viz Zoom. Go to agenda at [cityoforinda.org](http://cityoforinda.org) for Zoom meeting invitation.

**Historic Landmarks Committee.** Fourth Tuesday, 3-5 p.m. Call 925.788.7323.

**Moraga-Orinda Fire District.** Third Wednesday, 7 p.m. For agenda, go to [mofd.org/board/meetings](http://mofd.org/board/meetings).

**Planning Commission.** Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., [cityoforinda.org](http://cityoforinda.org).

## CLUB MEETINGS

## Club Meetings in November

While most clubs are not meeting during shelter-in-place, others offer Zoom meetings. Use contact info to find out.

**American Association of University Women - Orinda Moraga Lafayette Branch (AAUW-OML).** General meeting Tuesday, Nov. 17, 7 p.m., via Zoom, Speaker: AAUW Fellow. Visit AAUW-OML's website at <https://oml-ca.aauw.net>.

**Birding with Ben.** The group meets at a different birding location every Wednesday at 9 a.m., masks and social distancing rules are practiced and enforced. FREE. Email: Ben Petterson at [berntp988@gmail.com](mailto:berntp988@gmail.com) for weekly meeting information.

**Diablo Star Chapter #214.** Order of the Eastern Star. Second Monday, 7:30 p.m. 9 Altarinda Road, Orinda Masonic Lodge, 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). Contact Kent Long for Zoom link at [kentlong@moragaadobe.org](mailto:kentlong@moragaadobe.org).

**Friends of the Orinda Creeks.** Fourth Wednesday, 5 p.m., May Room, Orinda Library, 510.919.4765.

be conducted via Zoom video conferencing. 7 – 8:15 a.m. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82609498205>. We will resume our regular meetings at the Lafayette Park Hotel when conditions permit. [www.lamorindasunrise.com](http://www.lamorindasunrise.com) or [lamorindasunrise@gmail.com](mailto:lamorindasunrise@gmail.com). Meetings: Nov. 6: Bailey Farren, Innovative Fire Fighting; Nov.13: Dick Francis, Vietnam War POW Experience; Nov. 20: Hays Englehart, The Wonderful World of Cars; Nov. 27: No Meeting.

**Montelindo Garden Club.** Third Friday, Sept. through May. Lafayette Library and Learning Center's Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Meeting Nov. 20 at 10 a.m. on Zoom. Beauty and the Beast: California Wildflowers and Climate Change with Rob Badger and Nita Winter internationally acclaimed, award-winning wildflower photographers discussing climate change and other human impacts on the environment threatening wildflowers and the life that depends on them. To request a Zoom link email: [montelindogarden@aol.com](mailto:montelindogarden@aol.com)

**Orinda Association.** First Monday, 7 p.m., Orinda Library Plaza level, May Room, 925.254.0800.

Email Jean Barnhart at [jeanr.barnhart@gmail.com](mailto:jeanr.barnhart@gmail.com) or go to [www.orindawomansclub.org](http://www.orindawomansclub.org).

**Reservoir Walk for Seniors** meets Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at the center bench and we walk at 9 a.m. If you'd like to receive the weekly notice, e-mail to [jascala2@comcast.net](mailto:jascala2@comcast.net).

**Road Runners.** Runners meet 5:45 a.m. Tuesday at Papilion (67 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette), Wednesday (Gepetos 87 Orinda Way, Orinda), Thursday (SiSI, 910 Country Club Drive, Moraga) and Friday (Starbucks, 470 Moraga Road, Rheem). For more information

contact John Fazel, [runmnts@prodigy.net](mailto:runmnts@prodigy.net).

**Sons in Retirement (SIR) Lamorinda Branch 174** hosts, via Zoom, a speaker and discussion on the second Wednesday of each month at 11:30 a.m. SIR is a social organization of retired and semi-retired men who enjoy golf, walking, and other activities with friends. For info, call Tyler at 925.963.5741 or Bill at 925.963.0442 or go to [www.branch174.sirinc2.org](http://www.branch174.sirinc2.org).

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

#### ◆ HOLIDAYS from page 15

we do will be low-key and last-minute." The Schrittwiesers have two students away at college and a 90-year-old father-in-law living in their home, so she does not envision any large-scale gatherings in the foreseeable future. Schrittwieser, like so many other educators in the same tumultuous boat, also admitted that, at present, "I am honestly just trying to see my way through each week of distance learning."

On a humorous note, Schrittwieser shared, "If Andy and Katrina [youngest of her three children] should, indeed, drive home from college for a home-cooked feast, Andy will find that his bedroom has been transformed into a distance learning first grade classroom!" She continued, "He will find himself sleeping among alphabet posters, stuffed animals, and boxes of first grade reading books and math manipulatives!"

"Katrina will find her room has been converted to a storage space for furniture and items displaced in accommodating [spouse] Erwin's home office in our bedroom," she added. Talk about your authentic snapshot of COVID-19 life!

