



THE ORINDA NEWS

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October 2020

Council Candidates to Answer a Myriad of Questions During Forum

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

The Orinda Association is hosting a virtual forum Thursday, Oct. 8, from 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m. for three candidates vying for two places on the City Council board. Incumbents Darlene Gee and Inga Miller and challenger Latika Malkani will be given equal opportunities to respond to questions submitted by the public during a question and answer session moderated by the League of Women Voters. Incumbent Moraga-Orinda Fire District 5 Board Member Craig Jorgens, running unopposed, will speak after the forum about fire prevention, fuel reduction and the Firewise program.

The forum will broadcast in real time via Zoom and recorded to view at a later date on Contra Costa Television (CCTV), Channel 26. Questions for the candidates can be



Darlene Gee

emailed to: editor@theorindanews.com. Deadline is no later than noon, Monday, Oct. 5, to make sure the moderator receives [SEE FORUM page 3]



Latika Malkani



Inga Miller

Local AAUW to Host League of Women Voters on 12 Propositions Oct. 13

By LAURA MONIN
AAUW-OML, Public Policy

community outreach projects, interest groups and educational opportunities.

Election Day is almost here. In addition to choosing our next president, there are 12 propositions on the ballot, among them issues such as ending the ban on affirmative action, restoring the right to vote to people on parole, and changing how some commercial property gets taxed.

Are you undecided? Confused? The American Association of University Women Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch (AAUW-OML) has help on the way. The group will host representatives from the League of Women Voters (LWV) at its Tuesday, Oct. 13, 7 p.m. meeting. They will give a nonpartisan presentation about each of the 12 propositions, including pro and con statements. The program, via Zoom, is free and open to the public. To receive the Zoom link to the program, visit AAUW-OML's website at oml-ca.aauw.net.

The American Association of University Women advances gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy. The Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch meets monthly and sponsors

Classic and Exotic Cars Tour Orinda



DAVID DIERKS

Lucky Devil, a 1960 Thunderbird, was a colorful part of the Orinda Classic Car Tour on Sept. 12.

Owner **Tim Tolle** said, "My car is painted with House of Color red and silver flake. I painted old school tattoo flash all over it back in 1994. My influences are Von Dutch, Sailor Jerry, Big Daddy Roth and Barris."

This car and more than 65 others toured through various parts of Orinda and were viewed via Zoom throughout the day. See story on Page 2.

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Joe Rubay For State Assembly, District 16



Joe with his wife Cindy and daughters Alexa and Nathalie

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- ★ Equal Rights for All
- ★ Efforts to ensure clean water and clear air for everyone



Please visit my website www.JoeRubay.com and join the fight to take back our state.

Find these stories and more on our website TheOrindaNews.com.

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CARS



DAVID DIERKS

Richard Lane's 1954 Chevrolet 210 leads this group of classic cars (including a 1963 Buick Riviera, 1967 Ford Thunderbird, 2018 Ferrari 488 Spyder, 1973 Porsche 911 and a 1965 Porsche 356) waiting at Orinda Motors to begin their tour.

Quality Cars on Bad Air Quality Day

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

With all the pomp and circumstance of race day at the Indy 500, the Orinda Classic Car Tour got underway Saturday, Sept. 12, with black and white checkered flags, pilot cars and a police escort. Notwithstanding smoke-filled skies and bad air quality, more than 60 classic, muscle and vintage cars wended their way through Orinda, Lafayette, Moraga and the Berkley Hills/Grizzly Peak before returning to base in front of Orinda Motors.

Bystanders along the route, safely distanced in cohorts, were entertained with horns blaring, lots of waving from drivers and passengers and one long, musical "oogah" emanating from under a hood, which brought guaranteed smiles.

The livestream broadcast via Zoom was a huge hit with most Car Tour viewers attending online. Hosted by Steve Harwood and Jay Ward, the two and a half-hour broadcast highlighted real-time car and

driver entrants along the route, classic film clips, video from previous car shows and hot rod music. Impressive were the views from drones, strategically placed along the 30-mile course. The overhead view as the cars departed from Orinda Way was especially popular.

Online viewer Leo offered his congratulations: "You did a wonderful production, the explanations of car and owners, the conversations between the two hosts and the movie trailers, wow, what a nice touch. I saw my friend Ed Benson with his classic car *Gummie*. Congrats."

Volunteers met at the Car Tour headquarters at 7 a.m. to place tables, chairs, road closure barricades and signs and to hang flags and handle COVID-19 protocols for sanitation. "Everything was so different this year," said Diane Lautz, co-chair. "Our volunteers were essential, from master parkers, to the video team. They quickly adapted to last-minute changes from the original plans." She particularly noted the

[SEE TOUR page 22]

CAR TIME

Is It Still Worth It to Keep Your Current Vehicle?

By JOHN VANEK



At some point, you may be faced with the decision as to whether or not your vehicle is worth keeping. I find that sometimes people like their car but question how much money to spend on it. It is important to look at the big picture.

Sometimes, our lives demand a different type of vehicle. An expanding family, for example, may face this circumstance. Conversely, you may have an empty nest and no longer need a large SUV. In other cases, the vehicle still fits your needs, and it makes more sense to keep it.

Lamorinda motorists faced with the decision about making a big investment for a vehicle typically weigh whether it is a smart move. It is prudent to remember these cars and SUVs, though when new looking as if they would never need it, require maintenance and upkeep as the years go by, which translates to required financial investments.

Wear and tear components (your battery, tires and brakes) are routine expectations. Unfortunately, owners may somewhat neglect maintenance and end up with a shocking bill. This does not mean you have to dump the vehicle. Replacing it does not usually save money.

There are other times, however, when the family hauler needs something significant like a transmission or an engine that exceeds the current value of the vehicle. Once again, this does not mean it is not worth the repair since you might be adding value with the big-ticket item. The alternative is usually more expensive in the long run. If you try to replace it with a similar used ve-

hicle, you are taking a chance it will require further expenses as well. If you replace it with a new car, all of the expenses that go along with ownership increase.

Your registration fees will double or triple. Insurance costs will also go up, not to mention interest on car payments. And, the cycle will continue. When your purchase is still being paid off, it might be time again for a battery, four tires, or brakes, etc. I ask my customers a few simple questions: Do you like the vehicle still? Does it do all of the things you need it to do? Do you need a vehicle that does more? If it still suits your needs, then it is okay to make a significant investment. You will get your investment back by just driving it and using it. Meanwhile every year you own it, the registration fees and insurance costs will go down.

It may not have the whiz-bang techno features of today's vehicles, but those are the features that are most likely to fail and cost money to repair in the future. As a matter of fact, today's vehicles have much more technology that will be more costly in the future. If your car does need a significant repair, it is a good idea to have an overall inspection performed by somebody you trust. That way you can understand if there are other required repairs that could affect your decision. As usual I encourage you to be a good consumer of auto repair. I am always available for automotive consultation.

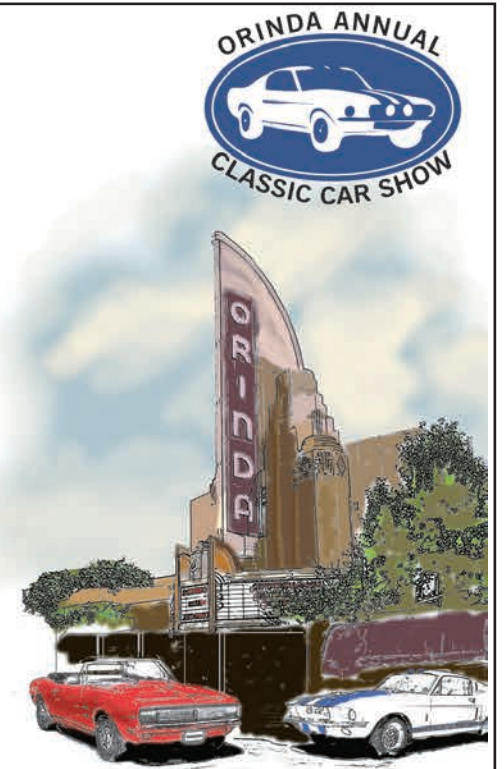
You can reach John Vanek at john@orindamotors.com.

Orinda Classic Car Tour Was A Hit - Thanks To Our Supporters and Sponsors.

- The Orinda Classic Car Tour on Saturday September 12th was highly successful – with over 100 cars registered. The Tour spanned some 30 miles throughout Lamorinda and was a big hit with many happy drivers, friends & family.
- The first ever "Car Tour Live Zoom Broadcast" presented by Steve Harwood and Jay Ward was also a smashing success- with hundreds of viewers watching from home. You can relive the memories and check out the live zoom video on the Orinda Classic Car Show website at www.orindacarshow.com.
- We sincerely thank all of the volunteers that made this happen, including the National Charities League, and our Car Show Master Parkers. And special thanks to our sponsors listed below, for their dedication to supporting the Orinda Association's Seniors Around Town free ride program for so many deserving Orinda seniors.

Orinda Classic Car Show Committee
Diane Lautz and Bill Waterman, Co-Chairs
Steve Harwood, Kate Wiley, Mike Robinson,
John Vanek, Bill Criswell, Todd Mercer,
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A Message From the OA President
Car Tour and Elections



Carlos Baltodano

As we enter the month of October, we grieve the victims of the horrific fires in the Western states. Thousands of people are still trying to survive the “apocalyptic” fires. Our prayers and thoughts are with them as well as those who have lost their lives and their homes.

On Sept. 12, under a cloudy and smoky sky, more than 65 vintage cars toured through Orinda, Moraga and the Berkeley Hills for Orinda’s reimagined Classic Car Show (Tour). Proud owners lined up their classic prized cars in groups of 20 and roared their engines. There were vintage Thunderbirds, Mustangs, Chevilles and Camaros. My favorite was Tim Tolle’s 1960 Thunderbird hand painted in old school tattoo flash inspired by tattoo artists Sailor Jerry and Big Daddy Roth.

The tour, which adhered to strict county health guidelines, required great imagination and organization by the car committee. The show went from cancellation to a virtual Zoom event to a car tour. As Diane

Lautz, Co-Chair of the event, said, “we made lemonade out of lemons.”

We would like to thank all the members of the committee for organizing such a wonderful event. A special thank you goes



HORATIO JUNG

Orinda Association Board Members **Bill Waterman** and **Diane Lautz** co-chaired the Orinda Classic Car Tour, braving smoke-filled air to bring the annual event to fruition.

to Steve Harwood, who presided over the filming and broadcasting of the tour in real time. And yes, there really were drones filming the tour. You can still see the car tour by visiting the OA website, oa@OrindaAssociation.org.

Elections

As we approach election day on Nov. 3, I would like to address two important local issues. On the ballot will be Measure R, which would raise the current half-cent city sales tax to one cent. This means that it will cost an additional 50 cents for each \$100 purchase. Food and medicine would be exempt from the sales tax.

Most of the money the city receives from sales tax comes from car sales. The car sales tax goes to the city where the purchaser lives, not where the car is purchased.

Measure R would need 50%, plus one vote to go into effect. If you are wondering about other cities, many other local cities, including Moraga and Richmond, already have a 1% sales tax. Since this is a general sales tax, the city council is not allowed to dedicate it to a specific purpose. The city council, however, has gone on record that it intends to spend the money for the first few years on fire fuel reduction. Private roads would also be included in the fire safety work. With the high fire danger and lots of dangerous brush and growth buildup, these additional funds would address quickly reducing the fuel load that threatens us.

To further clarify this issue, and many

[SEE PRESIDENT page 25]

◆ FORUM from page 1

them in time to be included Thursday evening. Questions will be presented anonymously to the candidates, and no questions will be accepted during the broadcast.

Organizer Cindy Powell said there should be time for about 12 questions to be presented to the candidates.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Craig Jorgens.

Not being allowed to gather, all participants will join the forum from their homes. Steve Harwood is handling the technical side of the Zoom broadcast, which may be accessed at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88000358655>.

Kathy Enzerink can be reached at kathy@theorindanews.com

The Orinda Association

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

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

Visit our office at 26 Orinda Way
(Library Plaza)
Phone: 254-0800
www.OrindaAssociation.org

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



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The Orinda Association Presents

CANDIDATES FORUM
Zoom Webinar
October 8, 6:30-8 pm

ORINDA CITY COUNCIL FORUM
Darlene Gee
Latika Malkani
Inga Miller

The Live Stream Broadcast will include questions previously submitted to *The Orinda News* and moderated by League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley

Send Candidate questions to Editor@TheOrindaNews.com by Noon, Monday, Oct 5
Questions will not be accepted by moderator

Forum will be followed by a Firewise presentation from Craig Jorgens, MOFD District 5 board member

Access the Live Stream Broadcast at:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88000358655>
Enter name and email address to join
Or go to www.OrindaAssociation.org

Forum will be recorded to be viewed later on CCTV, Comcast public access channel 26, The Orinda Association and City of Orinda websites.

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EDITORIAL

Anyone Seen the Locusts Yet?

It started as a relatively normal March in the new decade of 2020. News of a new virus in Asia and Europe had caught a few people's attention but didn't seem like anything to worry about. Then it began to spread; cruise ships became petri dishes for the virus, and, before we knew it, shelter-in-place was a way of life. As businesses closed and the economy tanked, it didn't seem life could get much worse.

Then unprecedented heat took over the Bay Area, taking its toll on many who

didn't have air conditioning, something seldom needed given our natural fog-based, air-cooling system. Generally, when a heat wave strikes, people flock to the beaches, swimming pools, indoor malls and movie theaters. COVID-19, however, made such choices impossible.

To add to the angst, fires from the Bay Area as well as Oregon and Washington made the air quality detrimental to health. With N-95 masks at a premium, just going outside became a challenge. In an unprecedented move, the Orinda Library and the Orinda Farmers' Market closed the weekend of Sept. 12 to protect the health of staff and customers as the air quality index showed Orinda moving into the "unhealthy" rating.

What's next? Locusts?

While we all cope with these challenges, it's easy to become depressed, angry and fearful. I often use exercise to alleviate some of these feelings, but with the current air quality, that is limited to inside workouts – not nearly as relaxing. I received an email from Tanuka Gordon of *Mindful Littles* the other day which reminded me how daily practices of mindfulness and habits of self-compassion can help one find balance.

The next time I'm tempted to look outside for the locusts, I'm going to try closing my eyes instead and do a little meditation and yoga. Maybe I'll finally get that tree pose down!

– Sally Hogarty, Executive Editor



KATHY ENZERINK

For many days in a row, the Orinda sky filled with smoke creating hazardous to very hazardous air quality.



dickling@gmail.com

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Letters to the Editor

Borderline Illegal Tax Grab

My wife and I are residents of Wilder and are in a subset of Orinda / Lamorinda residents that are disproportionately taxed but receive somewhat lesser benefits than other residents. While we understand this is California and over-regulation and tax grabs are unfortunately the norm, it is getting out of hand particularly with our lives and livelihoods, as well as that of our neighbors, all being materially and adversely affected by the ongoing pandemic and related public safety issues.

We are staunchly against Measure R as another ill-advised, hare-brained and borderline illegal tax grab by local officials. This adds to the list of nonsensical actions around basically pimping out Wilder House for tax revenues, sloppy enforcement of the fields, an even more idiotic placement of a memory care facility on a major highway near Wilder and other tax grabs – all she-nanigans that Wilder residents are gearing up to fight.

We ask that the relevant officials think things through for all residents, as opposed to focusing simply on their budget and tout-

ing their ability to stay in office.

– Chris Shen

It's About Time!

I am writing to add my support for Orinda's Downtown Precise Plan (covering privately owned property), which will complement the ConnectOrinda Plan (covering City-owned property). The planning process for both plans has been extraordinary with many community meetings and much citizen involvement. It's about time we did something about our tired-looking downtown!

Believe it or not, since Theatre Square opened 25 years ago, Orinda has not seen a single new project break ground in our "commercial" districts. In addition, only two of the current 53 commercial buildings in Orinda have been renovated during that time frame. We have work to do if we want to encourage renovations and new development.

Our height and residential density limits are so outdated and restrictive, they actually discourage commercial property owners from making improvement to their

properties.

We should support the Downtown Precise Plan, now being formulated, so we can address the changes that are needed to Orinda's old Objective Design Standards. We all need to get involved.

In my experience, there is better shopping available in the Town of Moraga. We can do better. We deserve better!

– Ellen Dale

Orinda Association Should Get More Credit

I enjoyed reading your article in the September edition of *The Orinda News* about the efforts to save the Orinda Theatre – both current and past. With respect to the latter, your article gives far too little credit to the Orinda Association, which played a large role in saving the theatre. The Friends of the Orinda Theatre surely deserve a lot of credit for obtaining the emergency stay of

[SEE LETTERS page 6]

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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. Letters to Editor for the Nov. issue are due **October 8, 2020**.

