



THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis
Volume 35, Number 7

www.TheOrindaNews.com

Delivered to 9,000 Households and Businesses in Orinda

12 Issues Annually
July 2020

Decorations, Photos, Noise at Noon – Get Ready for July 4 Celebrations

KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

Drive anywhere around Orinda and you'll be greeted with a flowing sea of red, white and blue.

In this year's Fourth of July celebration, entitled Together (apart), individuals, families, neighborhoods and businesses have gone all out to honor and celebrate local essential workers, the official Grand Marshalls of the 2020 Best Hometown Parade.

According to Diane Lautz, Fourth of July committee co-chair, preparations for the big day started in early June as homes, mailboxes and fences donned festive, patriotic decorations. Homemade signs

honoring front-line workers, retail staff, restaurant employees, teachers, delivery personnel and volunteer shoppers are visible everywhere.

There is still time to be included in an online photo gallery hosted by The Orinda Association, although the Virtual Decorating Contest ended July 1. Decorating possibilities are endless and include homes, mailboxes, fences, tree trunks, driveways... Costumes? Yes, for individuals, families and, of course, the furry pet. There is a special category to honor the 2020 Grand Marshalls with homemade signs.

"Who are your heroes during this time of crises and challenges? Let them know you

[SEE FOURTH page 2]



SALLY HOGARTY
Heeding a call to decorate houses, mailboxes, fences and even pets for this year's Fourth of July celebration, an Orinda front yard takes on a patriotic theme.

Orinda Stands for Equality



SALLY HOGARTY
It started with Neil Pretlow holding up a sign. Little by little, more people joined with their own signs. Within 48 hours, a crowd of about 1,500 assembled at library plaza June 6 for a rally supporting Black Lives Matter and diversity. See the story and more photos on Pages 10-11.

First Major Commercial Project in 45 Years Heads to City Council

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

With the Planning Commission's approval, plans for a 19,350 square-foot mixed-use downtown development named The Station are headed to the City Council July 7 to begin the approval process.

Coined an Orinda Mercantile, the project includes a front courtyard and patio, an indoor market hall and Orangetheory Fitness, the anchor tenant.

In 2015, Paul Ugenti submitted plans to develop the site at 25A Orinda Way, which has been vacant since 1998 when the BP Service Station closed. Approved by the City Council in 2017, the project was never built. In January, he submitted a revised proposal.

If approved, the project will be the first downtown development since the Vintage House building at 25 Orinda Way, next door to The Station, was constructed in 1975.

Both the original and revised designs include retail and restaurants on the ground floor. The latest iteration includes a larger building but uses 52-percent lot coverage

compared to a 95-percent lot coverage with the 2015 plan. The mezzanine and second floor will house offices, with mechanical equipment on the rooftop.

Instead of a second floor and rooftop parking as originally proposed, there will be a subterranean garage with 36 spaces versus 69 spaces in the original plan. According to Ugenti, "this project would generate one-third less parking than the previous proposal."

Based on Orinda Municipal Code, the project requires 86 parking spaces, 50 more than planned. A variance approved by the City Council on Jan. 21 allows developers to build fewer parking spaces than required by paying a fee. Ugenti and Aaron Cohen, who submitted the revised project application Jan. 7, plan to pay the \$469,200 parking in-lieu fee. They are the first developers to apply for the variance.

Exception permits will be required as the project does not conform to the minimum front, side, and rear setback requirements. It exceeds the maximum building height by two feet, ten inches and the freestanding wall height limit by three feet.

[SEE STATION page 8]

IN THIS ISSUE

News	
Black Lives Matter	10, 11
City Hall	2, 7, 8
Fire Safety	6
Police Blotter	Online
Around Town	
Arts	8, 17
Fourth of July	1
People	9
Theater	18
Business	19, 20
Car Time	16
Club meetings	Online
Calendar	Online
Classifieds	17
Editorial	4
Everyday Orinda	12
Letters to the Editor	4, 5
The Orinda Association	3
The Reel Less Travelled	18
Seasoned Shopper	15
Students	13, 14

Reopening of Schools Proves No Easy Task

By SALLY HOGARTY
Executive Editor

The Orinda School District has been busily preparing for a wide variety of eventualities as it deals with an uncertain school year and an even more uncertain budget.

"It's daunting," said Orinda Union School District Superintendent Carolyn Seaton. "If you didn't keep getting up and working through it, you'd just want to curl up in a ball."

One of the many "things" to work

[SEE SCHOOLS page 13]

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

NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
ORINDA, CA
PERMIT #4
EGRWSS

Postal Customer



Mash Gas & Food

Orinda's Lowest Gas Prices
Buy Lotto & Lottery Here

	Self Service Gasoline	
	CASH	CREDIT
Regular Unleaded	2.49 ⁹ / ₁₀	2.59 ⁹ / ₁₀
Plus Unleaded	2.79 ⁹ / ₁₀	2.89 ⁹ / ₁₀
Premium Unleaded	2.89 ⁹ / ₁₀	2.99 ⁹ / ₁₀

22 Bryant Way - Next to Casa Orinda
Mon - Sat 5 am - 12 am; Sun 6 am-11 pm

NEWS

City Wants to Recheck Voter Pulse on Sales Tax Ballot Measure

By PAUL KILDUFF
Staff Writer

In light of COVID-19, city leaders want to know what residents think *now* about extending the half-cent sales tax.

A pre-pandemic survey conducted earlier this year indicated residents were in favor of keeping the tax when it “sunsets” in two years, and possibly increasing it to one cent. But on May 19, the City Council voted unanimously to conduct a “tracking poll” of residents to see if they still feel the same.

“The idea is they’re trying to see if voter preferences have changed since earlier in the year,” said City Manager Steve Salomon. The earlier poll reached 436 Orinda residents with two different sets of questions.

The exact wording of the tracking poll has yet to be determined but it will be shorter and sent to fewer people. It should be ready by August.

The tax raises \$1.2 million annually for the city but due to the ongoing economic crisis caused by the coronavirus, it is expected to generate 10 to 20 percent less this year. If the tax was raised to one cent, it is projected to bring in \$2 million a year. The city’s earlier poll found support for raising the tax.