Maisie Hom has a daughter flying home from the East Coast, a son coming home from college and a close family friend with an extremely compromised immune system. The Hom family is considering celebrating 'Friendsgiving' several weeks early, before the colder weather jump starts cold and flu season. Hom's aging parents live in Hong Kong, so it is highly doubtful she will get to see them at either Thanksgiving or Christmas this year. Indeed, our hearts go out to those separated from family at the holidays, who have endured an uncomfortable separation since the quarantine began.

Ann Kunczynski's family typically spends Thanksgiving at an enormous gathering that spans five generations and joyfully spills out the living quarters of the host's home and into the yard, with

cousins of all ages. "This summer my grandfather cancelled the event, for obvious reasons," she explained. "But the thought of not seeing anyone this year is kind of hard," she admitted, adding, "Maybe we'll still gather with only one other family."

Melissa Matosian wondered if this unusual, fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants year could provide her big chance to finally replace the traditional turkey menu — food choices no one in her family particularly enjoys. "It's a lot of work for dishes that no one is really in love with," she laughed. "So I'm thinking, maybe this year I say to my relatives, 'I'll host, but we're dressing Hawaiian and grilling turkey burgers!'"

Whatever your preference, the staff of *The Orinda News* wishes you and yours a Happy and Healthy Thanksgiving!

Mimi Bommarito can be reached at [editor@theorindanews.com](mailto:editor@theorindanews.com)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Orinda Rotary** members organize donation for the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

**Guided Meditation.** Wednesdays, live on-line via zoom. 9 a.m. St. Mark's United Methodist Church, for link go to <https://www.stmarksorinda.org/contact>. Focuses on health, harmony and wholeness, 451 Moraga Way, Orinda, 925.254.5965.

**Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition.** Third Wednesday, 10 a.m., Orinda City Hall, Sarge Littlehale Room, 925.687.8844, ext. 227.

**Lamorinda Meditation Community.** Mondays and Thursdays, 10:30 a.m., Career Wisdoms Institute, 1036 Country Club Drive, Moraga. All levels and philosophies welcome. \$5 donation for the use of space. Contact Gaby for more details: [gcmozee@gmail.com](mailto:gcmozee@gmail.com).

**Lamorinda Nature Walk and Bird Watching for seniors.** Wednesdays, 9 a.m., free. Call 925.254.2445 for weekly meeting information.

**Lamorinda Republican Women Federated.** Third Thursday. For more information, search Facebook for Lamorinda Republican Women Federated or go to [www.lamorindarepublicanwomen.org](http://www.lamorindarepublicanwomen.org). Contact Elsie Euing at [ejeuing@comcast.net](mailto:ejeuing@comcast.net) or 925.254.8617.

**Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary.** Until further notice, all weekly meetings will

**Orinda Garden Club,** PO Box 34, Orinda, 925.257.0668, [www.orindagc.org](http://www.orindagc.org).

**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. Open to public on Wednesdays, 1-4 p.m.

**Orinda Junior Women's Club.** First Tuesday, via Zoom, 7 p.m., September through June. Orinda residents socializing and giving back to the community. [www.orindajuniors.org](http://www.orindajuniors.org).

**Orinda Job's Daughters.** First and third Mondays, 7 p.m., 9 Altarinda Road, 925.283.7176.

**Orinda Rotary.** Virtual meeting Wednesday, 12:30 p.m., Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way, 925.254.2222, go to [www.orindarotary.org](http://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 Woman's Club.** Currently meeting virtually Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m.




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REEL LESS TRAVELED

## Fitness Tip of the Month

**To Be In Great Shape...Follow these Eating Tips**

- Eat small meals/snacks throughout the day and keep your activity level high to burn off a lot of what you are eating.
- Focus on less fat and more protein.
- Limit complex carbohydrates.
- Limit or eliminate alcohol
- Protein is a priority and fruits and vegetables are necessary for nutrition. Both of these have fiber and will keep you from hunger and cravings as well.



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

### ◆ FITNESS from page 17

ger Type 2 Diabetic, at risk for cardiovascular disease or they are swimming faster and with more stamina than ever,” she said. “I never expected fitness to reach this deep into the quality of people’s lives and their health. I also love to work out and teach classes!”

Mueller gets a kick watching her clients fully engaged in their exercise routines.

“Our clients range in age from 30 to 92-years-old and everything in between. I am especially proud of my elders who walk standing straight, freely swinging their arms – walking like they mean it, with confidence,” she said.

Edgell says fitness is needed now more than ever, during the pandemic.

“Talk to any fitness expert or fitness fanatic, and they will tell you that fitness is a stress reliever. We are more stressed than ever right now with everything going on in the world,” said Edgell. “We need fitness to release all of that negative energy that’s building up inside of

us. High levels of cortisol – the ‘stress’ hormone – hinder our immune system, which can lead to several illnesses. Keeping our stress low and our immune system high will help us stay healthy and happy longer.”

Charleen Earley can be reached at [editor@theorindanews.com](mailto:editor@theorindanews.com).