For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 (jill@aspenconsult.net), Elana O'Loskey at 925-984-1751 (elanao@mac.com) or Kathy Enzerink at 252-626-2109 (kathy@theorindanews.com). The deadline for the November issue is **October 8, 2020**.

LOCAL NEWS

U.S. Post Office Protest Rally



KATHY ENZERINK
Madeline (left) and Sofia, with their father Chad Curran, hold signs they made for the rally.

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

A synchronized, national rally to “Save the Post Office from Trump” was held Saturday, Aug. 22 at 11 a.m., and Orinda was no exception, with a rally held in the parking area next to the Orinda Post Office.

Local organizer Chad Curran said the main goal of the event was to “protect mail-in voting.”

More than 1,000 rallies were scheduled in all 50 states at 11 a.m. local time. According to MoveOn.org, Civic Action, a nonprofit which focuses on “education and advocacy ... and supporting the development of more grass root leaders,” orchestrated the “Save the Post Office Saturday” events.

[SEE USPS page 25]



CONTRIBUTED

The Orinda City Council viewed proposed high-density projects such as this one on Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette, while considering proposed changes in Orinda building regulations.

Downtown Precise Plan Focus on Residential, Mixed-Use Development

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

City Council had considered department staff recommended changes to residential density limits, modifications to allowable building heights and changes to the number of stories permitted in a building.

Contentious Orinda issues concerning density limits, mixed-use and multi-family dwellings, allowable building heights and the number of stories permitted in a building on privately-owned property remained up in the air as the City Council and its Downtown Precise Planning (DPP) Sub-Committee worked through various meetings.

Recommendations included allowing privately-owned properties in the downtown commercial and office districts, located on the south and north sides of Hwy. 24, to be developed to include mixed-use and/or residential structures. Another change would see residential density increase from 10 to 30 dwelling units per acre in the Downtown Commercial (Theater) District and from “not allowed” to 25 dwelling units in the downtown office (Village) District. In certain areas, building heights could reach 55 feet, 20 feet higher than the current maximum allowed. These recommendations do not apply to city-owned properties.

The next sub-committee meeting, open to the public, will focus on building heights. A date had not been scheduled at press time.

In addition to viewing renditions of mixed-used and high-density dwelling buildings in nearby communities, discussions covered scenarios when incentives are made a part of granting waivers. Pub-

City Council Members Nick Kosla and Inga Miller, who serve as the Downtown Precise Planning (DPP) Sub-Committee, met with Planning Department staff members Sept. 10 to continue exploring the future of downtown development, with possible waivers to current building height, population density and setback regulations on the agenda. No decisions were made, nor actions taken.

During its Aug. 18 meeting, the Orinda

[SEE DOWNTOWN page 22]

Charleen Earley Takes Over as Editor

By SALLY HOGARTY
Executive Editor

Long-time freelance writer, publisher and teacher Charleen Earley became *The Orinda News*' editor-in-chief as of Oct. 1.

An adjunct journalism professor at Diablo Valley College, Butte College and Foothill College, Earley is well grounded in the basics of writing. Coupled with her 24 years' experience as a freelance writer/photographer for such Bay Area publications as *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Record*, *East Bay Times* and *Napa Valley Life Magazine*, Earley is a welcome addition to *The Orinda News* staff.

“I’m overjoyed and honored to be a part of what feels like a team and family at *The Orinda News*,” Earley said. “Writing, publishing, interviewing, editing and

[SEE EDITOR page 20]



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Charleen Earley was appointed editor-in-chief of *The Orinda News* in October.

We All Agree – Measure R Is Urgent and Essential for a Safer Orinda

Dear Orinda Neighbors,

As current and former Orinda mayors and city councilmembers, we urge you to vote Yes on R for a Safer Orinda.

Recent fire seasons have been the hottest, driest and most destructive on record. Orinda's ample vegetation could fuel a wildfire with conditions similar to those in Santa Rosa, Paradise and other communities. Proactive wildfire prevention is needed urgently to keep Orinda safe.

With another deadly and destructive fire season upon us, wildfire prevention work CANNOT WAIT. Voting Yes on R will let Orinda get to work before it's too late reducing flammable vegetation, creating fire breaks, ensuring defensible space and safe evacuation routes as recommended by our local fire professionals.

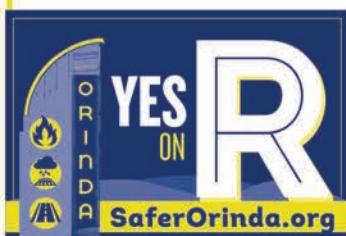
Measure R renews Orinda's expiring voter-approved sales tax and increases the rate by 1/2¢ (50¢ on a \$100 purchase). For the past eight years, these locally-controlled funds have been used to repair Orinda's roads, which just a few years ago were rated among the worst in the Bay Area. All scheduled road improvements were completed on budget and ahead of schedule, as documented by the Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission.

Voting Yes on R will continue this important local funding source for local needs. In addition to reducing wildfire risk, Measure R will maintain our improved roads to protect the investment we've made and ensure they do not deteriorate to their prior condition, requiring costly repairs. Measure R will upgrade Orinda's aging and deteriorating storm drains to prevent flooding and sinkholes; it also will help to maintain safe emergency evacuation routes.

Measure R continues strict fiscal accountability protections, including an independent citizens' oversight committee and mandatory annual audits. By law, all funds must stay in Orinda and cannot be taken away by Sacramento. Essential purchases like groceries and prescription medicines are exempt from Measure R so it is not a burden to those on fixed or limited incomes.

Preventing wildfires and maintaining Orinda's infrastructure will protect our safety, our quality of life and our property values.

Please join us in voting Yes on R.



Darlene K. Gee
Mayor
Darlene Gee



Amy Worth
Vice Mayor
Amy Worth



Dennis Fay
Councilmember
Dennis Fay



Nick Kosla
Councilmember
Nick Kosla



Inga Miller
Councilmember
Inga Miller



Laura Abrams
Former Mayor
Laura Abrams



Steve M. Glazer
Former Mayor
Steve Glazer



Joyce Hawkins
Former Mayor
Joyce Hawkins



Bill Judge
Former Mayor
Bill Judge



Bobbie Landers
Former Mayor
Bobbie Landers



Tom McCormick
Former Mayor
Tom McCormick



Dean Orr
Former Mayor
Dean Orr



Sue Severson
Former Mayor
Sue Severson



Victoria Smith
Former Mayor
Victoria Smith



Allan Tabor
Former Mayor
Allan Tabor

LETTERS

◆ LETTERS from page 4

demolition from the California Supreme Court that prevented demolition while the Friends and OA cases were pending. It was the argument made in the Orinda Association's briefs, however, that prevailed on the final appeal. Representing the OA was the firm of Pillsbury, Madison & Sutro, also working pro bono. The winning argument related to the height of the proposed new building, which so dramatically exceeded the allowed limits that the variance granted by the County Planning Commission, was found to have been unwarranted.

I would also join in urging readers to get behind the GoFundMe campaign started by the theatre's proprietor. It would be a shame if the pandemic should bring an end to this historic building that adds so much to the City of Orinda.

As an historical footnote, the OA board members who initiated the lawsuit that helped save the theatre also, during their tenure, began publication of *The New Orinda News* (*The Orinda News*' predecessor newspaper) and initiated sponsorship of the first Fourth of July parade and festivities that we enjoy each year.

— Jim Roethe

Protect Orinda: Vote Yes on Measure R

Orinda needs Measure R, to introduce a new 1% Transactions and Use Tax (TUT), to replace the existing half percent TUT, which is due to expire in 2023.

Passage of this measure will provide Orinda an estimated \$2.4 million per year, a resource the city needs to significantly re-

duce the city's risk of catastrophic damage due to wildfires and flooding, and to protect the recent investments made in our roads.

Recent lightning-caused wildfires and the fact that much of Orinda is in an elevated or extreme fire risk area, provide a very clear warning that our city must prepare for potential severe wildfires, and must take steps to reduce wildfire risk.

The failure of the storm-drain pipe under Miner Road, caused a dangerous sinkhole, clearly demonstrating what can happen if we don't address very old storm drain pipes in need of repair or replacement.

In the past several years, we have invested heavily in repairing many of our roads. Most are now in very good condition, and will stay that way for a number of years. But, if we don't perform needed maintenance, they will fall apart again, and we will have wasted all the money we spent.

Measure R will provide Orinda with resources we desperately need to address these issues and will give the city flexibility to direct funds where they are most urgently needed. The mandated annual audit and the required citizens' oversight committee will assure that the funds provided are spent effectively.

A Transactions and Use Tax is a type of sales tax that applies not only to items sold in the city, but also to items, such as cars, major electronics and appliances that are purchased outside the city, for use in the city.

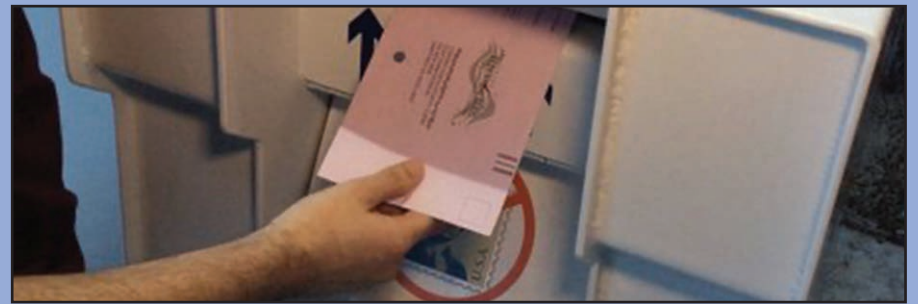
Vote Yes on Measure R.

— Jud Hammon

Vote Yes on Measure R

As a homeowner in Orinda, I write in

Need-to-Know When Voting by Mail



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Every registered California voter will receive a vote-by-mail ballot with a prepaid postage return envelope for the Nov. 3 general election. Mail-in ballots may be placed in drop boxes, returned to any county elections office or polling place on or before election day. If mailing, the ballot must be postmarked no later than Nov. 3, but the U.S. Postal Service recommends mailing the ballot one week early.

Important Dates:

Oct. 5: Early voting begins

Oct. 19: Deadline to register online or by mail (www.RegistertoVote.ca.gov)

Oct. 27: Deadline to request a mail-in ballot

Nov. 3: Election Day

To track mail-in ballots, sign up at www.WheresMyBallot.sos.ca.gov. The location of in-person polling places is printed on the back page of the county Voter Information Guide.

support of the very small 0.5% tax increase that Measure R stipulates. The measure is written as an increase of 1% because Orinda already has a sales tax of 0.5%, which is set to expire, so this measure only increases what we are used to spending by 0.5%.

I support this measure because of how Orinda plans to spend this money: dedicated to fire prevention and mitigation. Although as an individual homeowner, I have taken steps to ameliorate fire hazards on my property, individual homeowners cannot do it alone.

Through this measure, Orinda will have a continual, consistent funding source to keep our community as fire safe as possible. Moraga has already passed a measure on this issue, and it's time for Orinda to do the same. When I hear about communities being dropped from insurance policies, I worry. When I smell the smoke from nearby fires, I worry. I am so grateful that I can turn these worries into action by voting YES on Measure R.

— Maggie Reeves

Vote in Favor of the Small Fire Mitigation Tax

Regarding the proposed new 1% sales tax (Measure R), Hattie Hamlin, in the September issue of this paper, took issue

with my letter suggesting this new tax is ill advised.

Even if the city now says how it intends to use all of these revenues, it can't be held liable for later changing its mind, because general taxes legally cannot be dedicated to specific purposes, which is what the city's own attorney stated more than once at last month's city council meeting. This tax will run for 20 years; during that time we will have many different city council members with many different ideas. It will only take three of them to redirect revenues.

In its February poll, the city found that 86% of respondents say fire prevention is their highest priority. A parcel tax, placed on the ballot in March, dedicated entirely to fire mitigation (\$150 for five years) would generate more money, more quickly, and it would cost taxpayers \$750 total, rather than the \$7,000 for this new doubled sales tax. Ms. Hamlin argues that not enough residents would vote for this small parcel tax. But the library parcel tax, the current sales tax and our 2012 and 2016 road bonds all passed with over a two-thirds majority.

We already have a sufficient general sales tax that is good until 2023. We are in the midst of uncertain economic times for Orinda residents and businesses due to the worst pandemic in a century. A new sales tax can be put on the ballot in 2022 when our needs and our finances are clearer.

Ms. Hamlin is right that we need to address fire mitigation now, but the proposed sales tax will provide too little for

[SEE LETTERS page 7]

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Everyone should have received his or her Official Voter Information Guide. Please review it and get ready to vote! Mail-in ballots will be sent out on Oct 5. Mark your ballot and place it in the postage-paid return envelope. Sign the envelope and mail it back. Return it as soon as you can to ensure your vote will count. If you cannot mail it on time, Lamorinda Village has volunteers to help seniors in Lamorinda get their signed and sealed ballots delivered to an official ballot drop-off box. Simply contact us at info@lamorindavillage.org or call 925.283.3500. We want to make sure your votes count!

LETTERS

◆ LETTERS from page 6

that purpose. If 86% of Orindans want fire mitigation, surely we can trust them to vote for a small fire mitigation tax.

– Kathleen Finch

We Have a Chance to Make Serious Progress

In the fall of 1984, I stood in my driveway and watched a grass fire, started by a tossed cigarette, burn less than 200 feet away. When the fire reached a Monterey pine tree, it looked as though the tree had been napalmed. With an audible “whoomp” it burst into flames – an exploding tree.

It was a hot dry day, but fortunately, not windy. Still, I climbed on my roof with a garden hose and wetted down our wood-shake roof.

Times have changed a bit. We’ve had an asphalt shingle roof since 1994. We removed 13 Monterey pines, and we’ve changed our landscaping to reflect a hotter, drier climate. But climate change has lengthened the fire season and made us all less safe.

We have a chance to make serious progress on the vegetative fuel load that has been planted in Orinda since the 1940s, when it was grass and native oak trees. Measure R on the November ballot will increase Orinda’s sales tax by half a cent. The city council has stated that the first years of the tax will be used primarily to tackle the long-overdue project of removing brush and overhanging trees to reduce fire hazards and keep evacuation routes open. We need to do this. The cost of this measure is far less than the insurance premium increases many of us are paying. Let’s get to work!

– Linda Landau

Flagrant Inequity Even in Orinda: No on Measure R

John Benzie’s letter to the editor (September) demonstrates ignorance about private roads when he speculates about the “huge cost of repairing one-fifth of all our roads, which probably have been subject to years of neglect.” In fact many private roads (e.g. those in Wilder) are some of the newest and best roads in Orinda. Also, many older private roads like Canyon View Drive have been well maintained. They are in far better condition than neighboring public cul-de-sacs that truly were subject to years of neglect by the city itself. That is, until taxes paid in part by private road residents were used to fix these neglected public roads, while these taxpayers on “private” roads were deprived of the same services.

Mr. Benzie goes on to say “... the prestige of living on private roads comes with a cost.” I can assure him that there is no prestige whatsoever in living on a publicly accessible and publicly serving private road. Private and public cul-de-sacs are comparable and private road residents did

not pay any less for their houses. The city simply refused to make any of the newer roads public, and most older private roads were classified as private, based on criteria that apply identically to similar size public roads.

Private road residents are selectively saddled with having to personally double subsidize the public drainage system, often in the form of extreme and concentrated costs borne by some residents. “Private” Canyon View drive is larger and wider than neighboring public cul-de-sacs, and its culverts accept millions of gallons of storm water every winter from public Diablo View Drive above.

During the past 20 years, Canyon View residents have paid about \$110,000 in maintenance costs, and over \$30,000 for replacing two culverts that drain water channeled from Diablo View Drive - all so residents like Mr. Benzie could enjoy lower taxes.

Also, despite written requests by engineers in the community, the city council and staff didn’t even have the technical competency to include in its current drainage study, which is the basis for some of the repair work to be funded by Measure R tax, large private culverts that are force fed heavily concentrated water from public drainage structures.

The nation as a whole is tired of flagrant inequity and we should no longer be tolerating it in Orinda either. As the infrastructure uses of Measure R sales tax proceeds will be selectively diverted away from some residents for no fair, practical or logical reason, please vote No on R.

– Joel Libove, Ph.D.

Let’s Not Wait for the Next Freakish Lightning Storm

I will never forget frantically packing the car with my one-year-old and a diaper bag to flee the approaching flames of the Oakland fire in 1991. After we moved over the hill from Oakland to Orinda nearly 20 years ago, I was struck by the magnitude of fire hazards I saw here – from piles of dry branches to the lack of defensible space around most houses.

While our family was spared that time, the situation now in Orinda is dire with decades of fuel that is ready to burn with the next freakish lightning storm or a spark from a lawn mower. Orinda is clearly not ready.