The tax’s biggest generator of income is from car sales to Orinda residents. Despite the fact Orinda has no car dealers, when a car is sold to an Orinda resident the city receives the tax.

While some Orindans would like to see the money raised by the tax used to address long-standing issues such as drainage maintenance and fire prevention, it cannot be earmarked for a specific use because the

money goes into the general fund.

A sales tax that goes in to the general fund only needs a simple majority to pass. A dedicated sales tax requires a two-third majority — something the survey did not predict as likely to happen.

However, that doesn’t mean a citizen’s oversight committee couldn’t be established to keep an eye on what’s done with the money.

“If the council doesn’t do what they pledge to do with the money people will get after them — especially in Orinda. People are very involved,” said Salomon.

One such involved citizen is Steve Cohn. He said the “burning issue” facing Orinda is wildfire prevention. “It has been obvious since the Oakland hills fire (of 1991),” said Cohn.

And he’s not alone. Cohn points out that in the survey taken earlier this year, 55 percent of respondents rated fire prevention as “Extremely Important” and another 31 percent viewed it as “Very Important.”

The matter is so important that Cohn advocates passing a parcel tax to fund fire prevention efforts.

“That 85 percent total probably could pass a dedicated parcel tax which could not be raided for road maintenance, as can a general sales tax,” said Cohn. “The council, in its discussion of the sales tax, never discussed anything other than a sales tax.”

Cohn said the road to better fire prevention efforts in Orinda could be through taking a closer look at how the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) is financed.

“The city needs to know the facts behind the emergency services provided by MOFD so it can effectively discuss the issue,” said Cohn who points out that taxpayers pay \$17 [SEE TAXES page 3]

Fitness Tip of the Month

Lifelong Fitness Requires Fun

It is much easier for us to get into shape than it is to stay in shape. That’s because we don’t necessarily like the path we had to take, whether it was an awful diet or a painful/boring/time consuming workout routine.

Once we see results, we stop.

Pick an effective workout/eating method or program that fits you and that you really enjoy.

If you enjoy the process, chances are you will continue to maintain and exceed your fitness level.



For more information, contact Sheena with Living Lean personal training and eating for elite fitness at 925-360-7051 or www.thelivingleanprogram.com.

◆ FOURTH from page 1

care,” said Lautz.

Photos may be submitted to Jill@AspenConsult.net and will be included in the photo gallery at www.OrindaParade.com.

Registration for the annual Virtual Run for a Reason is open through July 4 at <http://sudc.org/wesley/run-for-a-reason>.

July 4 Schedule of Events:

10:30 a.m.

Video Celebration

Created and narrated by Steve Harwood, the voice of Orinda, this 12-minute video features highlights of past July 4 Best Hometown parades. The link is available at www.OrindaParade.com.

11 a.m.

Virtual Decorating Contest

View the Virtual Reverse Parade Decorating Contest online in the Photo Gallery. There is a plethora of patriotic themes and colors on homes, mailboxes, fences, vehicles, pets and people, along with Thank You signs to honor local, essential workers/heroes, who are collectively the Grand Marshall for 2020.

Noon-12:05 p.m.

Noise at Noon

To celebrate local essential heroes, Orindans are encouraged to make some noise. A lot of noise. Beat a drum. Ring a cow bell. Bang on pots and pans. Honk a horn. Church bells will ring. Sirens will blare.

Making noise to rally for a cause dates back to World War I when the Liberty Bell was used as a symbol of America to encourage people to buy war bonds. Its use included ringing it in Philadelphia on the telephone to be heard in San Francisco to inaugurate the phone lines’ completion.

According to *Smithsonian* magazine, in their April 2017 article “Saved by the Bell,” by Stephen Fried, “As the dominant symbol of the war effort, the sounding of the Liberty and other bells (and whistles where there were no bells) became the Pavlovian cue to do the right thing — buying war bonds, enlisting in the military or raising

money for the Red Cross.”

“In the tradition of ringing the Liberty Bell to call Americans to do the right thing as well as paying tribute to local essential workers/heroes, we have included a noon citywide time to make some noise,” said Jill Gelster, Fourth of July committee member.

12:15 p.m.

Front-yard barbecues and picnics to show camaraderie and community

Break out the grill, tables and chairs to celebrate July 4 traditions, old and new, with family, friends and neighbors at a safe distance.

Looking forward, 2021 marks the 70th anniversary of The Orinda Association, which has put on the July 4 Best Hometown Parade, for decades. The association and its Fourth of July committee already are in the planning stages for a bigger-than-ever celebration.

Reach Kathy Enzerink at kathy@theorindanews.com

Correction



In the June edition, the item “Water Polo Club Athletes Head to College” was published with the wrong photo. The correct photos are above. We regret the error.

A special thank you to the staff and volunteers of
The Orinda Association for:

- ★ **The Orinda News, which continued to report, print and mail the paper during Shelter in Place**
- ★ **The Orinda News, which found a very special way to honor our graduates**
- ★ **Seniors Around Town for quickly adapting their senior transportation program to a grocery and errand delivery program**
- ★ **The July 4th Parade organizers for creating ways we can all celebrate Together (apart)**
- ★ **Reminding us all that America and community are strong with the American flags waving on our streets**
- ★ **The Orinda Classic Car Show organizers for again creatively looking at ways to keep this long-standing and much anticipated Orinda event happening this year**
- ★ **Not heroes per se, but committed community leaders and volunteers responding and looking forward**

Signed, A 35-year resident and long-time supporter of
The Orinda Association

Seniors Around Town
Orinda
(925) 402-4506

Time to buy or sell? Let me help you.
See what my clients say at www.myagentsuzanne.com

Clients Are Always First

Suzanne Toner Geoffrion
925-699-4832
CalBRE# 01878803
Presidents International Sterling
Top 100 Sales Coldwell Banker SF Bay Area

©2020 Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. All Rights Reserved. Coldwell Banker® is a registered trademark licensed to Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. An Equal Opportunity Company. Equal Housing Opportunity. Each Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage Office is Owned by a Subsidiary of NRT LLC. CalBRE License #01908304.

THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President
Achieving Positive Change

Carlos Baltodano



It's been a turbulent time for our nation. First the pandemic, then a senseless act of violence that galvanized the country.

We grieve the hideous killing of George Floyd and join the voices of peaceful protestors demanding a more just society, including the hundreds who demonstrated on both sides of Highway 24 in Orinda June 6.

In a public letter, Mayor Darlene Gee upheld everyone's right to protest under the First Amendment. City leaders have begun a process to achieve positive policing. Let us take this moment to reaffirm our commitment to decency and the dignity of all people. As we celebrate the birth of American independence, let us commit to equal justice for all.

The Orinda Association (OA) mailed postcards to all Orinda homes informing this year we are celebrating the Fourth of July differently: Together (apart). Because of the shelter-in-place orders and risks involved with large gatherings, it was decided not to have the usual parade and park events of past years.

A variety of inclusive and virtual ac-

tivities are planned for July 4, according to event co-chair Diane Lautz. Don't miss a You Tube "Memories of Parades Past" narrated by Steve Harwood at 10:30 a.m. Go to www.OrindaParade.com. At noon, there will be five minutes of noise, including police and fire sirens and church bells. Please join us by getting a noise maker and making some noise. These five minutes are to honor our nurses, doctors and essential workers. Don't forget to decorate your homes, mailboxes and balconies.

There is an abundance of generosity in our community. Toward this end, we thank all the people who generously donated to purchase the needed test kits to test senior homes in Lamorinda.

"It was a fabulous outcome," said Sue Severson, president of the Orinda Community Foundation. "There were no positive cases in Orinda's Senior Village or Monteverde of either the residents or employees."

Meanwhile, the city has been working for the past several months on the Downtown Precise Plan (DPP). An online survey received 728 responses. In addition, there have been numerous interviews with interest groups and property owners. The results were shared at the June 10 meeting of the DPP subcommittee. The two City Council members on the committee are Nick Kosla and Inga Miller.

Based on the summary of interviews, there appears to be a general consensus that many residents want a more vibrant and refurbished downtown. They also want to preserve the historic nature and small-town feel. There seems to be a desire to provide incentives to owners to improve their businesses.

The DPP will give a clear direction and vision of what the downtown will look like in the future. Do we add more parking? Do we enhance creek-facing parcels that can be used by the community? How do we keep the semi-rural character? Do we update zoning codes?

This effort will amend the General Plan and will have a significant impact on our town for years to come. Residents should take the time to contact the Planning Department at mpatel@cityoforinda.org to provide their input. It's not too late.

◆ TAXES from page 2

million, an amount greater than the Orinda general fund, to MOFD for services that only cost the agency \$14 million to provide. "Orinda should have a committee or commission to understand what services it is being provided and what services it needs."

Another idea Cohn recommends is implementing a real estate transfer tax or RETT. Emeryville and El Cerrito recently have implemented RETTs. According to Cohn, a one percent RETT on Orinda real estate transactions would raise \$4 million — enough to "deal with all three of our major issues: road maintenance, storm drains, and fire prevention. Like a sales tax, this tax can only be voted on in an election year so it's too late for this year; but not in two years."

Another potentially appealing aspect of a RETT is that half of it is paid by new homeowners and the other half by the home seller. "The most popular tax is a tax someone else pays for and half of this tax is paid for by someone else," said Cohn.

Paul Kilduff can be reached at editor@theorindanews.com.

Reach Carlos Baltodano at cbalt ldc@comcast.net.

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

OFFICERS		BOARD MEMBERS
President	Carlos Baltodano	Anil Comelo
Vice President	Joe Garvey	Joe Haughin – Board Member Emeritus
Secretary	Sally Hogarty	Chris Laszcz-Davis
Treasurer	Bill Waterman	Diane Lautz
City Council Liaison	Inga Miller	Jim Luini – Board Member Emeritus
		Cindy Powell
		Bryan Silveira
		Devan Sudra
		Kate Wiley



All officers and board members volunteer their time.

Masterfully connecting exceptional people with compelling properties.

Over 25 years of experience
www.AGrealty1.com
925-254-7600

Alexander Gailas
DRE # 01356574
C-925-788-0229

Katia Gailas
DRE # 02033175
C-925-788-6646

Thank You Grand Marshalls
Our Front-Line Heroes
Our Essential Workers

★ ★ ★

We appreciate your hard work and dedication, especially through all that has happened these last 3 months

Co-chairs for the Orinda July 4th celebrations **Together (apart)**
Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!

"April has an incredibly detailed knowledge of the local area. She consistently gave us great advice and represented our best interests. We couldn't be happier!"
Brian & Megan, Buyers

It's **April** in Lamorinda for Real Estate

April Matthews
925.253.2147
1.April.Matthews@gmail.com
DRE# 01221153

It's Village. Of Course.

July 4th
Orinda Celebrates
Together (apart)

This year Orinda is celebrating July 4th differently: "Together (apart)"

Offered below are safe options which will allow us to celebrate, to remember, and to honor our essential heroes and our community.

Information and details for all events are at www.OrindaParade.com

PRE-July 4th

Decorating Photo Contest for homes, mailboxes and more!
Signs Honoring Local, Essential Heroes

Virtual Run for a Reason (see link below)

July 4th CELEBRATION

Sharing the 4th across Orinda

10:30 Orinda-wide Video Celebration
narrated by Steve Harwood

11:00 Virtual July 4th Decorating Contest

Virtual Reverse Parade: View Orinda decorations and costumes

12:00 Celebrate Local, Essential Heroes
Five minutes of **NOISE!**

12:15 Front Yard BBQ
Together (apart)

Celebrations End, The Memories Continue

Visit www.OrindaParade.com for complete event details

EDITORIAL

Editorial

George Floyd: Finding the Words

We knew we had to say something. Another black man dead at the hands of police. Another black man uttering those same final words: I can't breathe. This time, it hit a nerve across the country, and the world. As people took to the streets, we knew we had to say something, too.

So did Tammy Thompson, who sat in disbelief watching television news as former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin knelt on George Floyd's neck for nearly nine minutes.