### For More Information, Visit These Websites

[www.informaorinda.com](http://www.informaorinda.com) | Tristan and Tiffany Tool

[www.anytimefitness.com/gyms/4625/orinda-ca-94563/](http://www.anytimefitness.com/gyms/4625/orinda-ca-94563/) | Jami Edgell

[www.livingleanprogram.com](http://www.livingleanprogram.com) | Sheena Lakhotia

[www.corekinetics.com](http://www.corekinetics.com) | Carolyn Mueller

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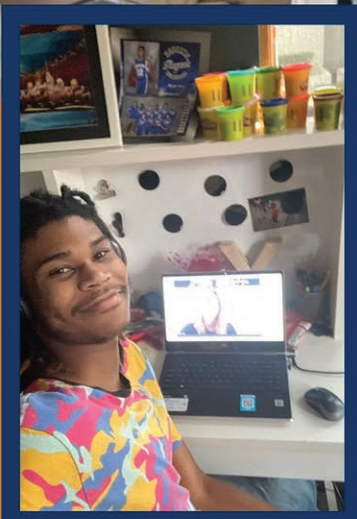
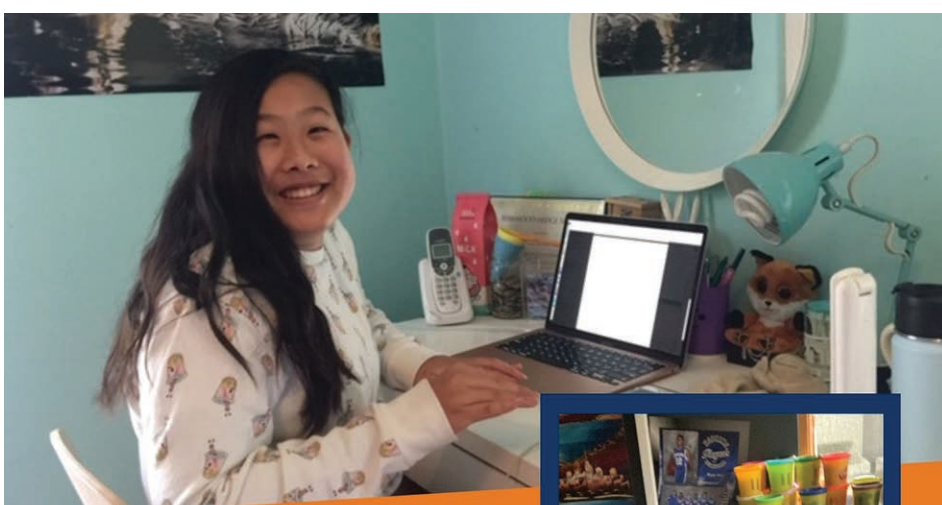
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## THE REEL LESS TRAVELED

“PUSH THE BUTTON, MAX”

TOM WESTLAKE

In this column, I’ve written about nearly every genre of film, from the spooky to the dramatic to the comic to the romantic but have never really explored the epic.

You know the type: The film with such a long, important story to tell it requires an intermission. These range from great historical sagas like *Dr. Zhivago* and *Lawrence of Arabia* to more personal, but no less sweeping epics like *Gone With The Wind*. They can take us to far off places as did *2001: A Space Odyssey* or more down to earth fantasies as Peter Jackson’s *Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings* films. Epics can deal with life stories such as *Reds*, *Barry Lyndon* and the musicals *Oliver* and *Fiddler on the Roof*. The one genre not given as much relevance is the epic comedy. Since we’re living in challenging times when laughter can be more important than ever, I’ll shine a spotlight on this little-known cinematic subset.

In order to do this, we will have to go all the way back to 1963. *It’s a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* came out of nowhere and hit the silver screen with a bang. Starring some of the bigger names at the time (Spencer Tracey, Mickey Rooney, Sid Caesar and that biggest of all big names Ethel Merman) it told the story of a cross-country chase to find a buried fortune.

Along the way much comic hi-jinx ensues, with cameo appearances ranging from Jack Benny to the Three Stooges, adding to the fun. Suffice to say, the movie ends in a wild climax, involving a fire engine ladder and people flying off in every direction. It’s also obvious with that much talent, this film almost has to be long – although even that varies. There’s a 154-minute version, one lasting 174 minutes and a longer one running 186 minutes.

The 1963 film lays the groundwork for future films. Flash forward to 1965, when a brash young director took full advantage of cinema’s experimental stage and wrote and directed a full-on epic farce called *The Great Race*. This film has it all, starting with the talented Blake Edwards.

Edwards, known primarily for his *Pink Panther* films, was no stranger to comedy. He had a hand in directing some of cinema’s greatest comedic actors, namely Peter Sellers, Dudley Moore and most notably, his wife Julie Andrews, in *Victor/Victoria* and *S.O.B.*

In *The Great Race* he has Tony Curtis,

Jack Lemon, Peter Falk and Natalie Wood, who are clearly having the time of their lives. Telling the story of an automobile race from New York to Paris, this film recalls an old-style of film making, but in color. The characterizations are purposefully cardboard in that the hero is always dressed in white, while the villain’s wardrobe is predictably black, and everyone plays it broad. There’s spectacle and a rivalry between the two main characters which is cartoonish in its invention and hilarity. *Race* also features danger, palace intrigue and the largest and longest pie fight in cinematic history. There’s even opportunity for a sing-along. Oh, and it clocks in at about 160 minutes for anyone who’s counting.