Efforts such as the chipper program are a big help, but need to be greatly expanded to make a substantial dent in fuel reduction. Dead trees and branches need to be removed before they potentially block major escape routes, trapping people in their cars as they did in Paradise.

For these and many other reasons, I strongly support Measure R, the half-cent sales tax measure on the November ballot. For people who say now is not the time, the next firestorm is not going to wait. We cannot rely on existing city funds as only 7% of property tax actually stays in Orinda. The money generated from a very small tax increase (50 cents per \$100 spent in Orinda – not including food at Safeway) can pay for programs that directly help homeowners do large scale brush and branch removal to protect their home and their neighbor’s.

The city has pledged that a majority of the funds from Measure R will go to fire prevention, just as the current sales tax has vastly improved Orinda roads. This is our chance to save our town from the devastation we have seen from wildfires all over Northern California. Please join me in voting Yes on Measure R.

– Elisabeth Jewel

Craig Jorgens is the best fit for Moraga-Orinda Fire District

We have known Craig Jorgens for 30 years and absolutely trust him as one of Orinda’s Board Members on the MOFD.

Craig is extremely detail-oriented and puts forth both the time and effort to understand and enhance the Fire District finances and operations. With an annual budget of \$30 million and significant unfunded pension liabilities, the challenges are great. But Craig is up to the task and has a track record of working with the district and citizens to get things done (such as the chipper program). Note that he is not tied to any special interest.

Please join us in supporting our friend Craig Jorgens and let’s re-elect him to the MOFD Board of Directors.

– Mark and Jane Zuercher

Look Out the Window

To those who believe that Measure R is

the wrong tax at the wrong time, let me encourage you to look out your windows.

Having studied fire science at advanced levels, Orinda Chief David Winnacker knows where and how a fire is likely to start: Briones, at night from a lightning strike, after a dry winter increases excess fuel buildup, with windy conditions, and CalFire fighters strained by other fires. If that doesn’t sound familiar, open the drapes, turn on the TV, or log in. Better yet, make sure you are registered for the CWS alert system and pay attention to emergency evacuation information.

Involvement with the Fire Neighborhood Council has taught me that Orinda citizens are eager for aggressive efforts to mitigate years of dry fuel buildup. Many neighborhoods are organized to promote fuel mitigation, but we lack the resources needed to catch up and keep up with the backlog. Measure R will front load that effort and provide an ongoing source of funds to continue the work for the next 20 years.

The national COVID-19 virus situation and the smoky sky outside my window demonstrate once again how interdependent we are. This tiny tax increase allows the community to invest in vital roads and storm drains in addition to fire prevention. The Orinda Firewise council is committed to oversight of Measure R spending to ensure it is focused on the needs identified in the neighborhoods. I live on a private road that is included in the fire prevention efforts supported by this tax, an investment in the common good if there ever was one.

– Dan Detzner

Safer Orinda: Vote Yes on Measure R

Measure R will address urgent fire safety issues, repair critical storm drains

[SEE LETTERS page 8]

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LETTERS

◆ LETTERS from page 7

and protect our hard fought investment in our roads.

When I was campaigning for city council in 2018, I talked with a couple that has lived in Orinda for a very long time. At one point they asked me to come into their house and showed me a picture of Orinda from the 1940 or 50s. The picture showed hills with a few oaks and not much else. If you look at that same location now, it is covered with trees and other vegetation. We need to make up for years of growth that was not abated, and we need to do it quickly because climate change is increasing the risk of wildfires.

Last year, Fire Chief Winnacker received a grant (around \$4 million) for the North Orinda Fuel Break. This was very helpful, but he believes we need to do more. We rely on the Fire Chief's frank assessment of fire-related issues, and when he says we need to do more to protect our residents, the city council listens.

Measure R will allow Orinda to start immediately on urgently needed fire fuels reduction, followed by repair of failing

storm drains. After the critical storm drains have been repaired and wildfire fuels have been mitigated, which is about the time roads will need additional resources, sales tax revenue will then be available for road maintenance and to maintain the progress made in fire fuels reduction.

After spending the last decade implementing a plan to improve our roads, we need to protect our investment and provide funds to keep the roads in good condition.

Please join me in voting Yes on Measure R for a safer, better Orinda.

– Dennis Fay, Orinda

Orinda's Proposed Sales Tax is the Wrong Tax at the Wrong Time

Why?

Orinda needs to fund fire prevention, because MOFD refuses to do so even though we are paying it millions more than it costs them to provide us with the service we do receive. But, a 20-year, one-percent sales tax is the wrong tax.

Out of the \$2.4 million a year the tax will generate (at a cost of \$9,000 per household over 20 years including inflation), the city "plans" on spending only \$500-750,000 per

year on fire prevention, and this is for only 3-4 years. Then, supposedly the "job" will be done and the city can reduce the spending to maintenance only. Who came up with this "plan"? Is there any science behind it? Has anyone seen the plan? If history tells a story, in the 29 years since the Oakland Hills firestorm the city has spent virtually nothing, nor demanded that MOFD spend our tax dollars, on fire prevention. Right now the current sales tax generates \$100,000 a month. What is being spent on fire prevention?

Alternatively, a \$150 a year parcel tax would generate over \$1 million per year and legally require the city to spend it on fire prevention services. It could be for a limited five years to see how the city performs this new service. This tax could be put on the ballot as early as March. In the February survey, 86% said fire prevention was their greatest concerns before the current fires filled the air with smoke. Since 2012, all four of the city's tax proposals passed with over two thirds majorities.

This tax is essentially a road and storm drain maintenance tax with a little fire prevention thrown in. But there are huge questions on what we should really spend to protect ourselves from a devastating wildfire and which roads and drains shall and should get fixed.

A \$60 million, 20-year general tax is the wrong tax.

And now, in the midst of the worst pandemic in a century, with its unknown economic impacts, it is not the time to implement a 20-year, \$60 million tax. For the next two years the city has over \$3 million at its disposal, even without a parcel tax, for fire prevention and road maintenance. Now is the wrong time to commit to this additional huge new tax.

For more details see www.OrindaRoadFacts.info.

– Steve Cohn

een shootings occurred. Starting in 2019, she began working with Police Chief Cook on wildfire preparedness.

Ms. Miller operates her small business right here in Orinda; that is, her law practice focusing on real estate issues. She finds time to be a volunteer driver helping Orinda non-driving seniors to get to important appointments.

Ms. Miller helped bring to the November 2020 ballot the much needed – and timely - measure to beef up fire safety (on city and private road rights of way), flood prevention and road repair. She works to keep Orinda road maintenance and repair costs in check.

Ms. Miller supports our downtown Orinda Library, a long-time center for students, seniors and avid readers. She worked with the council and The Friends of the Library to place a measure on the ballot, and advocated passage vigorously in the press to maintain library hours and services; continue programs for children, families and seniors; undertake building maintenance and repairs. The measure passed by 75% Yes in June 2018, providing \$500,000 annually for seven years. The measure included an independent resident oversight committee, reflecting her commitment to fiscal prudence.

Ms. Miller addresses social issues that resonate in this city. On June 7, she marched as a city council member with three other council members, in support of Black Lives Matter, a gathering that drew a large, dedicated crowd.

Inga Miller grew up here in Orinda. She has the temperament for public service, and the experience, having worked as mayor, vice mayor and council member, during a challenging, stressful four-year period.

She knows our city. She has my vote and I hope, that of my fellow Orindans as well.


– David Anderson

To Melanie Light, Safer Orinda and FireWise Group Members

I, as much as you, know that Orinda is a high fire risk area and that we need to reduce our fuel load. I completely agree with your objective. I need to warn you that our city council misleads and manipulates us, the voters.

The council misrepresents their intentions, to get more money into the city coffers. Subsequently, it becomes "their" money. It is only because most (86%) Orindans


[SEE LETTERS page 9]



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Vote Yes for Inga Miller

Inga Miller, running for re-election to Orinda's City Council deserves our unqualified support.

I agree with Steve Glazer, state senate representative, also former mayor of Orinda, who has endorsed Ms. Miller, as well as Darlene Gee!

She is a strong supporter of completing Orinda's road repairs. As mayor, Ms. Miller helped guide the city in 2019, through a shocking, difficult time when the Hallow-



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LETTERS / FITNESS TIP

◆ LETTERS from page 8

expressed their fear of wildfires that the tax is being promoted as a fire prevention tax. If our council was honest they would state how much will be spent on excess fuel reduction. They should also state that this sum does not fund the removal of large trees. I predict that you will be disappointed with the future council decisions. Please do not trust them. No matter what they tell you in private conversations.

The only way to control this is by a tax or bond that legally binds the city to spend the funds for one purpose. The proposed measure R does not do this. You should fear, not only fire, but the integrity of our council. Internal documents exist which allocate these funds, but are not made public. One such detailed (and revealing) document was pulled from the city website because "it was premature." All that is left is a general "needs assessment" document.

Please verify the "facts" that they tell you. It is not true that the gift of public funds precludes helping private roads. The City of Orinda already does this (by contract) and other cities pay 25% to maintain all private roads. The city attorney has said these contracts and policies are legal. Orinda has not allowed any private road to become public since incorporation. Beware of what they do not tell you.

Dear Safer Orinda and FireWise people, please be careful. You are being used as a pawn in a game by expert manipulators, who will take your money but not listen to your pleas. Think carefully about whether you should give them a dollar in order to get a few cents worth of fuel reduction.

I will vote against Measure R, hoping to get a dedicated source of money for fuel reduction in early 2021. The current tax continues till 2023 and the city can manage with the funds it already collects for now.
—Charles Porges

More Needs to be Done: Yes on Measure R

I am writing in support of Measure R on the November ballot. We are blessed with a wonderful community in a beautiful environment. We have worked hard to maintain what we have been given and must keep the efforts up. A major concern and responsibility is, as it should be, protection and enhancement of our infrastructure that includes fire prevention, roads and storm drains.

Why city involvement in fire prevention when we have a fire department? There has always been a cooperative effort between the city and MOFD to address the shared concern for fire prevention. The fire department is allocating increased resources to fuel management, but more needs to be done. Remember we are citizens and taxpayers of both agencies and we all need to work together. This measure will allow the city to do more on this front as well as address other important infrastructure needs such as road maintenance and storm drains. While the measure does not restrict the city's allocation of the funds, knowing this community's involvement in Orinda's operations, there will be accountability, including a citizens' oversight committee and audits.

As a founding director of MOFD, serving from 1997 to 2014, I have seen the community engage when needed. We brought paramedics to Orinda and the community rallied to bring our roads up to the level we have now. It is time to commit to maintaining that standard and bring our fire prevention efforts to that same level. Measure R will do that.

— John Wyro

Support Our School Gardens

I was happy to see the article in September's issue supporting school gardens. Susan DiStefano was my inspiration when I started my lunchtime and after school

Fitness Tip of the Month

Health and Your Refrigerator

- What we have is what we end up eating; so if you are committed to getting in shape, carve out a section of the refrigerator for yourself.
- Put all your healthy items, fruits, vegetables and lean protein up front, so you can see them immediately.
- Shop proactively: try to find new and interesting items for your section.
- If you are ordering out and it's healthy, order extra and put it in the fridge.
- Refrigerator contents can be a positive or negative factor in improving your fitness and health.



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nature programs at OIS 20 years ago. Working with Debra Jockish, the school gardens I developed there (with the help of dedicated parent volunteers) were incorporated into the school curriculum and served as outdoor classrooms for a variety of science, art and Special Ed classes.

I got similar results at my Miramonte gardens. Barbara Denny, my faculty advisor, went on to teach Environmental Science and the gardens served many purposes. Her successor, Chrissy Orangio, expanded her outreach at the gardens, teaching horticulture and promoting her "food forest" with fruit trees donated by Kenny Murakami, owner of Moraga Garden Center.

In these critical and anxious times, these spaces provide more than an opportunity for an outside activity. They have always served as sanctuaries for the students and staff. Ms. Orangio has moved to another school, but told me she is concerned that her legacy at Miramonte be preserved. The school district is unable to provide the support needed for proper maintenance. I encourage the many knowledgeable and talented parents and other members in our community to become involved in supporting the gardens.
— Linda Mizes

Let's Make This Happen

As a resident of Lamorinda since 1972, living in Orinda for the past 21 years, I was an early proponent for refreshing a very tired-looking downtown with a Downtown Plan to guide efforts to renew Orinda. It is now thrilling to know that a plan is finally in place and is being further refined with input from Orinda residents. Yahoo! We are on our way!

The many letters to the editors of *The Orinda News* and *Lamorinda Weekly* in favor of the still-in-process Orinda Downtown Precise Plan (DPP) give me great hope that someday Orinda will be more welcoming, beautiful, walkable, functional, with more restaurants, shops, residential choices and a more cohesive appearance and feel. The DPP will provide the changes needed to accomplish these goals. When I lived in Lafayette and Moraga, I used to come to Orinda to shop at Blacks and Phairs or enjoy a meal at The Vintage House. Now that I live in Orinda, we drive to Lafayette and Moraga to shop and dine out. It's not a happy situation.

Bravo to the Orinda City Council and everyone who has participated in bringing
[SEE LETTERS page 10]

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RESIDENTS

Bran Yaich Receives Special Service Award for his 53 Years in Rotary

By SALLY HOGARTY
Executive Editor

His father, a cable car gripman, Bran Yaich and his family lived in a modest home in a blue-collar section of San Francisco where he attended Commerce High School. If people would have told him at the time he would spend most of his life across the Bay in a little place called Orinda, he would have thought they were crazy. But that's exactly what happened.

Yaich and his wife Kathy moved to Orinda 52 years ago, long before the unincorporated town became a city. They raised their daughter here while Yaich taught math and science at Miramonte High School and coached baseball and football. When Yaich became assistant principal, Principal Bob Callan decided they both should join the two prominent service groups in the area: Lions Club and Rotary Club. Callan became a member of the Lions with Yaich opting for Rotary.

"At the time, the most prominent professionals in Orinda belonged to Rotary. We had many dentists, doctors, attorneys and architects. The district governor for Rotary, Jack Schneider who owned Orchard Nursery at the time, was from our club,"



RODNEY LAI

Bran Yaich has seen lots of changes in the Orinda Rotary during his 51 years as a member. He had his first exposure to Rotary as a high school senior in San Francisco.

said Yaich.

Fifty-one years later, Yaich found himself, along with fellow Rotarian Peirce McKee, honored for his service at an awards ceremony in September. Together Yaich and McKee accrued more than 100 years of Rotary membership to date.

"I actually had a connection to Rotary from my San Francisco high school," said Yaich. "I was student body president at Commerce, and the SF Rotary invited all of the area's student body presidents to attend a meeting at the Garden Court of the Palace Hotel. I came from

a very modest family, and the Palace Hotel and the Rotary meeting made a big impression."

Yaich remembered what that meeting meant to him many years later when he became Principal at Miramonte High School. He began inviting a few students each year to attend Orinda Rotary as his guests. He recently heard from one of those former students, now a successful producer in Hollywood, saying how important the experience had been to him as well.

The long-time Rotarian remembers how all of the club's service was directed toward the local community. In 1969, the club donated \$7,000 for an ambulance for the fire

department. Many of the club's projects continue today, such as the Jack Schneider Scholarship program at Miramonte, the Frank Isola Field Day, where inner-city students are invited to a day of fishing and fun at the San Pablo Reservoir, and Career Night at Miramonte.

Yaich also noted the many good things that changed with Rotary over the years, such as now having women members. Old school still, however, he doesn't feel cancelling mandatory attendance at meetings is as positive. "While I had to make up all the Rotary meetings I missed when I was in the Army Reserve, I think it was very valuable having mandatory attendance," Yaich said.

[SEE ROTARY page 27]

Walking Orinda Streets – New Mission for COVID-19 Survivors

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

Laurie Smith and her husband Todd have embarked on a new mission for COVID-19 survivors, one that you might notice somewhere in Orinda.

Laurie has been walking with a group of friends around Orinda's Lake Cascade for 25 years. Then COVID-19 attacked her husband Todd after their trip to Colorado in March. While she quarantined with him, not knowing she too had the virus, Laurie walked around their property seven times each day for a total of 35 minutes.

"That is the amount of time I used to walk with our neighbor ladies before COVID," she said. "Todd and I started to walk around the Lake when he felt better, but it was too crowded." So, the Smiths came up with a new, safe walking mission: to leave their footprints on every street in Orinda.

"We started about the middle of April," said Laurie. "We try to go three to four miles on weekdays and five to six miles on weekends. Our longest trek was 8.5 miles into town and back."