Upset, Thompson walked from her Orinda Senior Village apartment through the park and to the office of Seniors Around Town, where she stops by a few times a week to shoot the breeze with program coordinator Cathy Goshorn. This time, the topic was racism.

Goshorn suggested Thompson express her feelings in a letter to the editor to *The Orinda News*.

So when it came time for us to write an editorial about Floyd and the movement his death has mobilized, we realized we

couldn't say it better than Thompson already had in her letter, printed here in its entirety.

In Memory of George Floyd
There shouldn't be any racism against anyone because everyone is unique and everyone has good in them.

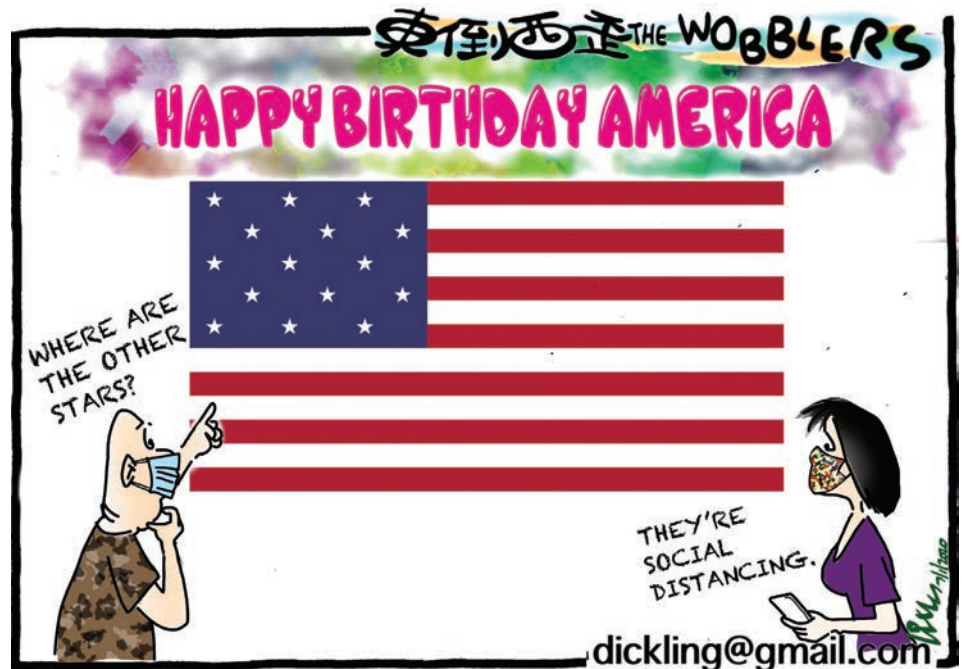
There should not be any discrimination because what counts is the person inside. Everyone is special and has good talents. Please don't think of the negative in people. Everyone has things that are similar. But we don't all add up the same.

Sometimes we get jealous or wish we want to be like someone but don't have to act on it. It's OK to be who we are.

And the police need to be careful about who they shoot. They need to be more careful so that people don't die for wrong reasons.

And let us heal in peace.

Sally Hogarty, executive editor
Simar Khanna, editor



Letters to the Editor

Wildfire Prevention: City, Fire District Need to do More

While it is great the city is acknowledging the threat of wildfire in Orinda and is gearing up to do something about it (29 years after the Oakland Hills firestorm), I am chagrined that it, and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD), still seem to believe the limit of their involvement is directing residents in how to take care of themselves. Chief Dave Winnacker was quoted: "the key to prevention is what homeowners are willing to do."

If there was an extreme threat of a cholera epidemic, would the key to prevention be to hound homeowners to get their septic systems working, or would the government create a waste water disposal system including sewage treatment plants?

We did not incorporate Orinda and form MOFD (and pay it \$17 million a year) for it just to tell us how we can do the heavy lifting. They are there to do the hard work.

The city and MOFD need to work together – and find the funds – to finance an emergency fuel reduction program.

MOFD puts a big feather in its cap for agreeing to not waste \$1.5 million a year on two superfluous firefighters. What it did not do was:

1. Suspend the \$2 million a year of excess funding of the employee retirement program.
2. Put into effect, after 23 years of being remiss, the parcel tax that voters in Moraga approved before MOFD was even formed, which would generate \$2 million in revenue. This would increase the

per-household cost in Moraga to \$1,900, which is still three-quarters of the \$2,500 Orinda households pay annually for the same service.

3. Dig into their \$17 million in reserves for emergency funding for Orinda wildfire prevention.

As for Orinda, they are still talking of a new sales tax, which would continue funding road maintenance and might fund some fire prevention. This is when they have been put on notice that 20 percent of Orinda would oppose such a tax until the city pays serious attention to the 30 miles of roads that remain unfunded.

Wouldn't it be smarter to propose a dedicated parcel tax for fire prevention when 85 percent of the recent survey respondents put that as their highest priority?

It's great that Orinda and MOFD are going to get together and talk. But they need to put their money where their mouths are and actually start removing vegetation.

–Steve Cohn

Planning Commission, Council Ignore Financial Warnings

As a long-term resident, strong supporter of downtown organic development, participant in the three-year Planning Process Review Task Force (PPRTF), and past planning commissioner, I was surprised to see members of the Planning Commission basically ignore substantial public input that suggested now was not the appropriate time to move forward with significant expenditures for a Downtown Precise plan. (Joint Planning Commission/Downtown