Moreover, just as *Mad World* might have paved the way for *Race*, this film inspired two more lengthy comedies, which, though nowhere near as amusing, are worth checking out: *Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines*, also released in 1965, and *Those Daring Young Men in Their Jaunty Jalopies*, released in 1969. Sadly, neither film reaches the mad cap heights of *The Great Race*, which may be the reason why there weren’t a lot of epic comedies which followed, but at least these are still out there and well worth seeing.

On the local front, I would be remiss not to mention the International Film Showcase is continuing its virtual cinema program. Check the schedule at [InternationalShowcase.org](http://InternationalShowcase.org).

Also, the Orinda Theatre should always be foremost in your mind. Thanks to all of you, the people who run the theatre are doing well, even going so far as opening on a limited basis. Recalling movie going as it used to be ages ago, they offer private screenings (Feel like a movie producer!) for parties of 25. They continue to have the Friday popcorn, wine and candy deal, virtual cinema and custom-made masks for sale. Go to [Facebook.com/orinda-theatre](https://www.facebook.com/orinda-theatre) and their continuous GoFundMe efforts at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/orinda-theatre-needs-your-help> for more information.

So, until next month, I encourage everyone to keep watching those wonderful, flickering light-filled images, for that is where the reel magic lies.

Tom Westlake can be reached at [poppinjay@earthlink.net](mailto:poppinjay@earthlink.net).

## Shellie Abbes Kirby

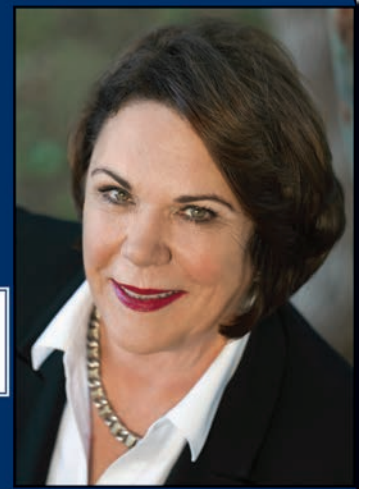
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## VISUAL ARTS

## Wilder Gallery: Art Students “The Human Conditional”

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

The Lamorinda Arts Council invites you to view a virtual multi-disciplinary exhibit of artwork from six students at Saint Mary's College in Moraga. Visiting Professor of Art Practice at Saint Mary's, Laura Elayne Miller, Faculty Advisor of the GRID, introduces the California GRID Art Club leadership's exploration of the relationship between the unknown and the re-invented truth through subjective human belief systems. Visit [www.lamorindaarts.org/current-exhibits-wilder/](http://www.lamorindaarts.org/current-exhibits-wilder/) for an overview of this exhibit.

The theme, “The Human Conditional,” explores the relationship between the unknown and the re-invented truth through

subjective human belief systems. Six artists offer their virtual exhibit through images and videos at [www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries](http://www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries). Miller said, “My students have been incredibly energized by the opportunity to share their artwork with the community.”

Caed Folkestad is an interdisciplinary artist from Ashland, OR, currently studying Art Practice and Communication. His work is largely concerned with the romanticism of youth and the inextricable connection between human beings and their environment.

Carly Hodes is an interdisciplinary artist who utilizes satire to explore the gender binary, and how it shapes the self-perception of males within contemporary society.

[SEE WILDER page 26]



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sierra Miller's 24" x 18" mixed media work entitled *Pathways* reminds us that, if we use our imagination, it can be fun to hold many options open while considering life's multiple choice questions.

## Library Gallery: trAction Paintings, de Young Exhibitors and Wild Hats

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

All Lamorinda Arts Council art exhibits are virtual until COVID-19 restrictions change. Artists displaying artwork in the virtual Art Gallery at the Orinda Library for the month of November include John A. Barry, Christian Ehrhorn, Judith Feins and Denise Goodman-Lachowsky. Learn more about them at [www.lamorindaarts.org/current-exhibits/](http://www.lamorindaarts.org/current-exhibits/).

Viewers may purchase exhibiting artists' artwork online during their scheduled month. To see images of artwork for sale by current exhibitors and their virtual video exhibits, visit [www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries/](http://www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries/).

Barry, of Danville, invented trAc-

tion painting when he was riding his bicycle through a puddle on the Iron Horse Trail and watched as the tire lay down a line of water on the pavement. He realized that if the water was water-based paint, he could create paintings by using bikes, skates, wheelchairs, etc., as his “brushes.”

His theme in “trAction Painting,” is seen in *The Red, White and Blue Rolls Over the Orange-Brown Shirts*, a 9 ft. x 5 ft. acrylic on canvas. “I have no aptitude for representational art so trAction painting enables me to focus on process and (sometimes) performance.” Learn more by watching his virtual exhibit video and viewing images at the online galleries webpage and [www.traction-painting.com](http://www.traction-painting.com).