By the end of May, both Laurie and Todd couldn't tell if they had allergies or were



KATHY ENZERINK

Laurie and Todd Smith consult their vintage paper map during a recent afternoon walk.

having a hard time breathing. After receiving the antibody test, it was confirmed both had been victims of COVID-19. They volunteered and have been giving plasma every 28 days since then. "It takes about two-and-a-half hours and we're pretty tired

[SEE WALKERS page 26]

◆ LETTERS from page 9

the DPP this far. It is not too late to let the Orinda City Council know what elements you would like to see in this new plan or give your support to the effort. Attending council Zoom meetings is an easy way to stay abreast of the exciting things that are happening in Orinda, as well as providing a way to make your ideas and support

known. To learn the date and time of the next meeting, go to the city's website, click on Meeting Calendar and drop down to Council Downtown Subcommittee Meetings. Together we have the ability to make Orinda a very special and especially charming city that will attract new businesses, shoppers and diners from near and far. Let's make this happen!

– Laurie Renny Reich

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ELECTION

City Council Candidates Share Their Priorities and Concerns for Orinda

The five members of Orinda’s City Council are elected volunteers who set policy, give direction to City Staff and make budget decisions. Besides attending twice-monthly council meetings, each council member serves on several committees. They also interact with the various levels of government between the city and the state on issues such as transportation, housing and traffic.

This November, three candidates (including two incumbents) will vie for two available seats: incumbent Darlene Gee, Latika Malkani and incumbent Inga Miller.

They were asked the following questions:

1. What’s your “vision” of Orinda five years from now? Are we a bedroom community with retail to support or are we more? Do we have a particular identity?
2. Specifically, what would you do to attract and retain retail business?
3. COVID-19 has created a budget deficit and forced the City of Orinda to do business differently. How will you address these issues and still provide adequate services to residents? Are there any silver lining opportunities?
4. How would you rank in order of importance, three areas of greatest need in Orinda moving forward?
5. What leadership/management skills/experience do you possess that will make you an effective City Councilmember?

Darlene Gee



TERRY RIGGINS

Vision of Orinda in Five Years

My vision for Orinda is that we remain the pleasant family-friendly community that our residents enjoy and value, but with enhanced downtown amenities. Years of city surveys have shown that over 95% of our residents rate their life in Orinda as excellent. Given that we are essentially a fully built-out community with limited land opportunities, my vision is that we work to make what is already good even better – but focused on Orinda. I certainly love the thought of our surrounding Lamorinda neighbors wanting to dine and relax in beautiful spaces in Orinda just as most of us do on occasion in Lafayette; but I don’t envision Orinda as a destination.

I do want our city efforts to include everything possible to restore and incorporate the creek into our improvements. With the right redevelopment and restoration, the creek could be a wonderful asset and very special amenity in our downtown space.

I also want Orinda to be a welcoming and safe place for everyone who lives and visits here. Our community diversity is growing,

[SEE GEE page 12]

Latika Malkani



NICOLE SIDLAUSKAS

Vision of Orinda in Five Years

Orinda is a special place because of its environment, economy and its community. In 2025, I envision Orinda having protected, preserved and improved on its strengths in all three areas.

To maintain its beautiful environment and ideal climate, we must work year-round to ensure that our community is prepared for wildfires by helping residents implement wildfire mitigation plans and collaborating with our fire district to better prepare us for the next emergency. And our economic development must enhance the beauty that we all love. I know many Orinda residents join me in their excitement to see our downtown transform into a walkable, connected, lively area. We must move forward with smart, sustainable growth that builds on Orinda’s existing splendor to create bustling community spaces, retail and housing.

We all want to live in the Town Where Everyone Knows Your Name. Our special community will remain special if we foster inclusion and resist division. When all resi-

[SEE MALKANI page 12]

Inga Miller



KERSTI PETER

Vision of Orinda in Five Years

Orinda is the modern small town. We cherish our schools, our sports programs and our library. Our volunteer organizations are the glue that keep us moving forward through challenges from school funding to disaster preparedness to beautification. Orinda’s identity is dedication to community.

As a council member, my job is to be a dedicated listener of our community and make the community’s vision happen. The vision I have heard our community enunciate is that we want to update downtown in a way that cares for the environment while making space for more Orindans and opportunities to shop, dine and gather here in Orinda. The Thursday Night Food Truck gatherings spearheaded by our What’s Up Downtown Orinda leaders in concert with our Planning Director Drummond Buckley shows what we can do when we work together and how much we Orindans value the opportunity to be together.

We also, during that five years, want to reduce the fuel load that has built up over the past 70 years and shape our gardens into

[SEE MILLER page 14]

Re-Elect Darlene Gee to the Orinda City Council

Darlene is endorsed by some of Orinda and Contra Costa County’s most trusted leaders and community voices.

To learn more about my professional background, accomplishments and City service, and goals for Orinda, and to add your name to this growing list of supporters, please visit my campaign website at: darlenegeeforcouncil.com.

- ✓ Steve Glazer, State Senator, District 7
- ✓ Don Perata, Past President pro tempore California State Senate
- ✓ Candace Anderson, Contra Costa County Supervisor, District 2
- ✓ Amy Worth, Vice-Mayor, City of Orinda
- ✓ Inga Miller, Councilmember, City of Orinda
- ✓ Dennis Fay, Councilmember, City of Orinda
- ✓ Nick Kosla, Councilmember, City of Orinda
- ✓ Victoria Smith, Former Mayor of Orinda
- ✓ Sue Severson, Former Mayor of Orinda
- ✓ Joyce Hawkins, Former Mayor of Orinda
- ✓ Laura Abrams, Former Mayor of Orinda
- ✓ Dean Orr, Former Mayor of Orinda
- ✓ Bobbie Landers, Former Mayor of Orinda
- ✓ Bill Judge, Former Mayor of Orinda
- ✓ Joan Kiekhaefer, Former EFO President
- ✓ Alex Evans, Former MOFD Director
- ✓ Melanie Light, Chair, Orinda Firewise Council
- ✓ Cara Hoxie, President, OUSD Board
- ✓ Hillary Weiner, Board Member, OUSD
- ✓ Carol Brown, Board Member, OUSD
- ✓ Linda Landau, Former President OUSD and Orinda Citizen of the Year
- ✓ Carlos Baltodano, President, Orinda Association
- ✓ Steve Harwood, Former EFO President and Orinda Citizen of the Year
- ✓ Craig Jorgens, MOFD Director, Division 5
- ✓ Rebecca Saltzman, BART Director, District 3
- ✓ Pat Rudebusch, Former President OUSD
- ✓ Ken Jew, President, Orinda Rotary
- ✓ Terry Murphy, Former Chair, Citizens Infrastructure Oversight Commission
- ✓ Jud Hammon, Chair, Citizens Infrastructure Oversight Commission
- ✓ Richard Nelson, Former Chair, Citizens Infrastructure Oversight Commission
- ✓ Brad Barber, Former MOFD Director
- ✓ Orinda Firewise Council
- ✓ OrindaVision
- ✓ What’s Up Downtown Orinda?
- ✓ Tom Trowbridge, Former Chair, OrindaVision
- ✓ Pete Hasselman, Orinda Citizen of the Year
- ✓ Bob Thompson, Former Chair, Finance Advisory Committee
- ✓ Cassandra Forth, Former OUSD Board Member
- ✓ Dick Burkhalter, Co-Founder, Orinda Community Foundation; Volunteer of the Year
- ✓ Richard Westin, Co-Founder, Orinda Community Foundation; Citizen of the Year
- ✓ Robert Burt, Former Member, Finance Advisory Committee
- ✓ Mark Roberts, Former President, Orinda Association



“Darlene is an exceptional asset for Orinda – her infrastructure expertise, executive management experience, and open, responsive style make her a valued and trusted voice for our community.”

Amy Worth, Vice Mayor, City of Orinda

“Darlene has demonstrated that she is responsive to residents’ needs. The Orinda Firewise Council supports re-electing Darlene to the Orinda City Council.”

Melanie Light, Chair, Orinda Firewise Council

✓ VOTE DARLENE GEE

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

ELECTION

◆ GEE from page 11

and we want to celebrate that and benefit from the wealth of experiences that we connect within our neighbors and friends. The city proclaimed in September 2019 our jurisdictional commitment to diversity and as we work on our physical amenities, I want to see us work on improving our social environment where needed. The city can take direct actions to ensure that our police services follow the best practices and that our city staff interactions with residents are professional and respectful. We can also further extend our partnerships with our two school districts, our Chamber of Commerce and our neighboring communities to take positive and actionable steps to form meaningful social collaborations.

I am proud that in my term as mayor this year, the city has taken multiple key steps to ensure that our police department is implementing best practices and has transparent and regular oversight that is available to the community. I am also pleased that the city has initiated a dialogue with OUSD with the goal of building a more direct partnership on the key issues of diversity and inclusion.

Orinda has been a wonderful place to raise my family, to make lasting friendships and to enjoy the best of a small town in an urban region. I want the same for many generations to come that choose to call Orinda home.

Attract and Retain Retail Business

The most important step is completing Orinda's Downtown Precise Plan in 2021, including an economics component that will allow the council, the community and

most importantly the property owners and developers to understand what can be constructed within an updated framework. The city doesn't initiate development, it provides guidelines and processes that allow the private sector to propose new projects for approval. The city's plan will define objective design parameters and possible incentives that can motivate the private sector to create new spaces. Property owners may even look at aggregating downtown parcels to optimize new projects. Existing Orinda businesses will undoubtedly have opportunities to stay and even grow with downtown improvements.

Additionally, the city should take a more proactive communication approach with both the downtown property owners and the chamber. Hiring a specialty consultant that works to offer expertise that can entice private sector interest may speed results. Restaurants and specialty food may be a better initial draw than goods retail that has online competition. Some addition of downtown housing will add more customers, enhancing both downtown vibrancy and profitability. And when the city adds Project Connect streetscape elements as downtown infrastructure, we need to prioritize walkability for retail enhancement.

COVID-19 and Budget Deficit

COVID-19's biggest impact to Orinda's revenue has been the required hiatus of our parks and recreation programs. While sales tax has also been lower, property taxes, our largest revenue component, has remained stable. Unfortunately, the inability to conduct recreation classes and sports has re-

[SEE GEE page 22]

◆ MALKANI from page 11

dents feel respected, accepted and valued, our community is more cohesive and is happier. Thus, the council should support efforts that value diversity and inclusion.

These days, a lot of politicians talk about inclusion, but what have your elected leaders done to act on these values in the last five years? In recent years, current city leadership has either rejected or taken no action to implement low-cost, practical, resident suggestions, including: (1) an Orinda "City Day" focused on celebrating diversity, (2) a proclamation that "All Are Welcome Here" with resident-provided signs visibly posted on city windows, (3) an implicit bias training for staff and councilmembers and (4) a resident review committee to oversee and review police practices that includes all stakeholders (concerned residents, the police chief, the police unions, and others). It's not enough to talk the talk. We must walk the walk. Our community will be more vibrant and better connected if we listen to our residents' call to celebrate our diversity and welcome even more.

There are innovative ways to foster an inclusive culture while also promoting other city values, such as educating our children, supporting local business and creating more vibrant downtown spaces. Imagine if the city partnered with local businesses and restaurants to host an annual speaker or art series showcasing presenters from diverse backgrounds? Orinda values education, so let's partner with OUSD and AUHSD to co-host community events that supplement recent curriculum changes. The possibilities are exciting and endless.

Attract and Retain Retail Business

Even before the impacts of COVID-19, Orinda has struggled to attract and retain quality retail. Most developers and planners will tell you that the key to retail development is housing with sufficient density that supports the spacing of desired stores. So if Orinda wants to lure more desirable dining, shopping and entertainment, we need to revitalize the entire downtown, with a comprehensive plan that promotes mixed-use development that balances

retail and other commercial use with limited housing appropriate to our downtown landscape and city charm. The Downtown Precise Plan's vision of updating objective design criteria for mixed-use and residential land uses, is a step in the right direction. I would continue to support these efforts, responsibly but promptly, as we embark on long-term revitalization.

More immediately, I'd like the city to do more to support existing retail to weather the devastating impacts of COVID-19. We've already seen some local small businesses shut their doors, and if we don't act soon, more will follow. Orinda should consider measures that other cities have adopted to weather this storm, including creating more outdoor dining spaces and providing minimal small business advisor services.

COVID-19 and Budget Deficit

Over the past year, the city has cut several staff that provides public services. One staff reduction occurred in April 2019, long before COVID-19, but appears to remain unfilled, leaving the city down one facilities maintenance staff in 2020, before COVID-19 changed our world. Then, in June and July of this past year, the city cut an additional 3.5 FTE staff, including public works and facilities maintenance personnel. With these cuts, city services have decreased, and the lack of staff impacts the city's ability to maximize wildfire mitigation, to maintain city properties, and to provide recreation, park and community services. At the last City Council meeting (Sept. 1), the salary ranges of two senior staff were substantially increased. While I support rewarding staff with competitive salaries, I would first prioritize the return of services.

The "silver lining" to tighter purse strings is the opportunity and motivation we have to examine the city's budget and service provision. From a budgeting perspective, what are Orinda's key funding priorities for the next five years? We contract out our policing services, spending far more than Moraga – does this continue to make sense? What additional funds can we seek from state and public district partners to support revitalization efforts? Finally, can we implement creative solutions to improve services without adding costs? Some immediate ideas include engaging community volunteers to establish more PSPS charging and cooling centers, more public education

[SEE MALKANI page 14]

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SCHOOLS

Distance Learning for Parents, Not Just For The Kids

By Charleen Earley
Editor-in-Chief

Orinda students of all ages are back to school using distance learning; however, this academic school year has found adults heading back to school as well – through educational sessions called Online Parents University.

Offered free by the Orinda Union School District (OUSD), parents and guardians now have a learning curve before them when it comes to distance learning for their students and for themselves.

The hour-long educational Zoom sessions included classes on how parents could navigate OUSD's distance learning platforms with their student, strategies for helping their children have successful distance learning experiences and ways of keeping their kids engaged.

"The Orinda USD Online Parent University is working incredibly well to date," said Dr. Carolyn Seaton, Superintendent of Schools, OUSD. "We have had between 35-50 participants in each session."

She said the parents and guardians of Orinda students have shown appreciation with these learning opportunities available to them.

Since the sessions were asynchronous through Zoom on various dates throughout September (with more sessions in following months as needed), Seaton's staff kept in mind those who couldn't make specific session dates. "I have received specific praise that the sessions have been recorded so they can be accessed later in the event of calendar conflicts or wanting to repeat a session," said Seaton.

Parent Kendall Glynn of Orinda, who has a nine-year-old son in the fourth grade at Glorietta Elementary, took two of the sessions: how to navigate distance-learning platforms, and how to keep her son engaged, using positive reinforcement and other strategies. "They were both really insightful," said Glynn. "The OUSD

IT team did an excellent job providing an overview of the platforms being used by the teachers."

"They spent a considerable amount of time going over how the teachers would be using Google Classroom, which was really helpful," she added. "There are several ways to use Google Classroom and understanding the way in which the teachers are posting and tracking assignments has helped me more effectively manage my fourth grader."

Glynn works both in and out of the home as a certified genetic counselor, and as co-founder and COO of Square Baby, a subscription-based organic baby food delivery service.

She said it's important parents model what is expected of their kids, whether it's time management or positive attitudes: "I think we also need to remember that if our kids come through this extremely challenging time having learned flexibility, patience and resilience, then we can consider our efforts a success."

She also feels using the resources offered by the school district is key: "It is easy to tune out a little bit because we all are overloaded right now, but I am so thankful that OUSD is offering this parent education series." She added, "The topics covered so far have been extremely valuable and have helped our family so much."

Local cable and Wifi service providers are helping during COVID-19 to help students as well. Xfinity sent out email and print notifications about its Internet Essentials program, known as the nation's largest low-income Internet adoption program which helps connect millions of families to the Internet.

It's offering 60 days of free Internet service to new Internet Essentials customers and recently launched the Internet Essentials Partnership Program to provide the opportunity for school districts and other organizations to connect quickly large numbers of students and families to broadband



MARKUS WINKLER/UNSPASH

Orinda parents are taking online Zoom sessions offered through the Orinda Union School District, courses to help them navigate the new-normal of distance education for their kids and themselves as well.

access at home. Visit internetessentials.com for more information.

AT&T is doing the same – providing affordable Internet for distance learning through a program called Access from AT&T. The program provides home Internet access to qualifying California households with at least one resident who

receives Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for \$10 a month. More information can be found by visiting att.com/access or by calling 855-220-5211.