List of The Orinda News Advertisers

	Page		Page
Automotive		Nonprofits	
Mash Gas and Food	1	The Orinda Association	3, 7
Orinda Motors	9	Orinda Classic Car Show	20
Orinda Shell Auto Care	5	Orinda Community Foundation	19
Beauty and Fitness		Professional Service	
CoreKinetics	19	5A Rent-A-Space	10
Nancy Henderson, Personal Training	17	Bay Area Underpinning	16
Living Lean Exercise & Eating Program	11	Park Place Wealth Advisors	17
Cleaning Services		Professional Property Management	16
Kirby Carpet Cleaning	12	Real Estate	
Dental		AG Realty	
Dr. Amin Samadian DDS	7	The Gailas Team	3
Dr. Mary Smith DDS	10	Coldwell Banker	
Educational		Laura Abrams	5
Orinda Parks & Rec	14	Suzanne Toner Geoffrion	2
Heroes Ads		Shellie Kirby	8
Supervisor Candace Andersen	19	Vicki Nakamura	10
Carlos Baltodano	15	ReMax	
Fourth of July Committee	3	Peter Liu	7
Mayor Darlene Gee	11	Sotheby's	
Jill Gelster	5	Ann Newton Cane	15
Senator Steve Glazer	16	Village Associates	
Law Offices of Victoria Robinson Smith	7	Dexter Honens II	12
Inga Miller and Leslie Johnson	12, 13	April Matthews	3
Vicki Nakamura	10	Murphy Team - Karen & Hilary Murphy	18
OA Supporter	2	Ann Sharf	14
SAT Volunteer/Driver	17	Clark Thompson	13
Wells Fargo Wealth Advisors	14	Restaurants/Catering	
Amy Worth	18	Baan Thai	18
Garden/Landscaping		Casa Orinda	13
McDonnell Nursery	8	Farmers' Market	15
Tree Sculpture	11	Fourth Bore	6
Medical		Siam Orchid	12
Advanced Therapy Center	8	Zamboni's Pizza Company	7
Medicine Shoppe	17	Retail	
Orinda Optometry	17	McCaulou's	16

Planning subcommittee May 26.)

Well hidden from the public in numerous ways, and including substantial misinformation, the downtown development plans in reality are based on the Urban Land Institute's (ULI) recommendations that center on significant multi-story condo/apartment development, which is necessary to meet economic goals of any large central development project.

As ULI stated in its presentation, significant housing acts as the "value enhancer." The presentation was based on six-, five- or six-story buildings, at 40 units each, for a total of 240 units. Deniers can argue this

is not the Precise Plan, but fundamental financial development objectives require something very similar, and eventually these goals will be clear to the public.

Whether you agree or disagree with Organic Development (code compliant) vs. centralized multi-story condo/apartment development (noncode compliant, 50' or 60' building heights, or more), now is not the time to divert the city's limited budget to yet more planning/code changing studies, involving substantial expenditures.

It would seem, given the circumstances, that fire prevention, fuel mitigation, fire

[SEE LETTERS page 5]

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

- Executive Editor.....Sally Hogarty
- Editor.....Simar Khanna
- Assistant Editors David Dierks, Kathy Bohanan Enzerink
- Advertising Representatives.....Kathy Bohanan Enzerink, Jill Gelster, Elana O'Loskey
- Editorial Committee.....Jill Gelster, Cindy Powell, Mark Roberts, Kate Wiley
- Staff Writers.....Carlos Baltodano, Mimi Bommarito, Bobbie Dodson, Paul Kilduff, Barbara Kobsar, Elana O'Loskey, John Vanek, Tom Westlake
- Contributing WritersMelanie Light, Susan Jordan
- Graphics/Layout.....Aspen Consulting: Jill Gelster & David Dierks
- Printing.....Folger Graphics

The Orinda News

A Publication of
The Orinda Association
Mailing Address
P.O. Box 97
Orinda, California 94563
Telephone: 925 254-0800

www.TheOrindaNews.com

Find us on



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

Opinions of *The Orinda News* are expressed on the editorial page. Views of writers and letters to the editor are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Orinda Association or of *The Orinda News*. Advertisements appearing in *The Orinda News* are not to be construed as endorsements by The Orinda Association or *The Orinda News*. 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 August issue are due July 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 August issue is July 8, 2020.

LETTERS

◆ LETTERS from page 4

breaks, debris cleanup and the like would be a far higher priority and a more appropriate use of our funds (already projected at a \$1 million-plus shortfall), as many residents recommended.

There is a history of asking for public input and then ignoring or discounting that input, or even being told we are wrong. It would be an interesting change to see if our local government leaders listen to and act on what the majority of residents want.

– Chris Kniel

Downtown Housing Would Help Business, Families, Teachers

The state is pushing all communities to help address the housing shortage and all communities, including Orinda, should tailor their responses to that pressure to create the most advantageous outcome for current as well as future residents.

We should build on the community that we have, hopefully enticing others who love what Orinda is, and want to add to it. There are many reasons why Orinda should be excited to welcome more people to live in our downtown.

Firstly, housing downtown greatly supports downtown vitality, helping to maintain a greater offering of shops and restaurants.

Second, many community members want an alternative to single-family housing. There are empty nesters looking to downsize, families or individuals with a change of circumstance, those wanting a more walkable lifestyle, and those in the “boomerang” generation who grew up here and wish to return.

Allowing for our community to remain intact, to sustain our social fabric and build upon that is a good the city should promote.

Third, the Orinda Union School District has expressed the need to get creative to compensate teachers, given limited funds. The most impactful way to do this would be to provide housing dedicated to district teachers. The city should partner with the school board in achieving that goal.

Lastly, as developers include a percent-

age of below-market-rate units, the city should encourage units that suit the needs of families with school-aged children. There is no greater good the city has to offer than access to our excellent schools, and the schools have room for it. Schools are expected to remain under-capacity in the most recent school board projections.

Young families who value education are a great fit for this community and would add to our city. I’m excited to see Orinda grow in this way.

– Arran Schultz

OrindaVision is Out of Focus

In the June edition of *The Orinda News*, OrindaVision (OV) presented its goals for Orinda. Space did not permit submission of the details. Of course, details matter. The details establish that OV’s grandiose plans for Orinda are completely unrealistic, and would hinder, not help, revitalize downtown.

The written public comments submitted in connection with the May 26 joint meeting of the Planning Commission and Downtown Planning Subcommittee (comprised of council members Inga Miller and Nick Kosla) contained 16 emails opposing housing downtown, and only two supporting new housing. One was from OV’s chair. And this despite a massive effort by OV to generate support for its position from its mailing list.

OV’s submission included a graphic showing the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica (www.3rdstreetpromenade.com), which has about 100 stores, as an example of its vision for Orinda. The size and scope of the Third Street Promenade are completely unattainable in Orinda.