Ehrhorn's 48" x 60" oil painting on canvas is one of the 877 artworks on display at *The de Young Open* through Jan. 3, 2021, artwork #493. He explained, “My artistic renderings begin when I heed unusually attached sensations that arrive when I observe people and places, and objects related to both. I most enjoy these moments when I am not confined by what my mind thinks is worthwhile but, instead, by what feels right during the time my artwork is formulated and executed.”

Learn more about *The de Young Open* in the accompanying story. You can reach Orinda resident Ehrhorn by dropping in at Christian Ehrhorn Fine Arts Gallery, 39 Moraga Way, in Orinda; see [www.christianehrhornfineart.com](http://www.christianehrhornfineart.com) for hours and details.

Feins' 30" x 40" *Edge Illuminated* oil painting on canvas, artwork #464, is also at *The de Young Open* until Jan. 3, 2021. One look at this painting and we can see her assertion, “I love to paint the brilliant tranquility of light on water,” is real. “I'm

fascinated by all that I see in the natural world. My passion for portraying that beauty is the force behind my paintings,” she said.

A resident of Orinda, she is thankful for its supportive arts community. According to Feins, “Although we're a small town, there's a lot of appreciation, involvement and creativity that remains vibrant even in challenging times.” She hopes her paintings bring pleasure and inspiration to others. Keep up with her artwork at [www.judithfeins.com](http://www.judithfeins.com).

Goodman-Lachowsky, who lives in Alameda, has always loved wearing hats and is an active member of the Red Hat Society (RHS). The group counts 35,000 members, including international loca-

tions. She likes RHS because it is fun and filled with the pleasant social interaction of connecting with old friends and making new ones.


When RHS announces a theme event, she makes a hat according to the theme and often gifts it to a new member. She scours garage sales, consignment and thrift stores for materials. Part of the fun is competing in and winning a hat contest like “Most Bling.” View *Seeing Red* and *Crowned in Pink* for a sample of her creations. She encourages women of all ages who are interested by hats and fun to explore the options at [www.redhatsociety.com](http://www.redhatsociety.com).

Elana O'Loskey can be reached at [business.orinda@gmail.com](mailto:business.orinda@gmail.com).




ELANA O'LOSKEY

Flamboyant hat maker **Denise Goodman-Lachowsky**, lives in Alameda and sports her *Salute to Captain* hat, made of felt, gold braid and sailing emblem. Her hat is not for sale.



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## VISUAL ARTS

## Orinda Artists Shine at “The de Young Open”

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

To celebrate the 125th anniversary of the de Young Memorial Museum in Golden Gate Park, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco is hosting *The de Young Open* through Jan. 3, 2021. Nothing like it has ever been seen as the call for artists went out only to artists living in the nine Bay Area counties surrounding San Francisco Bay. Three Orinda artists have work in the show: Christian Ehrhorn, Judith Feins and Nancy Vachani.

A staggering 11,514 artworks were submitted by 6,188 artists from the nine Bay Area counties. Every artwork image was reviewed anonymously multiple times by a group of qualified jurors who did not know the identities of the artists. When you visit the nine Herbst Exhibition Galleries (12,000 sq. ft.) displaying 877 artworks by 762 visionary Bay Area artists, you will notice the galleries are in thematic

groupings. All COVID-19 restrictions are in place, such as masks, social distancing and limited entry via ticketed reservations.

Themes include Black Lives Matter, social justice, global warming, feminism, political and economic equity, LGBTQ, San Francisco inspired artwork, COVID-19, abstraction, nature and the human figure in all age groups. To view all artwork in the exhibit, go to <https://deyoungopenexhibition.artcall.org/pages/web-gallery>.

Erhorn's 48" x 60" oil painting #493, *Highway 1* is in Gallery 6. He said, "I am honored to have been given the opportunity to display a painting as part of *The de Young Open* exhibition. It is a positively overwhelming and compassionate exhibit. Upon entering the galleries, a sense of community involvement erupts with a multitude of voices that bravely confront viewers with questions about many social issues." Learn more about his artwork at [www.christiane-hrhornfineart.com](http://www.christiane-hrhornfineart.com).

Feins' 30" x 40" oil painting #464, *Edge*

*Illuminated*, is also in Gallery 6. "Having my painting exhibited at the deYoung is a dream beyond my wildest imaginings," she said, continuing, "The whole experience, including how kind and welcoming the staff has been, has been a bright spot during these difficult times. I hope there'll be more *Open* exhibits so that many others can have this experience - there are so many talented artists in the Bay Area." Visit [www.judithfeins.com](http://www.judithfeins.com) for more information.

Vachani is one of only 50 artists who had two works selected for the exhibit. Her #630, *Self-Reflecting in Great Grandma's Mirror* and #635, *Pi Day at the Exploratorium* are both in Gallery 7. "I never would have imagined after visiting the museum over many decades that one day my work would be hung there in a juried exhibition. I wish to thank artist and instructor Patsy Taylor who encouraged me and others to enter the competition," said Vachani. Follow at [instagram.com/vachaniart](https://www.instagram.com/vachaniart).