Seaton is thankful to the many Orinda USD teachers, specialists, administrators [SEE LEARNING page 27]



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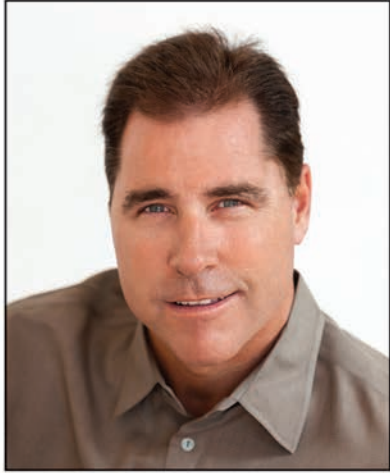
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ELECTION

◆ **MILLER** from page 11

a firesafe landscape that retains aesthetic beauty and trees so important for sucking carbon dioxide from the atmosphere while also removing dead trees, underbrush and other vegetation that poses fire risk. I see our garden clubs serving as a tremendous resource in guiding our understanding of the new plant and tree choices we should be making and look forward to being a part of education campaigns that I believe will lead our gardens to look quite different in five years than they do today.

Attract and Retain Retail Business

As a member of the Downtown Subcommittee, I am leading efforts on the Downtown Precise Plan, which will revise downtown development standards in order to help guide future development that will attract restaurants and shopping and provide foot traffic to support business. Our present zoning designations are outdated and do not reflect current conditions so they discourage property owners from updating their properties by making doing so difficult and expensive. The Downtown Precise Plan when finished next year should show property owners not only the potential of their property but also the commitment of our community to both approve their projects and to then shop and dine in their businesses. Then, it is, of course, up to all of us to support those businesses.

COVID-19 and Budget Deficit

This pandemic has been difficult on all of us in Orinda. It has posed unique challenges for our residents, our teachers, our retail workers, and our City of Orinda employees. Social distancing and the need of many of our residents to decline to participate in recreational programs has forced us to reduce our Parks & Recreation department. The corresponding loss of city income and increasing costs related to COVID-19 forced us in June to reduce personnel costs

by reducing hours of our Parks and Recreation director, a Recreation supervisor and the Facility and Parks supervisor. We also had to lay off three employees. Because of our swift response to the conditions, however, I am pleased to report that the city has balanced the budget and is in the process of negotiating the return to work of one of these employees. I hope that we are able to offer the other employees their jobs and hours back in the year to come. In Orinda, we pride ourselves on following the fiscal responsibility our community demands of us. This means no council member pet projects or stipend for the job. We all are volunteers. It is part of calling Orinda home.

Safety and infrastructure needs, downtown revitalization, and inclusivity are our biggest priorities for 2021. Each of these needs is the purview of a different city department so they can be tackled simultaneously.

Three Areas of Greatest Need

Orindans embrace the need to fortify our community against fire, and I am hopeful voters pass Measure R, so we have resources for fuel management, education and improving our evacuation routes. We need to continue to maintain our newly improved roads and work on the El Toyonal corridor and other evacuation routes to make them safer and to delve deeper into drain work to avoid another infrastructure failure like the Miner Road sinkhole.

Meanwhile, we need to finish our Downtown Precise Plan so we can refresh downtown and start enjoying it more again. As we finish that work, we should be making incremental progress like implementing outdoor dining areas.

The Lamorinda Family Walk we participated in during the spring recognized that we have Orindans who feel marginalized by race, and I am committed to removing bias to assure all Orindans are supported

and feel this is the community of caring neighbors I have always known it to be.

Qualifications

As a journalist for nine years and a lawyer for the past 10 years, my best quality for serving on the City Council is my instinct to see the issue from all angles. I am a tenacious question asker and investigate the back story because the whole story is not always evident from the face of a staff report. There are people who are affected by every decision we make, and everyone in Orinda should have my phone number by now and know that I am available to hear all sides of the story. I am available day and night and the public safety power shutoffs last year while I was mayor followed by the terrible shooting tragedy tested my ability to work around the clock, and I was honored to have the community's trust to represent the city during that time. If reelected, I will bring that same thoughtfulness, dedication and balance to the next four years.

◆ **MALKANI** from page 12

around wildfire preparedness and establishing a city presence on social media.

Three Areas of Greatest Need

Wildfire management and protections is critical. As we continue to support infrastructure improvements, we must also prioritize wildfire preparedness. Our beautiful environment and homes are the city's most valuable asset and we must do everything we can to be prepared. That means not only working with our local fire protection experts on preventive actions within Orinda that will keep us safe, but pressing state and federal leaders for broader solutions. The devastating fires and environmental harm we have seen in the last month alone is a wake up call for Orinda.

Revitalizing the downtown and attracting more retail development is also essential. We can do better than what we currently

have and doing so will raise revenue that will help fund all of our priorities and goals.

Celebration of diversity and inclusion is priceless. When San Francisco and the Bay Area emerged from World War II as one of the most welcoming and inclusive communities in the world, the impact was stunning. The area grew to become the world leader in technology and innovations, its commerce, arts and culture blossomed and it became one of the most visited and sought out places on Earth. Inclusion is dynamic and uplifting.

Qualifications

As a mother of three raised in Orinda, a practicing lawyer and a delegate to the State Democratic Party, I spend my days engaged in rigorous legal analysis, interaction with persons and entities across the commercial spectrum, conflict resolution and negotiation, and I interact with elected leaders on the most effective policies to serve our constituencies.

I ran for this position based on feedback I received from many community members that they want their City Council representatives to listen and really hear their concerns and bring fresh ideas to our community. Listening and hearing is job one as a mother and as a lawyer. But job two is taking what you hear and finding effective solutions. That is what I strive to do every single day.

I have held numerous leadership positions in my professional life and as a member of this community. I've spent years advocating for justice, recently serving on the board of the nation's largest Planned Parenthood affiliate, with an annual budget many times that of Orinda. Like many of you, I have also spent countless hours volunteering at home – supporting our schools, youth sports, scouting, local arts and charitable organizations.

For more information, please see www.latika4orinda.com.

Vote to Re-Elect Inga Miller



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FIRE SAFETY

Fire District's Craig Jorgens Wants More Spending on Prevention

By ROWENA GONDEN
Contributing Writer

Even before thousands of wildfires swept over 1.6 million acres and earned California a dubious place in the history books this summer, long-time Orinda resident Craig Jorgens had his sights squarely fixed on averting such disasters.

"Fire safety starts with prevention and fuel reduction," said Jorgens, who is running unopposed for a second four-year term on the Moraga-Orinda Fire District board (MOFD). "I want to prioritize more prevention."

The retired businessman talks fast and fervently about the shift he hopes to see in district spending.

Jorgens, who represents District 5, would like more of MOFD's \$29.7 million budget to go toward taming vegetation, the fuel which can cause sparks to explode into an inferno. To be clear, he's not advocating cutting spending on suppression, Jorgens said, but rather allocating a greater share of future growth in property tax revenue to prevention.

The threat is real, he said, noting the expansive watershed just north of Orinda is a "wild jungle" of flammable vegetation that has no pressurized water source.

If something starts burning, hot, strong winds could fan the flames "and the next thing it finds is Orinda," Jorgens said.

In fact, fires already make incursions into the area: in recent years there have been three to five wildfires annually within fire district boundaries.

In July 2018, flames came dangerously close to five Moraga homes before they were extinguished and last fall, an early-morning fire in that town's Merrill Drive

area forced the evacuation of about 140 homes and burned approximately 60 acres before firefighters halted its advance.

Orinda has plenty of heavy brush on and around residential lots as well as trees with low-hanging branches that can convey flames to roofs, Jorgens said.

Although he readily acknowledges homeowners are responsible for minimizing fire hazards on their property, he'd like the district to spend more money helping them with its Wood Chipper Program.

The free service enables groups of neighbors to pile tree limbs, shrubs and brush by the side of the road, where a district wood chipper will grind them up. Residents then can reclaim the landscaping material or have it hauled away.

Jorgens not only wants more district residents to know about the program but would like to see the chipper working year-round, instead of about two-thirds of the time. The advantages are two-fold: by each household ridding itself of combustible vegetation, there's less chance of fire spreading from one home to all the others nearby, he said. And, because multiple households must band together to make a visit more efficient, neighbors become acquainted, Jorgens said. That can prove important if there's an emergency evacuation because people already will know if there are elderly residents in their midst who might need to be alerted and helped out of the area, he said.

Jorgens also intends to continue pushing Firewise USA, a national public education campaign that encourages homeowners to band together and work with local fire officials to devise and execute an action plan for fireproofing their properties.

The program provides a variety of infor-

[SEE JORGENS page 27]



MELANIE LIGHT

Firewise members **Kathleen Bain** and **Doreen Rau** take out Scotch broom bush.

Seventh Inning Stretch on Wildfires

By Melanie Light
Contributing Writer

If we are not quite to the seventh inning on this fire season, we are close enough to take a breath, give ourselves a pat on the back and consider how far we have come. While the threat of a wildfire has never been more real, we are actually safer than we were two years ago. Then, there was little consciousness that a wildfire could actually hit our beloved community. Chief Winnacker was giving his wildfire talks over and over, to no avail. I remember hearing his talk at a meeting I went to for an entirely different subject and, at first, was wondering why on earth I needed to hear from the fire district. Then, I was rocked to the core to learn just how vulnerable we

are as a wildland urban interface in this new age of climate change.

Eventually, people started responding, and a Firewise group or two sprang up. Since then, awareness and action have snowballed. In just a short time, at least 16 Firewise groups have been certified with more starting all the time. Tons of excess fuel has been removed over the course of two years by individuals and through the MOFD (Moraga-Orinda Fire District) chipper program. We have the North Orinda Fuel Break, and MOFD uses high tech monitoring systems to warn us of a fire.

I have seen residents Keith St. Claire and Derrick Prosser tackle the Scotch broom around Lake Cascade on their own. I've seen GoFundMe campaigns to help

[SEE FIREWISE page 20]

Re-Elect Craig Jorgens

Businessman  Engineer
Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Fire Safety is a Choice – Prioritize Prevention

- Endorsed by the Orinda FireWise Council representing over 1000 North Orinda homes and growing
- Initiated MOFD Chipper program in 2018 (removed 190 tons of fuel in 2020)
- Founding member of Orinda FireWise Council (OFC)
- Promoted sensors/cameras/software enabling early fire detection and evacuation
- HOA president, leading 150 acre open space fire prevention effort
- Uncovered \$23M double counting of assets on financial books and fought to correct it
- BS in Engineering/Economics, MBA



I believe becoming FireWise is unifying our community as neighbors work together to prevent devastating fires.

- Craig



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Craig Jorgens

**Supporter of the summer chipper program
& Firewise Community member
Incumbent for MOFD Board Director**

The Orinda Firewise Council is a consortium of non-partisan citizen leaders representing over 1400 homes in Orinda's Firewise neighborhoods that have come together to support each other by sharing resources and best wildfire prevention practices and to engage the City of Orinda & the Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) in wildfire prevention.

**TO JOIN or Start a Firewise Neighborhood Group
visit**

WWW.FIREWISECOUNCIL.ORG

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Who Else Is Tired of Improvising?

MIMI BOMMARITO



I love words the way some people love shoes. A well-crafted sentence is like a flawless wardrobe ensemble. But I'll tell you this: if I were cleaning out my 2020 vocabulary closet, the word "improvise" would land in the Goodwill pile. I would not study the word "improvise" and question if I might want to use it one more time once the weather changes. I have gotten my money's worth out of the threadbare "improvise." Thanks to COVID-19, all we have done lately is improvise, and it's zapping what little brain power I have left. "Pivot," "uncertain times," and "patience." All tossed, along with "improvise."

The fancy word "improvise" really means hastily cobbling together a last-minute plan of action before praying like heck it works. Improvising can take many forms: an unscripted comedy sketch, assembling a tasty dinner from a random collection of leftovers, or, as today's overburdened and bedraggled educators and parents would agree: "school."

As parents, we've had to improvise from the moment we realized "offspring" was a misnomer. Our children have no "Off" switch. A little bit of improvising here and there is fine. But never has anyone had to improvise on such a grand scale as 2020. Like Maurice Sendak's obstinate "Pierre," renowned for his continual "I don't care," I now respond with "I don't know" more times than I can count. It's unnerving because we mothers usually have an answer for everything.

This all got me thinking about the Six Types of Literary Conflict. Although I glossed right over this concept in sophomore English, it revisited me recently — the chatty, uninvited guest at 3 a.m. Talk about your checklist that's funny but not really funny. Usually an author will choose one conflict and explore. Yet in 2020, most of us experience six out of six on any given day:

- Human vs. Self. Check
- Human vs. Human. Check
- Human vs. Nature. Check
- Human vs. Supernatural. Check
- Human vs. Technology. Double Check.
- Human vs. Society. Sadly, Check.
- Human vs. PG&E. (I made that up.)

By the way, if you're currently home-schooling, I vote reading this portion of "Everyday Orinda" aloud to your student

counts as today's English instruction. Class dismissed.

All this improvising has made me realize how often I relied on tradition, repetition and familiarity to guide me. Ah, sweet predictability! If anything, COVID-19 has forced me to live more fully in the present moment. While technically it's smart and healthy to live in the present, I miss anticipating.

This subtle shifting has changed me. Last week we moved our youngest daughter into her dormitory at Cal Poly. Mind you, only two days prior did we finally receive the green light that move-in would actually happen. Typically, I'm an annoying shipwreck of tears, mucus and pitiful, clingy hugs. But this time, my eyes were dry and my composure impeccable, although, apparently, I was still annoying. But something was different. I didn't feel that crushing panic of impending separation.

It's not that I don't miss her. I still listen for her to stir at the crack of noon, or complain if we're having fish for dinner. But my last daughter weathered through senior year during a pandemic. She deserved a brand-new chapter. To clarify, I'm not throwing a pity party here. We are the first to admit that while, yes, it stunk to have the final third of senior year upended, it's far worse for the families heading into a new senior year, or any grade school year, filled with reductions, restrictions and way too much improvising.

Typically, I feel a longing to pinpoint the next time I will see my college kid. But not this time. It's not that I wasn't missing her before we even said goodbye. It's not that I wasn't stunned, yet again, that 18 years had passed so quickly. But as a result of watching her cope with commencement evaporating, a senior trip disintegrating, her final summer of rec swim and her employment disappearing, her college future wavering on whether it would happen in person or not — I was just so ready for something positive and stimulating to happen in her life, that I stopped thinking about myself. Temporarily.

I'm not altruistic. I just wanted a plan actually to unfold the way we had both counted on. College — part of the plan. Leaving home — part of the plan. Living in a dorm — part of the plan. Thanks to

Recognition for MOFD Firemen



On Aug. 20, members of the Acalanes Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) presented the firemen who responded to the Aug. 16 fire on Manzanita Dr. with a certificate of appreciation and a gift certificate for dinner. The fire was close to the home of DAR Acalanes Chapter Regent Mary Carrillo, who called in the alarm. (L-R) past Regent Nancy Boren, Vice Regent Terry Lucido Captain Michael Lacy, Engineer Matt Lopez and Mary Carrillo. Not pictured is Firefighter Garrison Feil.

some careful improvising, dorm living looks a little different — freshmen have no roommates at Cal Poly. Her dorm room was designed for three students, and as a result, she has more storage space than she does at home. Despite this, her room will still be a mess. She will not heed my warnings that no girl wants to loan her cute clothes to a slob. Hers will be a happy, collegiate mess, and I will not have to look at it. Students at several other universities had their on-campus housing opportunities revoked at the eleventh hour. The fear of that happening was greater than our fear of the virus. I questioned if that made me a bad mother.

And as for the longing, the counting of days until I can see her again? In COVID-19 times, there is always the looming threat the dorms will be closed down and the students sent right back home again in a couple of weeks. As much as I would love to see her physically, I would rather see her have, at least an improvised version, of a college campus experience.

With a heavy sigh, I'm heading over to retrieve "improvise" from the Goodwill pile. I just realized I'm still going to need it a little while longer.

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



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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, in 3-week sessions.

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

www.OrindaParksandRec.org

We Will Get Through This Together



Orinda Parks and Recreation Department
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THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

Orinda Starlight Produces a Spooky Halloween Fundraising Event

By DAVID DIERKS
Assistant Editor

The Orinda Starlight Village Players (OrSVP) return in October with a new Zoom Murder Mystery fundraising event. “We had to cancel our 2020 regular season due to COVID-19,” said OrSVP Marketing Director Suzan Lorraine. “Not all is lost, though, as we have been presenting an online murder mystery game on Zoom, the interactive video meeting software.” Over 125 people joined the July/August Zoom event and many have donated a ‘ticket’ to

help with fundraising efforts.

Malcolm Cowler, director of the July/August Zoom Murder Mystery, is back at it with an original murder mystery for October: *Halloween Haunts, Jaunts and Murder*. Participants have been invited by the Count to the annual Halloween Ball in Castle Caldura. At the stroke of midnight, celebrations get abruptly halted with the discovery of the Count’s body in the chapel with a stake through his heart. That makes it time for participants to figure out “whodunit” to escape from the castle.