OV’s submission also included housing and other hardscape that would take over much of the parking on the privately-owned lots in the Village. To compensate for the loss of parking, OV proposes new underground parking. Apart from the cost, which makes underground parking infeasible financially, parking (let alone underground parking) cannot legally be required for new projects with affordable housing within one-half mile of BART – which includes

most of the Village.

The recently completed online survey, sponsored by the Planning Department, contains responses of 703 residents. Parking was the third highest priority; housing was fifth, favored by fewer than 29 percent of residents. In other words, the public does not want to replace parking with housing.

The draft Existing Conditions Report, prepared by the Planning Department, counted 211 on-street parking spaces in the Village. The ULI Report, submitted three years ago, proposed adding 240 housing units to the Village. Because parking can no longer be demanded of a developer, adding such housing would swamp the available public parking in the Village.

Notably, the Village cannot be revitalized if parking is non-existent or scarce. No one will come to shop or dine if they cannot park.

For these reasons, OrindaVision needs to rethink its vision for Orinda and bring that vision into focus with today’s realities and the desires of Orinda’s residents.

– Nick Waranoff

Stack and Pack: What’s Really Behind the Downtown Plan

Behind the Stack and Pack in Orinda Visions’ letter in the June edition of *The Orinda News*, there are a number of purported reasons for the implementation of stack and pack. Listed are:

1. Better designed buildings
2. Pedestrian-friendly
3. In-town residential living
4. Preserve Orinda’s history
5. Generate vibrancy (I like this one!)
6. “Better direction for commercial property owners” (this means control, folks.)

Does anyone actually believe the above nonsense constitutes the reasons developers and the City Council want to tear down and rebuild the entire Orinda Crossroads

and Village?

I believe the City Council’s motivation is more money through more taxes. The developers want the business. Who will pay for all this?

Bureaucracies are like cancer. They always want to spread. They want to relocate businesses so they can be re-assessed at much higher rates under Prop. 13. They want stack and pack for far higher tax revenue. They do not care about current Orinda residents.

Businesses in Orinda are marginal at best. Orinda is a small market compared to nearby cities. Stack and pack will result in many of our current businesses leaving. There would be more traffic and crowding in our schools. I also predict the City Council will try to get this through without a vote.

– Henry R. Pinney



Ring the Bell!

“...the Liberty Bell became the Pavlovian cue to do the right thing...”
Stephen Fried

“Let us, therefore, abolish all distinctions that may lead to ill feeling and let us call ourselves, before the whole world, Americans, first, last and all the time.”
Rudolph Blankenburg

Thank you to our Patrons and Advertisers

From Jill Gelster
Orinda Starlight Village Players
The Orinda News
Orinda Association 4th of July Celebration Committee





Laura Abrams






laura@lauraabrams.com
www.lauraabrams.com
 5 Moraga Way, Orinda CA
 510-697-3225
 CALBRE#01272382

International Presidents Elite
 Top 100 Coldwell Banker Bay Area
 21 Years in residential Real Estate with Coldwell Banker
Exquisite Presentation

Have a safe and healthy July 4th!





Orinda Shell Auto Care

- Complete Auto Care -
 Scheduled Maintenance -
 Air Conditioning - Electrical Repairs -
 Brakes and Suspension - Warranty Repair - Wheel Alignments -
 Free Shuttle Service
 Walking Distance from BART

Celebrating Over 18 Years in Business
 Thank You Orinda!



925 254-1486 • fax 925 254-3427
 9 Orinda Way
 e-mail orindashell@sbcglobal.net




NEWS

Virus Takes Bite Out of City Budget

By SALLY HOGARTY
Executive Editor

The city is facing a two-year projected deficit of \$850,000 as a result of COVID-19, despite taking several actions to decrease expenses.

The bleak news was revealed June 16 when the City Council received a Preliminary 2020-2021 General Fund Mid-Cycle Budget Update.

With approximately one-third of the General Fund going toward salaries and benefits, the city must look at further reducing personnel costs. Programs supported by fees and charges will be impacted the most as declining activities due to shelter-in-place has resulted in reduced revenues.

The city has 36 employees with 19 represented by Teamsters Local 856 and subject to formal bargaining procedures. The city's Labor Relations Consultant, Greg Ramirez of the Industrial Employers and Distributors Association (IEDA), city personnel and Teamster representatives have been meeting to discuss options.

A three percent cost-of-living adjustment scheduled for this month will not be happening, and vacant positions, two in Parks and Recreation and one in Planning, will not be filled.

Parks and Rec received the largest decrease in revenue as classes and summer camps were reduced to a few virtual options. "We had to lay off our part-time and temporary employees when shelter in place first started," said City Manager Steve Salomon. "Now, we have to make more cuts."

Those cuts include a half-time management person as well as the remaining Parks and Rec management team going

to 60 percent. According to Salomon, employees can use general leave (over time) hours to make up the 40 percent reduction.

Additional lost revenue for the city includes less property transfer taxes due to fewer houses on the market and reduced sales tax.

"It's hard to know about the sales tax with restaurants and retail operating in such a limited way," said Salomon. "The state also told businesses they can defer sales tax, which helps local businesses but reduces our revenue."

Salomon did note a possible silver lining with Contra Costa County's tax pool for local online purchases. The city manager speculated more people are purchasing items online, which would also increase the county tax pool of which Orinda receives a share.

"Even though we don't get much, it's still something that might help us," he said.

The City Council policy is to have six months of operating budget in reserve. That figure, however, already had fallen below the preferred balance due to additional costs for Sheriff Office personnel during the investigation of the murders over Halloween and COVID-19 requiring more police officers on the street. Some of those funds can be used for immediate city needs but more long-term solutions must be found.

The city staff will present a revised General Fund budget update at the July 7 City Council meeting with final decisions taking place at the council's July 21 meeting.

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



KEN LIGHT

Embers from the 2017 Tubbs wildfire in Santa Rosa blew from a nearby "very severe" wildland into this urban development, devastating it in several hours.