Other East Bay artists in the show include Jennifer Perlmutter of Lafayette; Karen Frey of Oakland, now exhibiting work at Christian Ehrhorn Fine Arts Gal-



NANCY VACHANI

Orinda artist, **Nancy Vachani**, has her *Pi Day at the Exploratorium*, an \$800 painting, exhibited at The deYoung Open, now through Jan. 3, 2021.

lery. Linda Hoffman of Martinez and Carolyn Lord of Livermore. For details visit [deyoung.famsf.org/exhibitions/de-young-open](http://deyoung.famsf.org/exhibitions/de-young-open), email [contact@famsf.org](mailto:contact@famsf.org) or call 415.750.3600.

Elana O'Loskey can be reached at business. [orinda@theorindanews.com](mailto:orinda@theorindanews.com).



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Artist **Judith Feins** with her 30" x 40" *Edge Illuminated* oil on canvas, currently has her piece on loan at The de Young Open exhibit, now through Jan. 3, 2021.

#### ◆ WILDER from page 25

K. Isaac Kim is a Minnesota born artist with a Korean perspective; he experiments in music, painting, drawing, and digital drawing.

Amanda Moser is an interdisciplinary artist from San Diego studying Art Practice at Saint Mary's College. Her work is influenced by human nature and connectivity.

Sierra Miller is a mixed-media artist who uses ideas focused in psychology, philosophy and color theory in order to help people understand how they fit into the universe.

Sydney Toland is an interdisciplin-

ary artist from San Ramon, who focuses on creative imagery in order to capture fantastical realities in her artwork.

The Council hopes you enjoy this multifaceted student artist exploration into the roles of human beings as fosterers of subjective realities. The Art Gallery at Wilder is virtual because the Gallery is closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. Contact Curators Denise Nomura and Aniston Breslin at [wildergallery@lamorindaarts.org](mailto:wildergallery@lamorindaarts.org) with any questions.

Elana O'Loskey can be reached at business. [orinda@theorindanews.com](mailto:orinda@theorindanews.com).

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Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 AM - 12:00 Noon  
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CAR TIME / CAENDAR

# CAR TIME

Automotive Questions, Concerns and Ideas about the Future:  
California Phasing Out Gas Powered Vehicles By 2035?

By JOHN VANEK



Our state's politicians are moving towards accelerating California's efforts to combat global warming. It is a big step, confronting this problem with these major plans. Do we want to ban all internal-based combustion vehicles by 2035? This is California's reaction to this real problem.

We have to look at the big picture. The way we will meet the proposal's demands seems a bit complicated, leaving me with questions. What does the big picture look like in 15 years? What will transportation be like in 2035, based on the technology curve? What about the advancements in combustion engines? Will we have the resources to make the batteries needed for all the electric vehicles? What about the emissions issues related to increased power grid usage?

The big picture is to curb greenhouse emissions. In 15 years, transportation will be much different than it is today. In the not-so-distant future, we will have autonomous "cars" which do not require a driver. Car usage will be more like a service than ownership. More like an armchair with wheels than a traditional car, these vehicles will be comfortable shuttles, with better accessibility.

Many folks will prefer this alternative to making car payments and dealing with maintenance. Uber and Lyft are testing their driverless programs. Robo taxi companies like Cruise and Zoox are on the scene. These robo taxis are electric as well.

This segment will account for a large percentage of electric vehicles on the road. Currently, electric vehicles use lithium-ion batteries. The main raw material needed to produce these batteries is tungsten. China monopolizes the majority of tungsten mining today and is dominating the battery market. This will complicate a plan which relies on electric vehicles since using these batteries could have an impact on the U.S. economy.

There are other alternatives to gas burners, like low emission, natural gas and hydrogen vehicles currently on the road. There are presently infrastructure concerns with these vehicles, but they do fit the needs of some of today's drivers.

Solar energy is good but is still only able to handle a fraction of a zillion electric cars. If you do not have an effective solar set up, then you get your power off the grid. The

nation's electric grid gets its power mainly from burning coal and other fossil fuels which generate emissions. Sources say the nation's electric generating mix will be just 30% renewable by 2030.

And as for the electric car: The energy for it doesn't come from nowhere. Cars are charged from the nation's electrical grid, which means they're only as "clean" as America's mix of power sources.

Those are getting cleaner, but we still generate power mainly by burning fossil fuels. Natural gas is our biggest source of electricity, and the percentage is projected to increase. And coal, while still declining, will remain the second largest source of electricity for some time (third is nuclear power, which doesn't generate emissions but has other worrisome byproducts for environmentalists). Even with large increases in wind and solar generation, the Energy Information Administration (EIA) projects it could be not just gas burning cars which are endangered, but cars in general will have a finite life span and eventually go the way of the CD player. This transition will take a long time and it is not likely some of us will see gas burners completely outlawed in our lifetime.

While electric cars are the current rage, automotive manufacturers are using today's technology to design super clean-burning engines. Combining engine technology with new lightweight building concepts can significantly increase fuel mileage while also reducing tailpipe emissions.

The best solution may be a combination of alternative ideas and a worldwide commitment to address global warming. Things will change a lot in the next 15 years and we will see where it takes us. I am always available for automotive consultation, whether about your vehicle today or what your perfect vehicle might be in years to come.