The game lasts about one and a half

hours and runs Tuesday and Thursday nights, starting Oct. 6. It plays throughout the month, with a special presentation on Halloween (Oct. 31). The game is free. Reservations, however, are required because Zoom seats are limited. “We’re getting more skilled at handling larger groups. We’ve been shooting for up to nine connections per show, but there are often multiple guests on one connection,” said Cowler. “Our cast is just as professional and reliable as they always have been.”

Cowler said their biggest issue with the game involved technical problems with the Zoom platform: “Challenges include making sure participants are muted when it is required so random audio doesn’t intrude on the actors; timing slide and video sharing so they show smoothly integrated within the show; and, keeping an eye on lost connections and making sure participants can get back online quickly if necessary (luckily we’ve not lost anyone to a power outage yet).”

In addition to the Zoom game, OrSVP is releasing a video of the 2014 production of *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* just in time for Halloween. “We’re sure you’re missing our live performances in the park this season, and we hope this presentation from our 2014 season will, in some way, compensate for this,” said Cowler. The free video is available at www.orsvp.org throughout October.

This year would have marked OrSVP’s 37th year producing shows in the Orinda Community Center Park Amphitheater. According to Cowler, “None of us have been able to experience all the joys of theatre in the park. As a result, no money is coming in to pay for storage of set pieces, costumes and props or the rights to plays or set supplies for the planned 2021 shows.” In addition to the Zoom game, Lorraine set up a GoFundMe page to help raise needed monies to support the little theatre company through the year. Visit www.gofundme.com/f/Orinda-Starlight-Village-Players for more information. “It’s financially touch and go as to whether we’ll be able to return for our 38th season,” said Lorraine.

The lineup for 2021 includes Agatha Christie’s *Towards Zero*, George Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion* (the inspiration for *My Fair Lady*) and Malcolm Cowler’s stage adaptation of *L. Frank Baum’s The Marvel-*



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Kelly Hansen stars as one of the suspects, Medisa Oggorn, in *Halloween Haunts, Jaunts and Murder*.

ous Land of Oz. “Anything you can give or encourage others to give will make our season possible,” said Lorraine. Everyone involved with the theater volunteers, and no one is paid. “Every penny goes toward the production of the three plays produced each summer,” added Lorraine.

For more information or to make reservations, visit www.orsvp.org or email info@orsvp.org.

David Dierks can be reached at david@theorindanews.com.

Funny Side Up

Dumbing Down of American Writers

Charleen Earley



I know what you’re thinking, or at least some of you are. Where’s the ‘b’ and why the extra ‘m’ in your headline in the word “dumbing.” Sure, I saw the red squiggly line Microsoft Word automatically placed under that word that’s supposedly misspelled. I just ignored it. But honestly, is it really misspelled? Who says? Merriam-Webster? Cambridge? Oxford?

Did you know that there were 315 misspelled words in the 1996 Webster’s dictionary?

Back to my word *dumbing*. You understood the message, right? I basically used my journalistic license and spelled the word phonetically. Remember when you were learning how to spell way back in the second grade and you stumbled upon a word you had no clue how to spell? What did your mom or very old and gray-haired teacher tell you. That’s right ... “sound it out.”

I’m told the English language is one of the most difficult languages to learn. If the ‘b’ is silent in the word ‘dumbing,’ then why is it needed in the first place? Take for example the word *there*. It has three different meanings and spelled three different ways depending on word usage.

Their words were spelled their way, because they’re the ones who wrote them and there is no wrong or right way to spell them. Explain that to your second grader without getting a WTF look on their face. And just for this article, ‘WTF stands for why-the-face?’

Now enter (stage left) texting on cell

phones.

Many parents, educators and just pissed off peeps hate to see those condensed words from texting teens and texting adults. They call it a form of dumbing down too. But is it really dumbing down or speeding up?

In the following text message, “i wil b ther 2morow bcuz im bizy 2day,” is the message ambiguous, vague or abstruse?

Let’s visit Gregg’s Shorthand, remember that? It’s what your mom did when she was a secretary back in the sixties. Named after John Robert Gregg (1867 – 1948), he was an Irishman who invented a form of stenography in 1888. He created a style of writing similar to cursive longhand, completely based on elliptical figures and lines that bisect them. It was used extensively in the business and reporting world, mostly for speed. Really? People needed to speed things up in the writing and business world back then?

Maybe texting in abridged words is more about saving cellular (billable) minutes, unless you have an unlimited plan, but it’s also about speed and communication. Does that make it bad or wrong? Does that make Gregg a dumbing-down guy for teaching us how to condense words?

Let’s travel back in time a little further to the scribblings of American Indians. Check out the birch bark scroll pieces of the Ojibwa (yah this is a tough one ... sound it out ... “oh-jib-way”) Indians of North America who wrote complex geometrical patterns and shapes. Their writings allowed

[SEE FUNNY page 25]



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◆ FIREWISE from page 15

fixed-income homeowners get rid of dead and dangerous trees on their property and neighbors working together to face our common enemy. The only silver lining to the new threat of wildfire is that we are coming together as a community as never before. While Orindans have always been incredibly generous to others in need, it is a bit new for us to admit we need the help of others. And make no mistake, the only way we can tame the threat of a wildfire is to recognize that we are interdependent. Unlike earthquake preparation when individual preparation might suffice, if I do not take action with my home, then I am putting you in danger; and, if you don't do your work, then I am in danger.

Similarly, it seems clear that we need an integrated approach to wildfire management all the way to the federal level. Our local stakeholders – Orinda, Moraga and MOFD – are now united in an effort to address fire prevention together. The Firewise groups have formed a network in the Orinda Firewise Council which is reaching out beyond the city boundaries to work with state Assembly-Member Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, State Insurance Commissioner Lara and even the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) to get better communications during evacuations. California members of Congress McNerney, Eshoo and Matsui have also sent a letter to the FCC urging them to do everything they can to “ensure that Californians stay connected during this time,” and have requested a report on exactly what their plan is to keep us safe during wildfires and rolling blackouts.

We have a long way to go until we have removed decades of overgrowth and dead and dangerous trees. The recent virtual evacuation revealed that there are some issues with our emergency warning system. Insurance companies are in flux as they re-calibrate their risk assessment models,

leaving us in a vulnerable position with our homeowner insurance policies. But we are all working hard to understand the elements at play and finding ways to fix problems we identify. I feel so proud of my Orinda and how we are meeting the challenges presented by wildfire. Keep it up – we can do it.

Melanie Light is chair of the Orinda Firewise Council. She can be reached at info@melanielight.com

◆ EDITOR from page 5

designing are my passions, along with teaching of course, so it doesn't feel like work, it feels like I'm getting paid to play with new friends.”

No newcomer to publishing, the experienced journalist founded and published *Delta Living Magazine* for five years before selling it in 2017. She currently owns and publishes *Colorful Living Magazine*, a 32-page quarterly print and online publication.

At home in front of a microphone as well as behind a computer keyboard, Earley is a stand-up comic working with a plethora of local comedians as well as booking A-list comedians from Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York in her comedy shows. You can get a taste of her brand of humor in her column “Funny Side Up” on page 19.

“We feel very fortunate to have Charleen take over this very important role with the newspaper and know she'll be a wonderful addition to our team,” said Orinda Association President Carlos Baltodano.

Born in Michigan and raised in Oakland, Earley now calls Oakley home. “Since I live in far east county, it's exciting to get to know and journal this community - it's culture, politics, history and future,” Earley said.

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

Club Meetings in October

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, Oct. 13, 7 p.m., via Zoom, League of Women Voters discuss the 12 propositions on the November ballot. To obtain a Zoom link to the program, visit AAUW-OML's website at <https://oml-ca.aauw.net>.

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.

Friends of the Orinda Creeks. Fourth Wednesday, 5 p.m., May Room, Orinda Library, 510-919-4765.

Guided Meditation. Wednesdays, 9 a.m. St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 451 Moraga Way, Orinda, focuses on health, harmony and wholeness, 925-254-5965.

Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition. Third Wednesday, 10 a.m., Orinda City Hall, Sarge Littlehale Room, 925-687-8844, ext. 227.

Lamorinda Drum Circle from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Enjoy learning to drum in a small-group environment. Drums are provided. Lamorinda Music, 81 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette. Suggested donation \$10-\$20.

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: gcmoozee@gmail.com.

Lamorinda Movers. www.lamorindamovers.org or call Vicki Nakamura 925-708-1915. No meeting in October.

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, lamorindarepublicanwomen.org. Contact Elsie Euing at ejeuing@comcast.net or 925-254-8617.

Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary. Until further notice, all weekly meetings will be conducted via Zoom video conferencing. 7-8:15 a.m. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82609498205>. www.lamorindasunrise.com or lamorindasunrise@gmail.com. Meetings: Oct. 2: Big thanks to Don Jenkins for bringing us interesting news, features and outlooks from Rotary outside of our club; Oct. 9: As Martin Luther said, “Whoever drinks beer, he is quick to sleep; whoever sleeps long, does not sin; whoever does not sin, enters Heaven. Thus, let us drink beer.”

Learn more with official beer judge and fellow Rotarian, Troy Feddersen; Oct. 16: Argentine journalist Lorena Julio took it upon herself to step away from journalism to help the truly disabled. In this talk you'll learn about the changes she is making happen around the world. She joins us from Buenos Aires.; Oct. 23: Club Assembly. Oct 30: Member Magazine.

Lamorinda Toastmasters. Every Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Temple Isaiah, 945 Risa Road, Lafayette. <http://lamorinda.toastmastersclubs.org>.

Orinda Association. Second Monday, 7 p.m., Orinda Library Plaza level, May Room, 925-254-0800.

Orinda Garden Club, 315 Camino Sobrante, Orinda 925-257-0668, www.orindagc.org.

Orinda Hiking Club. Every weekend and first Wednesday, www.orindahiking.org or Ian at 925-254-1465.

Orinda Historical Society. Call 925-254-1353 for times and location of meetings.

Orinda Job's Daughters. First and third Mondays, 7 p.m., 9 Altarinda Road, 925-283-7176.

Orinda Masonic Lodge #122 F&AM. First Thursday, except holidays. Family dinner at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 8 p.m., 9 Altarinda Road, Orinda Masonic Center. 925-254-5211, www.orindalodge.org.

Orinda Rotary. Every Wednesday, noon, Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way, 925-254-2222, www.orindarotary.org.

Orinda Satellite Rotary Club. Second Wednesday. Call Sylvia at 510-224-8548.

Orinda/Tábor (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation. Fourth Thursday, 7 p.m., social, 7:30 p.m. meeting via Zoom. For more information, 925-254-8260.

Orinda Teen Advisory Council – First Tuesday of every month at 4 p.m. Community Center, 28 Orinda Way, email Recreation Coordinator Matt Delmartini at mdelmartini@cityoforinda.org with questions.

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

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

Sons in Retirement Lamorinda Branch 174. Second Wednesday, 11 a.m. lunch. Holy Trinity Culture Center 1700 School St., Moraga. A social organization of retired and semi-retired men who enjoy leisure time with friends and activities. For info., call Tyler at 925-963-5741, www.branch174.sirinc2.org.

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



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FILM / CALENDAR



THE REEL LESS TRAVELED
 “LIFE’S NO FUN WITHOUT A GOOD SCARE.” From 1993’s *Nightmare Before Christmas* – “This is Halloween”
 Tom Westlake



This is a column I’ve wanted to write for quite some time. In ordinary times, I reported on the special movies the Orinda and Rheem Theatres played. Regrettably, more often than not, very few of them had anything to do with the month in which they were presented. Since October is best known for horror with its Halloween ending, one piece of good news in these COVID-19 times is that I can recommend films that are worth your while and readily available while, at the same time, thematically working for this month!

In columns past, I have liberally mentioned Roman Polanski’s *Repulsion*, and I’ll devote just a little more space to it now. It not only made a lasting impression on me when I first saw it but also left me with a feeling of unease lasting for weeks. Isolation was a recurring theme with Polanski’s early works, and he revisited that theme in two other films: *The Tenant* and the far more famous *Rosemary’s Baby*, but *Repulsion* really drives the theme home. For the optimum viewing experience, turn off all other distractions and watch this in a quiet room by yourself. I dare you.

At the risk of showing my age, I will admit that I prefer older horror films. A sort of insidious subtlety was a key element then, and often, the horror and fear were ambiguous at best and, possibly, imaginary at worst. Films like *The Innocents* and *The Haunting* wormed their way into your subconscious and, like *Repulsion*, stayed there well after you left the theatre. The real horror winner here though would have to be *Black Sabbath* (1963). Originally titled *I Tre Volti Della Paura* [*Three Faces of Fear*], this is one of those anthology films with three short vignettes guaranteed to get on your nerves – in a good way. The most notable story of the three is “The Drop of Water.” Hosted by none other than Boris Karloff and directed by Mario Bava, this one will have you listening for the distant bark of a dog while making absolutely certain that all your plumbing is working right.

If, on the other hand, you want to keep things light, it should come as no surprise that comedy and horror often intersect. From Abbott & Costello meeting nearly every type of monster to the more recent *Tucker and Dale vs Evil*, our nervous laughter gets intermingled with genuine mirth in a number of horror tales. Films like *Young Frankenstein* and *Shaun of the Dead* approached the horrific with self-

awareness at the ludicrousness of it all, but no film that I can think of has been more conscious of its own conceits than *Cabin in the Woods*. This is a multi-layered movie that takes time unveiling its secrets. To get its full impact, you’d need a pretty good knowledge of movie lore, though it’s still captivating without it. Written and directed by Drew Goddard and Joss Whedon, this one pulls out all the stops and manages to keep your emotions in a constant state of flux, alternately keeping you amused at its wit while at the same time horrified by its extremes. Ordinarily, I don’t go for many of the modern conceits in horror films, but this one finds a way around that in a very clever way.


And lest you think I’ve completely forgotten about what is actually going on in the outside world beyond reels, I’ll remind you that Derek Zembrak and Leonard Pirkle are still fighting the good fight. The even better news is, thanks to all of you, they are winning! The contributions are continuing to pour in, so much so that, our Grand Lady, The Orinda Theatre, is managing very well. But don’t take my word for it. Go to facebook.com/orindatheatre/ to keep informed about how the theater is doing and what is in store for the future. This, by no means, should be taken as a sign that we can rest on our laurels. Many projections (clever in a film column, no?) predict the Orinda Theatre may not open at all for the rest of this year, and though Derek and his crew are working diligently on its maintenance (learn more about that on the aforementioned Facebook page!), this does not mean it’s out of the woods just yet. Go to gofundme.com/ff/orinda-theatre and help out all you can.

Another Facebook page worth visiting is facebook.com/INTFS, which is the home of the International Film Showcase. They too are soldiering on with their virtual film festival which enables you to stream all their wonderful foreign films. Because schedules are always changing, another on-line place to check movie availability out would be internationalshowcase.org.

So, that’s it for the month. I know I usually try to leave you with my usual tag line, but as it’s the month of Ghosties and Ghoulies, instead I offer the closing words of Orson Welles from his famous *War of the World* radio broadcast: “That grinning, glowing, globular invader of your living room is an inhabitant of the pumpkin patch, and if your doorbell rings and nobody’s there, that was no Martian, . . . it’s Hallowe’en.”

On the Calendar in October

- Oct. 10, 17, 24 and 31. See article p. 10.
- 4 **Anytime Fitness** socially distanced outdoor workout. Free. Bring your own mat, towel, and water. 9 - a.m. 2 p.m. Orinda Theatre Square #148. Limited to 10 attendees who must sign up in advance at bit.ly/AForindaoutdoorworkouts. Also, Oct. 11, 18 and 25.
- 6 **Virtual Book Club at Orinda Books** featuring Allisson Wood introducing her new memoir, *Being Lolita*, a coming-of-age story. Buy the book in store, online, or by phone 925-254-7606. After purchase, you’ll receive a link to the meeting.
- Orinda Starlight Village Players**
 [SEE CALENDAR page 27]
- 1 **Orinda Library**. Jazz at the Library: Ian Carey Quintet (+1) virtual concert performing the world premiere of “Fire in My Head Anxiety Suite” in the Joe Henderson Lab at the SFJAZZ Center. www.facebook.com/watch/?v=328695111609834&extid=gI5hHTIcKxNnPW7S.
- Art Gallery at the Orinda Library** Virtual Exhibit featuring the artwork of Dina Alekna, Loralee Chapleau, Ann F. Fallin and poetry and artwork from the S.F. Peace and Hope’s “Light The Sky” online at www.lamorindaarts.org, see article p. 23.
- Art Gallery at Wilder** Virtual Exhibit featuring the artwork of Margie Caldwell-Gill online at www.lamorindaarts.org, see article p. 23.
- Art of Mixology**. Annual Lamorinda Arts Council fundraiser. Order craft cocktail kits. Mixologist of the Year announced via Zoom on Oct. 16 at 7 p.m. during virtual awards. Go to www.lamorindaarts.org/mixology or call 925-359-9940 for more information.
- 2 **Orinda Theatre/Cine Cuvée** 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 October 9, 16, 23 and 30.
- 3 **Orinda Farmers’ Market**, 9 a.m. Orinda Way in front of Rite Aid and the Community Park. www.cccfm.org or market hotline at 925-431-8361. Also



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CLASSIFIEDS

◆ GEE from page 12

sulted in the need to reduce 10% of the city staff. City services for police, public works, planning, finance and our city manager/city clerk have all remained at nearly full force and we have continued to maintain all needed city functions.