Sometimes it Takes a Village to Lower Cost of Home Insurance

By MELANIE LIGHT
Contributing Writer

The subject of homeowner insurance premiums has been bubbling up recently. Many people are finding their premiums are being doubled or more, and many folks moving into town have had a hard time finding coverage.

There is no mystery as to why. With climate change, wildfires have become part of the new normal and Orinda is in an extremely high and very high-risk zone. In fact, it could take as little as one hour for a wildfire to rip through the town.

Insurers have not been calculating this risk into premiums in the past, but are now. Rates will continue to rise. In addition, there is a mandatory moratorium on non-renewals which ends Oct. 27 for Orinda's zip code so we can expect cancellations to start then, too.

What to do?

First, the good news. Being in a designated Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

such as Orinda does not make it harder to get insurance. And, it is possible to lower the risk of a wildfire and to give yourself the best chance of keeping your insurance and buying affordable insurance. This has to do with understanding how insurance companies are adding wildfire to their risk-assessment formulas.

Unlike earthquake preparedness, in which an insurance rate does not depend on whether you shore up your foundation or not, a wildfire requires an interdependent type of preparedness: If I do not harden my home, I am putting you in danger and if you do not harden your home, you are putting me in danger. A wildfire spreads, gathering energy and speed as it goes. Insurance companies know this and they are looking at whole neighborhoods to assess risk.

The best thing you can do to preserve your homeowner's insurance is to work with your neighbors to make sure all of you have hardened your homes against wildfire.

[SEE FIREWISE page 7]

925.254.1183
OPEN DAILY AT 11AM

NOW OPEN FOR FULL SERVICE DINING CARRYOUT & DELIVERY

THE FOURTH BORE
TAP ROOM & GRILL
ORINDA, CA

SCAN ME

LIVE CONCERTS ON THE TV LIVE MUSIC COMING SOON

CONTACTLESS ORDERING AVAILABLE

NEWS

Planning Department Survey Finds Discontent with Downtown

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

On a scale of one to 100, how satisfied are you with downtown Orinda? What do you like and dislike about downtown? What are your favorite places in the Theatre and Village districts? What is your personal vision for downtown?

These are a sampling of questions included in a recent survey conducted by the Planning Department.

Drummond Buckley, director of the Planning Department, presented an overview of the survey results to the Downtown Precise Planning (DPP) sub-committee, which includes council members Nick Kosla and Inga Miller, during a virtual meeting June 10.

The survey was conducted April 30 to June 1 with 728 people responding, which is less than five percent of residents older than 18. The raw data of ideas, opinions, likes and dislikes about the future of the village and theatre sides of Orinda fill 200 pages.

"The presentation is exhaustive," said Miller.

Ninety-seven percent of respondents live in Orinda with 38 percent frequently visiting downtown. When asked "on a scale of one to 100, how satisfied are you with

downtown Orinda?" the average answer was 52. If graded, it would be an F.

This "appears to indicate, on average, deep dissatisfaction with downtown Orinda by the people who completed the survey," said Buckley.

Many residents live closer to downtown Moraga or Lafayette than downtown Orinda, but "no one in Lafayette or Moraga lives closer to Orinda's downtown than their own," said Buckley.

Overall, respondents like the small-town feel, community spaces, easy and free parking, movie theater, proximity to BART, trees, friendliness of merchants and the predominance of "mom and pop," non-chain restaurants and stores.

To the contrary, comments included, "We need to attract more mainstream retail like Trader Joe's and Whole Foods" and "chain restaurants such as Taco Bell, Subway and McDonald's should be permitted." One survey participant described downtown as, "Homey, a bit frayed about the edges - like me."

Poor aesthetics, lack of parking and grocery options were frequent complaints. Two comments were, "A little too sleepy," and "Lacking stores to keep me shopping in Orinda."

To the contrary, comments included, "Do not attempt to attract-out-of-town custom-

ers. I am here for the small town feel and will move if this changes," and "Orinda has everything we need and we never need to leave Orinda."

Favorite places in the Theatre District centered around food and beverages. Public facilities/spaces and restaurants topped the list on the Village side of downtown.

Utilizing private property downtown, respondents wanted more retail/restaurants (630), arts/events (376) and parking (320). Housing was fourth with 211 votes.

Buckley interpreted the results, saying "The high ranking of arts and events shows that this use needs to be embraced in the DPP... Housing will never be at the top of people's list because almost 100 percent of the respondents already have a home in Orinda."

Planning for the future of downtown Orinda, the needs of families and children as well as seniors were overwhelming priorities by respondents.

[SEE SURVEY page 16]

◆ FIREWISE from page 6

Here are ways to do that:

Join or create a Firewise group. In Orinda there are more than eight neighborhood groups, with more forming all the time. When you are certified, you will be able to show an insurer that your neighborhood is reducing the risk of a wildfire. Find out how to do that at the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) website (www.mofd.org/our-district/fuels-mitigation-fire-prevention/firewise).

Support the Orinda Firewise Council, a peer support group for Firewise groups in Orinda, by joining its mailing list or having your Firewise group become a member. Email melanie@melanielight.com.

Get active with agencies that can help. Start attending MOFD and City Council meetings. Ask the people who are running them to fund fire prevention and to tend to the infrastructure.

There is no guarantee that you will be able to keep affordable homeowners insurance but if you do the mitigation, you will look better to other insurers. Some companies are now insisting that you do mitigation, sometimes extreme mitigation,

before they insure you. Having done work already will work in your favor. Also, you will be safer from a wildfire, especially if your whole neighborhood has done the mitigation.

If you get renewed at decent rates, good for you. Some companies are still looking for business in Orinda – at least for now. The bonus is that if you do the work and join the Firewise community, you are safer. Also, the neighborhood is assessed at a lower risk for future renewals, which may translate into lower premiums.

We are in challenging times in many ways. The challenge of wildfire and insurance is a formidable one, but at least we know how to minimize a wildfire and can present our best case to insurance companies by hardening our neighborhoods.

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

Zamboni's
PIZZA COMPANY

1 Camino Sobrante, Ste 4
We're right across from
Orinda Safeway!

**Thin Crust & Deep
Dish Pizza**


Delicious pizza, calzones, salads
and drinks. Eat in or order out,
we're open everyday.