John Vanek can be reached at [john@orindamotors.com](mailto:john@orindamotors.com).

### Memory Care Appeal Scheduled

Wilder Owners Association's appeal for the proposed 38-bed Countryhouse Memory Care facility at 1 Wilder will be heard by the Orinda City Council Nov. 17 at 7 p.m. No other agenda items are planned for this meeting. Go to [cityoforinda.org](http://cityoforinda.org).

## On the Calendar in November

**Orinda Library** Online events. Daily storytimes and events can be viewed at: [https://ccclib.bibliocommons.com/events/search/fq=program:\(5e2b7849df59234500450f71\)](https://ccclib.bibliocommons.com/events/search/fq=program:(5e2b7849df59234500450f71)). Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way, for front door service only: Mon. through Thu., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Fri. and Sat., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; closed Sun. The library is closed Nov. 11, closes at 6 p.m. Nov. 25 and is closed all day Nov. 26. Call 925.254.2184 for more information or visit <http://ccclib.org/>.

**Art Gallery at the Orinda Library** Virtual Exhibit featuring the artwork of John Barry, Christian Ehrhorn, Judith Feins and Denise Goodman-Lachowsky. Visit [www.lamorindaarts.org](http://www.lamorindaarts.org) for more information. See article p. 25.

**Art Gallery at Wilder** Virtual Exhibit featuring the artwork of Saint Mary's College art students Caed Folkestad, Carly Hodes, K. Isaac Kim, Amanda Moser, Sierra Miller and Sydney Toland. Visit [www.lamorindaarts.org](http://www.lamorindaarts.org) for more information. See article p. 25.

**Christian Science Church**, Prayer Garden open to all for Quiet Meditation. Pray, read, meditate. Books and periodicals with a spiritual perspective on current issues are free. Attendant on site from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., but all are welcome during daylight hours. 24 Orinda Way.

6 **Demystifying Spiritual Healing** with Beth Packer from Australia, a Christian Science Practitioner and world-wide speaker, discusses how spiritual healing occurs through prayer. 7:30 p.m., See [christianscienceorinda.org](http://christianscienceorinda.org) for free Zoom link.

**Orinda Theatre/Cine Cuvee** for pick up: a bottle of wine or 4 craft beers, popcorn and a package of candy for \$20. 5 to 6:30 p.m. Also Nov. 13, 20 and 24. See article p. 24.

7 **Orinda Farmers' Market**, 9 a.m. Orinda

Way in front of Rite Aid and the Community Park. [www.cccfm.org](http://www.cccfm.org) or market hotline at 925.431.8361. Also Nov. 14, 21 and 28. See article p. 13.

8 **American Association of University Women, Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch (AAUW-OML) Girls4STEM**, Refinery 101, featuring Christy Tormey, Zoom webinar for high school girls, first in a series, 3 p.m., an AAUW-OML STEM outreach program, free, for further information and to register visit the website [oml-ca.aauw.net](http://oml-ca.aauw.net). See article p. 14.

9 **Orinda Books**. Jess Walter, author of *Beautiful Ruins*, will introduce his new novel, *The Cold Millions*. This event is in partnership with the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation Distinguished Speaker Series. Buy the book in store, online ([info@orindabooks.com](mailto:info@orindabooks.com)) or by phone, 925.254.7606. After purchase, you'll receive a link to the Zoom event. November Artist of the Month at Orinda Books is Juanita Hagberg – enjoy her contemporary abstract and plein air impressions on the gallery wall in November.

15 **Art Embraces Words Webinar** hosted by the Lamorinda Arts Council, 2 p.m. Writers read from their work surrounded by visual artwork from local artists. Free. Register or get info at [www.lamorindaarts.org/art-embraces-words](http://www.lamorindaarts.org/art-embraces-words).

22 **American Association of University Women, Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch (AAUW-OML) Girls4STEM**, Engineering with a Purpose, featuring Adrienne Johnson, Zoom webinar for high school girls, second in a series, 3 p.m., an AAUW-OML STEM outreach program, free, for further information and to register visit the website [oml-ca.aauw.net](http://oml-ca.aauw.net). p. 14.

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



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BUSINESS BUZZ

# Business Buzz Putting a Personal Face on Local Business

ELANA O'LOSKEY



## Piccolo Napoli Reopens After Complete Remodel

In Oct. 2019, when Blair and Jason Bagneschi started work on their remodel and code upgrade of Piccolo Napoli, they never envisioned completion would take more than a calendar year. At press time, the brothers were confident they would reopen late-November. Moving forward, both Blair and Jason will be on the premises full time, along with Executive Chef Andrew Farr, to ensure a smooth reopening.

Anyone who has persevered through a residential or commercial remodel where careful inspectors ensure every single inch

of the premises meet code upgrades won't be surprised at the wait. The term "back to the studs" comes to mind, including new flooring, electrical and plumbing throughout. Throw COVID-19 and unbreathable air into the mix, and the timing makes sense.

Blair is the bar and beverage director for the brand-new bar, while Jason is the director of operations. They have kept in touch with some former staff members and will offer interviews as hiring commences. Between them, they have 40 years in the restaurant/bar business. Opening Piccolo Napoli together fulfills a long time dream for these talented brothers.