The return of our parks and recreation department is largely dependent on public health orders and our ability to begin group and indoor activities again. Fortunately, our programs have enjoyed solid past success and the new Art and Garden Center at Wilder had only been open about a year when restrictions were implemented. Opportunities for activities at this beautiful new multi-use facility have significant growth potential. I am confident that the return to more normal activities will bring back this aspect of our city revenue relatively quickly.

Challenges always bring opportunities and I believe there are silver linings from our pandemic experiences. Our parks and recreation staff are getting the chance to re-assess our offerings and develop new options. Our management team has found ways to be effective even in a remote environment – work processes that can be capitalized upon even when they fully return to City Hall. We have also found several new ways to work share between departments that can increase our longer-term efficiency.

Three Areas of Greatest Need

The first area of great need in Orinda is on-going rehabilitation of our infrastructure facilities and improved community vegetation management. This terrible year of fires has reinforced to all of us that “it could happen here.” Wildfire prevention, emergency preparation, and well-maintained roads and drains are vital to Orinda’s safety and well-

being. Passing Measure R in November is critical to garnering enough funding to keep making significant progress in fuel mitigation and road and drain repairs.

Our second need is to finish our Downtown Precise Plan that lays the foundation for the future heart of our city. Our downtown has languished behind nearly all our surrounding neighbor communities in creating the amenities and options that most of our residents’ desire. Leaving us with fewer lifestyle choices close to home and less revenue that is critical for city services. We can create the framework for desirable improvements without sacrificing our enjoyable small-town atmosphere.

Third is our need to hire a new city manager by January 2021, given Steve Salomon’s retirement. The city manager’s experience and leadership ability is the most impactful component of our city organization. Finding the right leadership fit for Orinda will be our greatest catalyst for continued success.

Qualifications

I am currently Orinda’s Mayor and have served on the council since July 2015. Prior to joining the council, I served four years on the Citizen’s Infrastructure Oversight Commission. My nine years of city service has given me significant understanding of the issues and processes associated with every city department and function. My detailed knowledge of the city’s finances, capital programs, challenges and opportunities provide an excellent background to help the city move forward from the COVID-19 impacts.

Additionally, I’m a senior vice-president of a major transportation consulting firm where I have had executive management responsibility for operations of over 150 people engaged in delivering multi-billion

dollar infrastructure projects. I am a licensed civil engineer with an MBA from UC Berkeley that has held top leadership positions in multiple Bay Area professional organizations, including the Bay Area Council.

I have worked with our city staff, our residents, state and county representatives, the leadership of Moraga and Lafayette, MOFD, and the leaders of all of Orinda’s key community organizations on numerous topics. In building these relationships, I have worked to be responsive, open and collaborative and will continue to build on what I have learned to work for all Orinda’s residents.

◆ TOUR from page 2

10 mother/daughter teams from the National Charity League, Acalanes Chapter, who pitched in and were willing to do anything. “They were great,” she said.

Co-chair, Bill Waterman, provided an impassioned shout-out to hosts Harwood and Ward: “Congratulations for the outstanding and unprecedented broadcast on Zoom today. We received several emailed comments thanking you so much for the wonderful production you put together – bringing happiness to many people who otherwise would’ve missed out on the joy of everything ‘Car.’”

As the major annual fundraising event for Seniors Around Town (SAT), an Orinda Association free, non-emergency supplemental transportation program, Car Tour viewers were invited to make donations to support the program online.

“The Car Tour committee went beyond dedication to create the car show/tour,” said Kate Wiley, SAT Director. “They kept their eyes on the real intention, which was to support our ride program for Orinda seniors this year.”

An online viewer did end with the perfect summary and follow-up question for the event: “Zoom-zoom indeed! Thank you, Steve and Jay, for a wonderful Zoom version of this year’s car show. What’s the best way to make a donation to your cause, Seniors Around Town?” Wiley said donations, which may be made at www.OrindaAssociation.org, are still welcome and needed throughout the year. To view the Orinda Classic Car Tour live video stream, go to <https://youtu.be/xKxS81J0Wms>.

Kathy Enzerink can be reached at kathy@theorindanews.com

◆ DOWNTOWN from page 5

lic parks or San Pablo Creek access were mentioned as possible incentives. To the council, staff recommended most of the project area maintain a maximum 35’ building height, but allow flexibility for up to 55’ in height “in some areas as an incentive for uses highly-desired by the community.”

Density bonuses for multi-family units,

regulated by the state, are based on the level and number of affordable housing units. A possible concession would allow a lesser setback for more affordable units, according to Planning Director Drummond Buckley.

Miller asked, “If there is no affordable housing, then there is no density concession, right?” Buckley confirmed. At this juncture, Buckley stated the need for a market/economic analysis for building design standards. “The time is right,” he said for a map showing heights and densities with incentives in the project area.

According to the city’s website, “The DPP is intended to revitalize downtown and stimulate housing production by potentially increasing allowable residential densities in the Downtown Commercial zoning district and potentially allowing multi-family residential developments in the Downtown Office zoning district. Any changes to the existing densities would be subject to approval by the City Council through adoption of the DPP itself, as well as General Plan and Zoning Amendments.”

Increases in density, height and number of stories would represent “outer limits” for each category. The Planning Department staff report indicated it is expected “there will be variation in the allowed density and heights in different parts of the project area, depending on site characteristics.”

Visit www.CityofOrinda.org for the calendar of all city meetings.

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

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VISUAL ARTS

Library Gallery: Watercolors, Abstractions and Light The Sky Literary Journal

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

The Lamorinda Arts Council (Council) has reconfigured art exhibits to be virtual until COVID-19 restrictions change. Artists scheduled to display artwork in the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library for the month of October include Dina Asna, Lorelee Chapleau, Ann F. Fallin and members of the San Francisco Peace and Hope organization.

Drawn to paint watercolors to transfer feelings onto paper, Moraga's Dina Asna sees applying color as the most exciting part of her process. Her theme for this exhibit is "Be Happy!"

Two years after she was born into a warm, loving Tehran family, she developed polio and was fully paralyzed. Within a few weeks it subsided and remains today only in her legs.

"I believe art can heal a lot of wounds," said Asna. Get a glimpse of this at etsy.com.

Everchanging seasonal beauty inspired paintings of Lorelee Chapleau of Danville.



Reverie by Margie Caldwell-Gill. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Favoring large pieces, she paints in oils and acrylics with an expressive style, using vivid colors and energetic brushstrokes. Her theme for this virtual exhibit is "Recollections: Experiential and Imagined." Sometimes she paints from direct observation on location, but more and more she draws on past experiences and memory to create large semi-abstract pieces.

Chapleau strives to present emotion with every stroke in her paintings. Her *Cautious Optimism*, a 30" x 40" oil painting, leads one into the surprising vibrancy between land and sky. Visit loraleecs.wixsite.com/loraleeart for more of her work.

Ann F. Fallin of Walnut Creek began as an oil painter but switched to watercolors in 1980. Painting watercolors motivated her in a way oil painting never had: "Through painting I like to communicate the upbeat and the positive." Her goal is to share her enthusiasm for the subject – which can be anything from a landscape, portrait (human or animal) floral or still life – in hopes of engaging the viewer to become positively involved with her work.

"I love the battle to gain control over the medium, which often decides what it's going to impose despite the painter's plans. I love the transparency of watercolor, the endless effects it produces, its versatility, and how much just plain fun it is to paint with," said Fallin. She describes her work as contemporary realism.

Founding Director Elizabeth Hack of Lafayette works with advisor Al Young, California Poet Laureate emeritus and photographer Philip Lewenthal to ensure local and international voices are heard in San Francisco Peace and Hope (SFPH). SFPH reflects a hopeful vision in its literary journal devoted to poetry and art through online and print publications encompassing art and the spoken word.

When 9/11 occurred, Hack started a blog.

She realized a community used to expressing creative voices through spoken word, poetry, visual art, dance and more could articulate a singular, much needed mission in trying times.

The blog prospered and a literary journal devoted to poetry and art emerged. SFPH's first publication debuted in 2015 with an introduction by Al Young.

Viewers of the virtual exhibit will see photographs and a video of written and visual excerpts of *Light The Sky*. The book was further honored by a California State Library "Book of the Week" award: "If you're seeking a glimpse of what humanity can be, this is the book for you." Noted illustrator Elaine Drew created the book jacket. To learn more about this nonprofit organization go to sfpeaceandhope.com.

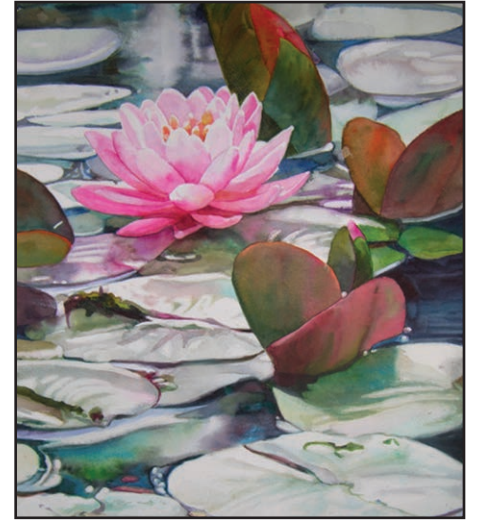
Photographs of artwork from each exhibitor are featured at the council's virtual gallery which also includes videos of the exhibit at lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries. A new feature allows you to purchase exhibiting artists' artwork online during their scheduled month.

Art Gallery at Wilder: Abstraction – Alive and Well in Orinda

The Lamorinda Arts Council invites you to view the mixed media paintings of Margie Caldwell-Gill during the month of October. Caldwell-Gill, who lives in Orinda, started out as a photorealist painter in college, rebelling against dominant art forms of the time, pop art and abstract art.

In graduate school, Caldwell-Gill studied to become a medical illustrator and equated being a good artist with making every painting look exactly like what the subject looked like in life. After working in this field for 15 years, she lost interest in recreating what she saw in the world and became interested in abstract painting.

She fell in love with the beauty of the



Ann F. Fallin's watercolor entitled *Lilypond #9*. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

materials themselves – thick and thin layers of paint, the edges of one shape next to another, how marks disappear behind a brushstroke of paint and how this can convey space, time and emotions. Classic abstract artists such as Richard Diebenkorn, Mark Rothko, Richard Motherwell and Hans Hoffmann inspired her.

She now paints intuitively, which means she never knows where a painting will take her. "I approach my paintings with a sense of experimentation and play," she said. She's learned more about color, composition and value than she ever learned when doing representational work. Most of her paintings begin with pencil marks; each line and mark influences the next.

She is showing nine works in her virtual exhibit, including *Reverie*, a 16.5" x 22.5" mixed media work. Expect to apprehend an abstract work with lots of geometric shapes in complimentary colors, including blues, grays and orange earth tones. To see more of her work go to www.caldwellgill.com.

Learn more about the Council's virtual [SEE GALLERY page 25]

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OBITUARY / SEASONED SHOPPER

Jim Wiltshire, Shipping Executive and Sports Aficionado Passes

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

James Faulkner Wiltshire, an Orinda resident since 1988, died Aug. 20 from a hemorrhagic stroke. He is survived by daughters Virginia St. Jean (Ron) of Orinda, Catherine (Kate) Bridges (Monroe) of Fremont, grandchildren Caldwell (Cal) and Elizabeth (Beth) Bridges of Fremont and Kathy Enzerink, his longtime friend, companion and partner.

Jim, born Feb. 29, 1932, in Martinsburg, WV, celebrated his 22nd “real” birthday this leap year. He graduated from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at King’s Point in 1954 and retired as a Commander from the US Naval Reserve after serving for 28 years.

While serving in the Navy, Jim met Elizabeth Ainsworth of Berkeley and they married July 14, 1956. The Wiltshire daughters, Virginia and Kate, spent most of their younger years in the Far East and Europe before settling in Walnut Creek and



James F. Wiltshire

KATHY ENZERINK

then Orinda. Liz predeceased Jim in 2005. Known globally as “Mr. Shipping/Mr. Transportation,” Jim enjoyed a stellar

international transportation career which took him overseas with his new wife to the Philippines, Japan and The Netherlands. He also experienced intermittent sales and marketing positions in New York, New Jersey and, finally, San Francisco.

An avid sportsman, Jim had a passion for sailing and rugby. Cal Rugby Head Coach Jack Clark said, “He just about never missed a rugby match, following the team throughout North America. He will be truly missed. RIP, Jim, you’re forever ours.” Jim, also an encyclopedia of sports knowledge, knew professional and collegiate players in all sports over many decades.

Jim will be missed by all who knew him, from the executive to the clerk, from professional sportsman to individual gym rats, to the stranger who was no longer a stranger after meeting him. Jim supported The Steinbeck House in Salinas, the SS Jeremiah O’Brien, Seniors Around Town in Orinda and Cal Rugby among other favorite causes.

Gatherings to honor and celebrate Jim Wiltshire are tentatively planned for Spring, 2021.

Kathy Enzerink can be reached at Kathy@theorindanews.com

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Strawberries and Persimmons

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One of the most popular produce picks at Orinda’s Farmers Market is strawberries. Growers from Viveros Farm come from Watsonville to continue to sell baskets and boxes of fresh picked strawberries this month. It’s a welcome sight as many of summers’ stone fruits and melons are finished.

Look for Lupe Garcia and Ben Gonzales behind the Viveros stand making sure the berries are ready for sale. The large Albion variety berries are their specialty and show off an intense red color and offer an exceptionally sweet taste. They are an excellent choice for eating fresh, making pies and preserves, and freezing.

If you purchase flats of berries, storage is possible for two or three days. Arrange unwashed strawberries in a single layer in a moisture proof container lined with paper towels. Top that with another layer of towels and refrigerate.

Strawberries freeze well too. Rinse, drain, hull and freeze in a single layer on a baking sheet before placing in freezer bags.

Persimmons are another fall favorite. Two available types of persimmons have the same beautiful deep orange hue inside and out and a sweet rich flavor when ripe, but textures vary considerably. Acorn-shaped hachiya persimmons are an astringent variety that must be allowed to soften and become almost pudding-like before eating. Once completely ripe, the astringency disappears and the sweet, juicy flavor develops. Scoop the pulp from the skin with a spoon to eat fresh or use in



BARBARA KOBSAR

Lupe Garcia and Ben Gonzales of Viveros Farms.

puddings, cakes and cookies.

The fuyu persimmon is non-astringent and delicious right off the tree. The ripe flesh of the tomato shaped fuyu is firm and sweet tart in flavor. These are particularly attractive sliced into thin crosswise pieces to add to salads or to garnish entrée dishes.

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 cccf.org, facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket and [Instagram@OrindaFarmersMarket](https://instagram.com/OrindaFarmersMarket), or call the market hotline at 925-431-8361.

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DIVERSITY – INCLUSION

◆ PRESIDENT from page 3

others, the Orinda Association (OA) will host a City Council Candidate’s Public Forum on Oct. 8. The three candidates for City Council have been invited to attend this interactive Zoom meeting. The three candidates are: Mayor Darlene Gee, Councilmember Inga Miller and Latika Malikani. We have also invited Craig Jorgens, who is running unopposed for the Moraga Orinda Fire District Board. Jorgens will provide a 15-minute presentation about fire safety. Anyone who would like to ask a specific question of the candidates has until Oct. 5 at noon. Please send it to editor@theorindanews.com and put “Candidate Question” in the subject line.

The questions will be categorized and submitted to the League of Women Voters, who will select questions and direct them to the candidates. Please join us in this special event by finding your way to the Zoom meeting at oa@orindaassociation.org. The forum will also be taped for broadcast at a later date on CCTV, Channel 26.

Carlos Baltodano can be reached at cbalt.ldc@comcast.net.

◆ FUNNY from page 19

for memorization of complex ideas in order to pass along history and stories to succeeding generations.

I wonder if they had spell-check back then? Did they have a dictionary to look up words or symbols they needed to communicate?

Okay, let’s get back to Mr. Dictionary Man himself. Noah Webster (1758 – 1843), notably known for his creation of the dictionary in 1806. He was a lexicographer (yah, another tough one here, pronounced “lek-s-kä-gr-fr”). But who died and made him Sir King Word Speller?

Did you know that the word “misspell” wasn’t introduced into our vocabulary until 1655? Before then, I’m sure they simply wrote ... *that just don’t look right!*

My point is this. Texting with butchered English words is not so bad after all. Lighten up all you who have master’s degrees in English, who won every spelling bee contest from grades K through 12, and who never got an essay marked up so bad, the red markings could not be deciphered between ink or blood.

Now before you judge me, know this.

I’m a high school and college journalism teacher and a freelance writer for daily newspapers and magazines – for the last 22 years. Spelling correctly is my job. Okay, maybe the burden falls more on my copy editor’s electronic pen than mine before it goes to press, but let’s just say if I turned in copies riddled with spelling boo-boos, my editors would not be so inclined to give me more work. They’d probably call on the writer who has a big fat Webster’s dictionary sitting on his or her desk.

I believe spelling is important, especially when you’re trying to reach the masses. But the next time your fifth-grade son shows you his essay, before you speed dial the Sylvan Learning Center, just be proud he sounded it out and spelled it *fonetically*.

◆ USPS from page 5

The website stated their intent was to rally at local post offices across the country to save the post office from President Trump and announce Postmaster General Louis DeJoy must resign.

The wall adjacent to the post office entrance was filled with homemade and ready-made signs, some made by Curran’s daughters, Sofia, age 9 and Madeline, age 6.

“They want equal rights and fairness and for all votes to count,” he said.

Curran said other goals of this rally were to stop further postal service job cuts, restore the jobs and workers already cut from the payroll and for the Postmaster General to resign. Curran estimated 50 people attended the local rally.

“The event brought awareness around the country and Orinda to the challenges facing mail-in ballots due to cuts in the postal service,” said Curran. “People now know the steps they need to take to make sure their vote is received and counted timely.”

Kathy Enzerink can be reached at kathy@theorindanews.com

◆ GALLERY from page 23

Art Gallery at Wilder by going to www.lamorindaarts.org/current-exhibits-wilder. To view photographs of Caldwell-Gill’s work and a video of her virtual exhibit, visit www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries. Contact the Lamorinda Arts Council Curators Denise Nomura and Aniston Breslin at wildergallery@lamorindaarts.org with any questions.

Council Votes to Spend \$18K for Body Worn Camera Equipment

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

Diversity, inclusion, racial and identity profiling, body worn cameras for police and establishing a public safety sub-committee dominated the topics of discussion during the Orinda City Council meeting Tuesday, Sept. 15. As recommended by staff, the council voted unanimously to “execute a procurement agreement . . . for a Body Worn Camera (BWC) program.”

Additionally, the council voted to explore anti-bias training for the council itself and committees with a possibility of making it available to the public, as recommended by vice-mayor Amy Worth.

The \$18,000 first-year cost will be budgeted from the General Fund. Police Chief David Cook will institute the department’s BWC program when the Axon Enterprises

supplied cameras arrive.

The Axon 3 camera, used by the Danville Police Department, automatically activates and records when a weapon or taser gets drawn. Cook said if officers are “engaged in an encounter, they should be recording.”

Racial and identity profiling (RIP) will be the focus of the yet-to-be created public safety sub-committee, planned to meet quarterly with the police department. Diana Honig asked about delays in receiving RIP statistics, currently available in other parts of the state, Cook said the system, under the jurisdiction of the County Sheriff’s office, is still in testing. He doesn’t know when it will be implemented. Rebecca Verity requested the Council immediately seek the racial profiling data now.

Kathy Enzerink can be reached at kathy@theorindanews.com

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LOCAL RESIDENT

Piano Teacher Remembers a Career Spanning More Than 50 Years

By ROWENA GONDEN
Contributing Writer

The youngsters whose fingers once thumped and caressed the keys of Elaine Klatsky's Steinways are gone now, but the mark the former music teacher made on their lives remains.

The 88-year-old Orinda resident gave her final lesson in March after spending more than a half-century sharing her love of classical music with students from 6-year-olds to retirees.

"[There are] 88 keys on the piano, so that seemed like a good time," said Klatsky, half-joking about her decision to stop at the point that the pandemic would have necessitated switching to virtual lessons.

It was a difficult choice for someone whose entire life revolved around music.

The New Jersey native recalled her father's large collection of classical music records as well as attending concerts as a child, noting her Jewish heritage valued classical music performances and lessons. "I've been steeped in it for many years," she said.

Klatsky graduated with a degree in music from New York University and immediately began teaching at a music school in Boston, Mass., as well as performing in recitals.

Becoming an educator was a natural choice because both her parents were teachers, she said, adding that she wasn't cut out to be a stay-at-home housewife.

After moving to Orinda in 1963, she began teaching when first one, then another member of the Oakland Symphony asked Klatsky to teach their children. As word of her services spread, her home-based business grew.

So did her involvement in the music community: at various points in her career, Klatsky has been a judge for several music organizations as well as serving as president of the Contra Costa County branch of the Music Teachers' Association of California, the Contra Costa Performing Arts Society and Berkeley Piano Club. She also chaired a symposium on Hungarian composer Béla Bartók at an annual convention of music teachers.

Klatsky's lost count of how many pupils she has schooled over the years and doesn't skip a beat when asked which classical greats' work they have experienced. "What composers have I *not* taught?" Klatsky chuckled. Handel and Haydn, Schumann and Chopin, Bach and Brahms - students have done it all under her firm-but-kind tutelage. "I like to say that I set high standards and lovingly enforced them," she said.



Eileen Klatsky recently retired from her long career as a piano teacher when COVID-19 made in-person lessons impossible. KSENIIJA OLMER

Klatsky auditioned prospects before taking them on to find out whether they had musical ability and the interest to learn, said Orinda resident Ksenija Olmer, whose youngest daughter was around six when she started lessons.

Once accepted, Klatsky expected to assume a measure of responsibility for their education, which included music theory and participating in the recitals the teacher held as well as performing at Music Teachers' Association of California conventions

and Junior Bach Festivals.

"If kids didn't practice she would drop them," Olmer said. "She expected a certain standard of behavior and responsibility, but she did it in a really nice way." And youngsters put in the work, not out of fear of a scolding but because they didn't want to disappoint their teacher, she said.

Klatsky's commitment to her pupils, however, went beyond aiming for a mastery of the keyboard. She talked to teens about [SEE KLATSKY page 27]

◆ WALKERS from page 10

afterward," said Laurie.

They continued walking, averaging three miles a day for the first 108 days. The Smiths walked 324 miles on both public and privately-maintained streets and carried an old paper map in case they got lost. "The map is so old, I've had to draw in some of our newer streets," said Laurie.

"I think the most interesting area was El Toyonal," said Todd. "There are old cabins and new, modern large homes with such an interesting topography and nature's foliage."

After saving Wilder for last, the next decision is whether to do an Orinda repeat or explore streets in a new community. "Since I get home from work around 6 p.m., we'll probably walk close to home when it's dark and take longer walks on the weekends," said Todd.

"Walking Orinda was a feeling of accomplishment during a time I wasn't accomplishing much," said Laurie. "Everyone we have met has been very nice."

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

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CONTINUATIONS

◆ JORGENS from page 15

mation, including tips on how homeowners can fireproof their property. These include ridding rain gutters of leaves, replacing missing shingles or roof tiles and installing metal mesh screening on vents under the eaves.

Jorgens credits Fire Chief David Winnacker's relentless promotion of this self-help approach with inspiring neighborhoods to participate. Before the Chief took the job in December, 2017, no Orinda or Moraga residents belonged; now, the district has 21 Firewise groups ranging in size from about 20 homes to 400, and four more are set to join.

Organizing Firewise can benefit all those residents who are reading the headlines about wildfires and even can smell the smoke yet still don't take steps to protect themselves, Jorgens said.

"It's not that they don't care – they don't know what to do," he said.

New technology that Jorgens expects the district to adopt in the next four years also should reduce the risk of conflagrations.

The district plans to use tiny, low Earth orbit satellites with cameras to detect smoke from fires in the early stages. Stopping the spread right away is key to getting the upper hand, Jorgens said.

The equipment would calculate the direction the flames are moving and thereby identify the neighborhoods that are threatened, which in turn would trigger an alert. "We're on the leading edge of this kind of development," he said.

Rowena Gonden can be reached at rowenalouise@msn.com.

◆ KLATSKY from page 26

what they were doing in school and their hopes for the future, providing emotional support for young people who didn't have an extended family nearby. "She was kind of a constant presence in the lives of these kids. She saw them more often than their own grandmother," Olmer said.

Klatsky's requirement that students behave themselves and dress properly when they took part in recitals at the Berkeley Piano Club prepared them for success in life, she added. And they have: many of her former students have graduated from ivy league universities and some now work in the arts according to Klatsky who noted a

former Hollywood producer once called her out of the blue to thank her for her efforts. Students also grew to love classical music performances, an appreciation she believes she helped foster.

Klatsky's legacy lives on with Olmer's daughter, Naya. Now 28, she still heads to the piano when she comes home for a visit and invariably expresses gratitude for her former music teacher.

Klatsky notes her own daughter continues to enjoy applying the skills she learned from her mother as well.

Even though she's no longer giving lessons, Klatsky hasn't forsworn the piano. She still plays in a trio as well as performing at churches, convalescent hospitals and other venues with another pianist.

Rowena Gonden can be reached at rowenalouise@msn.com.

◆ ROTARY from page 10

"We all became very close, and I'm still friends with many former members. Now, there are some members we don't see for months at a time."

Yaich looks back over his 51 years in Rotary with fondness, recalling all the good friends he made and the fun they had together doing service projects and enjoying social gatherings.

"It was a far cry from the kid who rode the streetcar to Commerce High in SF and sometimes created a little ruckus with the boys from Sacred Heart High School as we rode to school," he said. "It was nothing by today's standards, but it sure got me in trouble with my dad."

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

◆ LEARNING from page 13

and parents who have worked hard to create and deliver these sessions for the parents and guardians of Orinda's students. "It is commendable that our presenters have shared their expertise to help our students' parents and guardians navigate distance online learning," she said, "in order to better support their children."

Other sessions offered by the school district addressed habits to bring peace to your home; finding balance and calm in our COVID world and discovering self-care

and compassion for you, your child and your family.

Glynn said she's "extremely grateful to everyone at OUSD for all their efforts and hard work under extremely difficult and trying times."

For more information, visit orindaschools.org.

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

◆ CALENDAR from page 21

murder mystery game fundraiser, *Halloween Haunts, Jaunts and Murder*. Join the cast via Zoom and solve the mystery. Free (donations encouraged). Make reservation at info@orsvp.org. See article p. 19.

7 **Orinda Chamber State of the City** update with Mayor Darlene Gee, virtual. Noon - 1 p.m., registration required at www.orindachamber.org.

8 **Orinda Association Virtual Candidate Forum** for City Council candidates Darlene Gee, Latika Malkani and Inga Miller. 6:30 p.m. via Zoom and later on Contra Costa Television (CCTV). Send questions to editor@theorindanews.com by Oct. 5. Zoom broadcast, be access at https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88000358655. See article p.1.

13 **American Association of University Women Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch (AAUW-OML)** nonpartisan presentation about each of the 12 propositions. 7 p.m via Zoom, free and open to the public. To receive Zoom link visit oml-ca.aauw.net.

18 **Art Embraces Words Webinar** hosted by the Lamorinda Arts Council, 2 p.m. Emerging writers read from their work surrounded by visual artwork from local artists. Free. Register or get info at lamorindaarts.org/art-embraces-words.

CITY/FIRE MEETING SCHEDULE
City Council. First and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way. cityoforinda.org.

Historic Landmarks Committee. Fourth Tuesday, 3 – 5 p.m., Library Garden Room, 26 Orinda Way. Call 925-788-7323.

Moraga-Orinda Fire District. Third Wednesday, 7 p.m. Sarge Littlehale Community Room 22 Orinda Way, Orinda. For agenda www.mofd.org/board/meetings.

Planning Commission. Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Orinda Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way. www.cityoforinda.org.

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

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BUSINESS BUZZ

Business Buzz Putting a Personal Face on Local Business

Elana O'Loskey



UrbanSkin - Stem Cell Technology in Skin Care

Sandra Martin opened her skin care studio nine years ago and has recently rebranded as UrbanSkin in Lafayette. Her COVID-19 safe outdoor pop-up studio is a great place to experience any of her treatments, now offered at 25% off. She chose the Dermaquest line of state-of-the-art skincare products because they allow her to use science at its best.

Plant based Dermaquest ingredients are manufactured here in the East Bay. Martin uses formulas that include stem cells from lilac leaves, which reduce skin inflammation; anti-aging peptides to nourish the skin; and a new collection with CBD (Cannabidiol) to calm and hydrate the skin. Martin says the hyaluronic acid contained in most of Dermaquest's products helps plump the skin.

Dermatologist Dr. Lily Talakoub said in *Harpers Bazaar*, "Hyaluronic acid (HA) is a sugar found naturally in our skin that

holds water and helps keep it hydrated and plump. The HA within our bodies holds a thousand times its weight in water to not only retain all that moisture in our skin and joints, but also prevent all that moisture from evaporating into the air." Certainly, this is an example of science at its best.

Martin, who was born and raised in Switzerland, graduated from the prestigious Make Up Designory Academy of Los Angeles, and worked with a dermatologist and plastic surgeon. She is a licensed Esthetician with 18 years of experience. She attends Dermaquest's ongoing classes because of their international reputation for advancing plant stem cell technology. At industry trade shows, she keeps up on the latest technology in her field.

Alison Stout of Aspire PR in Orinda says, "Sandra has been my esthetician for more than five years. There's nobody I would trust more with my skin and all of my skin care questions. She's a truly talented artist who knows exactly what the skin needs to thrive."

According to Martin, people often come



Join UrbanSkin owner **Sandra Martin** at her COVID-19 approved outdoor popup studio, where she provides a variety of plant based skin care treatments designed to revitalize your skin.



Village Pizza owner **Adrian Adame** (R) has asked Manager/Chef **Jason** (L) to create daily specials from fresh ingredients for takeout orders during COVID-19 restrictions.

in with bumpy skin and are not sure what to do, having tried many different things. "I'm very realistic with them and tell them I can usually make a real difference within six treatments. It's true; they get results," said Martin. She says skin care is like working out - the more you do it the better it gets.

Hair removal services at UrbanSkin are accomplished with Nufree, a gentle soy-based antibacterial and antimicrobial liquid hair removal system. Testimonials say clients leave her studio and simply resume their day. So erase from your mind the pain, redness and swelling often associated with wax-based products. "I've been told my eyebrow shaping is very good, and it's easy to book," said Martin.

When not at her studio, Martin can be seen hiking around Briones with her dog Milo or shopping local - Romp is one of her haunts. Visit UrbanSkin at 1043 Stuart St., Suite 160 in Lafayette Tues. - Fri. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., call 925-330-7304, email myurbanskin@gmail.com or go to www.myurbanskin.com.

Village Pizza - 35 Years in Orinda

Have a pizza combination of your own invention? This is the place to make it real. Village Pizza is known for its piping hot pizza just the way you like it, including vegetarian choices. Call for the menu specials, which change daily. This hometown, family-run Italian restaurant and pizza parlor has been around for 35 years.

Owner Adrian Adame is grateful for the support shown by the community. He has adapted the businesses' schedule during COVID-19 restrictions, which is why he requests you call for daily specials. Their new hours are Mon. - Sun. 3 - 8:30 p.m. to pick up to go orders; 5 - 8:30 p.m. to request deliveries within Orinda, and from

3 - 8:30 p.m. for delivery by Doordash. Longtime managers Jason and Morgan, plus five other staff members, keep things running.

Village Pizza offers a wide variety of pizza options from vegetarian to chicken, sausage and pepperoni. Everything is prepared from scratch daily using the highest quality fresh ingredients. The current menu changes daily; all sauces and dressings are house made. Wine, beer and soda can be delivered or picked up when added to your food order.

Adame said, "Maybe the best experience we bring to Village Pizza is coming from an Italian family; cooking and getting people together around food are our passions." He says his two managers are equally passionate about creating dishes every day from the freshest ingredients. Manager Jason is the grandson of the original owner, Joe, and has worked there since the beginning. Manager Morgan has been there over 20 years. They both use grandfather Joe's original recipes because "they taste just like the recipes my family used in Italy," said Adame. He says both managers are artisan chefs because of their culinary originality. "Sometimes on a Friday night they will riff off what is fresh that day and come up with something spicy, unexpected and delicious. I am very proud of their abilities," he said.

Call to find out what's on order at 925-254-1200, pick up your order at Village Pizza, 19 Orinda Way (in the mini mall across from the Orinda Library) or request delivery from Village Pizza itself or Doordash. Email the Orinda restaurant at villagepizza@villagepizzaorinda.com or visit www.villagepizzaorinda.com.

To send items for consideration, email O'Loskey at business.orinda@gmail.com.

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