Their Italian heritage increases their knowledge base for offering regional Italian dishes to Orinda diners. Seasonal and fresh define much of their menu. The healthy living philosophy they believe in requires sourcing everything possible within a 100-mile radius to ensure freshness and support local businesses and farms. "They've been doing this in Italy for centuries," said Jason.

Pizza lovers can expect a handmade Neapolitan style crust with some traditional favorites such as margherita (mozzarella, tomato sauce and fresh basil) and pepperoni. Other choices are meat-centric, vegetarian-centric and cheese-centric, all with seasonal ingredients. For fall, try a vegetarian pizza with winter squash, caramelized onions and smoked provolone.

Look for vegetarian dishes such as broccolini with red onions and chili oil; roasted brassicas with black garlic hummus, beech mushrooms and carrots; and Fonduta



ELANA O'LOSKEY  
(L-R) Brothers **Blair and Jason Bagneschi**, along with Executive Chef Andrew Farr, are busy sourcing fresh produce and everything else from local farmers and businesses for their reopening later this month.



ELANA O'LOSKEY  
(L-R) **Kim, Elaine Zheng** and **Wendy** are ready to pamper your nails at Elaine's Nails across from Safeway on the Village Square side of Orinda at 1 Camino Sobrante, #10. Checks, cash or Venmo only.

Gorgonzola, or caramella (filled pasta that looks like candy wrappers) filled with figs, cheese and caramelized onions, topped with a gorgonzola sauce.

All pastas are handmade. Try pappardelle noodles, Tuscan style, with a wild boar or short rib ragu. Dinner specials will include Bistecca alla Fiorentina, made for 2-3 people and served with white beans, sage, bitter greens and roasted broccolini. Another planned special is trout from Mt. Lassen, with escarole and chanterelle mushrooms in red wine sauce.

Recipes from their great grandmother include focaccia; raw fish crudo (using whatever fish is in season); banana bread pudding with bourbon caramel sauce and banana bread croutons (similar to a trifle) with cocoa nibs on top for crunch. "A nice Limoncello goes well with this dessert," said Blair.

Blair has stocked their full bar with small batch local spirits like St. George, Hangar One, and Sonoma Whiskey. Expect a local and craft beer selection as well as an expansive wine list, including vetted California and Italian labels. His seasonal craft cocktail program for fall includes apple, pear and pumpkin flavors. He makes all his craft cocktail syrups and mixes from scratch. Whatever the season, your choices will be inventive and filled with flavor.

Piccolo Napoli is located at 2 Theatre Square, #144, Orinda, 925.253.1225, info@piccolo-napolic.com, www.piccolo-napoli-com. Dinner Hours are Mon. – Thurs. 5 – 9 p.m., Sat. 4 – 9 p.m., Sun., 4 – 9 p.m.; Brunch Sat. and Sun. 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. All COVID-19 precautions observed.

### Elaine's Nails – Open Daily

Elaine Zheng opened her nail salon 16 years ago. "I chose Orinda because I like a small town, and the townspeople here

seem more like a tight family than neighbors," said Zheng. She continued, "They've always been friendly and supportive; I'm lucky to be part of the community." She knew she did the right thing choosing Orinda because when she opened and brought her baby daughter to work, all her customers welcomed her little girl.

Longtime staff members at Elaine's Nails include Kim, Wendy, Lynn and Mei, all of whom are licensed and have 20 years experience as a manicurist. According to Zheng, she and her staff use the finest products so your nails last a long time. She strives to treat all customers like family.

There are various types of manicures available with different nail treatments at this salon, such as silk wrap, acrylic, gel, and shellac. Pedicures are also available. When you call for an appointment, know that the staff follows COVID-19 precautions by making appointments on a strict schedule so the minimum amount of people are present inside the salon. Weather permitting, the large double front doors of the salon are open to allow fresh air to circulate.

Elaine's Nails donates gift certificates to local schools and school-related sports activities. They also donate to Breast Cancer Awareness. When not working, especially during quarantine, Zheng has learned much more about baking. "My kids might have an extra five pounds on them by now," she said with a smile.

Stop by Elaine's Nails at 1 Camino Sobrante, #10, across from Safeway, just around the corner from Starbucks, 925.253.3688. Open daily 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. Accepts cash, checks, or Venmo but no credit or ATM cards. All COVID-19 precautions observed.

To send items for consideration, email O'Loskey at [business.orinda@gmail.com](mailto:business.orinda@gmail.com).



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What's  
On  
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Parks &  
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Working with selected contractors, Orinda Parks and Rec is providing all-day care for grades K-5, providing distance learning support and enrichment.

Also, in an effort to serve as many community needs as possible, additional youth and adult enrichment programs are also being offered. In all cases, we are committed to providing programming that meets or exceeds the latest county and CDC health and safety guidelines and protocol.

Please stay tuned to our website for all the program details and latest information.

[www.OrindaParksandRec.org](http://www.OrindaParksandRec.org)

We Will Get Through This Together



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 – **Currently Closed**