Remember we always offer
FREE local delivery! (\$15 min)

Open Daily

M-Th	11a – 9:00p
Fri – Sat	11a – 9:30p
Sundays	11a – 8:30p

Law Offices of
**VICTORIA
ROBINSON
SMITH**



**We wish to thank all of
the medical personnel
who have provided
medical care throughout
this Covid-19 crisis,
especially those who
tested the residents of
the Orinda Senior Village
and Monteverde**

**Real Estate Contracts
Easements, Loans, Leases
Title & Escrow**

320 Village Square
Orinda, CA 94563

Tel: (925) 253-1844
Fax: (925) 253-8478
www.orindarealestateattorney.com
vrslaw@pacbell.net

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE ALL-TIME CAR?

Share a photo and a short history in the September issue.
Contact Kathy (252-626-2109), Jill (925-528-9225) or Elana
(925-984-1751) to reserve space in the September issue.
Ad prices from \$110.



**BENEFIT SENIORS AROUND TOWN –
It's more than a ride**



The Orinda Association is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization

27 Quick and Easy Fix Ups to Sell Your Orinda Home Fast and for Top Dollar

Orinda - Because your home may well be your largest asset, selling it is probably one of the most important decisions you will make in your life. And once you have made that decision, you'll want to sell your home for the highest price in the shortest time possible without compromising your sanity. Before you place your home on the market, here's a way to help you to be as prepared as possible.

To assist homesellers, a new industry report has just been released called "27 Valuable Tips That You Should Know to Get Your Home Sold Fast and for Top Dollar." It tackles the important issues you need to know to make your home competitive in today's tough, aggressive marketplace.

Through these 27 tips you will discover how to protect and capitalize on your most important investment, reduce stress, be in control of your

situation, and make the best profit possible.

In this report you'll discover how to avoid financial disappointment or worse, a financial disaster when selling your home. Using a common-sense approach, you will get the straight facts about what can make or break the sale of your home.

You owe it to yourself to learn how these important tips will give you the competitive edge to get your home sold fast and for the most amount of money.

Order your free report today. To hear a brief recorded message about how to order your FREE copy of this report call toll-free 1-833-497-3961 and enter 1023. You can call any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Get your free special report NOW.

This report is courtesy of DRE 01460749. Not intended to solicit buyers or sellers currently under contract. Copyright © 2020



DR. AMIN SAMADIAN DDS

OPEN

DR. AMIN SAMADIAN DDS

We are here to serve our community

Your health is our priority. Proper PPE and modified appointments ensure patient safety. Call or reserve your appointment time through our website today.

Receive all your dental needs in a single appointment through our comprehensive dental model
Offering virtual exams and senior hours.

www.samadiandds.com | Call: 925-254-2360

23 Orinda Way, STE 301, Orinda, CA 94563

AROUND TOWN

New Downtown Art Project

The Lamorinda Arts Council has launched a new project that aims to beautify downtown.

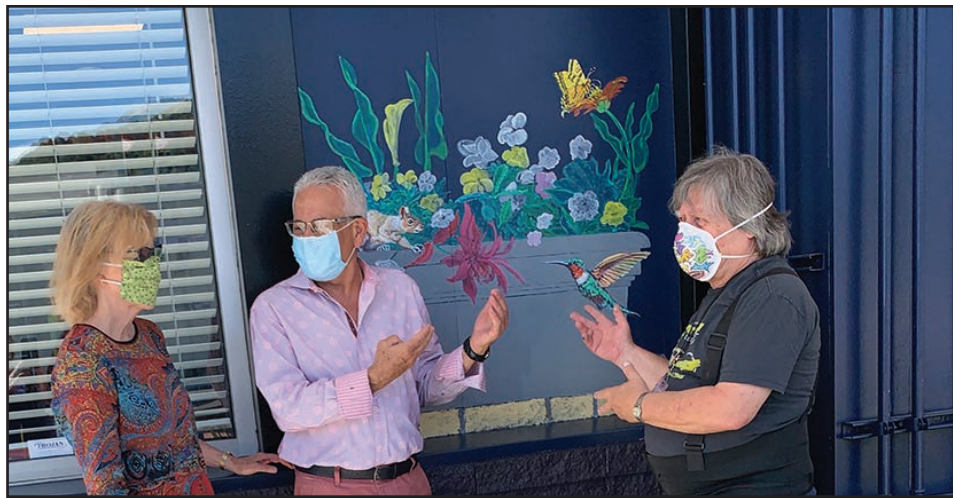
Called Artify Orinda, the project is the brainchild of Maggie Boscoe, Arts Council board member and curator of the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library.

In other cities, it is common to see brightly painted fire hydrants and electrical boxes. Boscoe's idea is to work with professional artists to create hand-painted

renderings on buildings by professional artists working in collaboration with private business owners on both sides of Orinda.

The first work is a decorative mural on the Mash Gas building at 22 Bryant Way by Bill Carmel, a member of the Lamorinda Arts Council and co-curator of the Orinda Library Art Gallery.

To get involved, email Boscoe at gallery@lamorindaarts.org or artify@lamorindaarts.org.



ELANA O'LOSKEY

Lamorinda Arts Council's **Maggie Boscoe** (left), building owner **Mo Mashhoon** and artist **Bill Carmel** discuss Carmel's proof of concept mural *The Ballad of Rocky the Squirrel and Andy the Hummer* at Mash Gas & Food.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Concept drawing of **The Station**, a building development proposal for 25A Orinda Way.

◆ STATION from page 1

The inclusion of the Orangetheory Fitness center generated several public comments at the June 9 Planning Commission meeting.

Adam Foster, senior planner, said the city received more than 100 letters in support of the project. "A common theme of many of the letters is that the residents would rather utilize an Orangetheory Fitness here in Orinda rather than travel elsewhere for this use. Additionally, many of the letters indicate a desire for Orinda residents to keep their dollars here in Orinda."

Conversely, Tiffany Aubrey said Orangetheory Fitness is a direct competitor to

Informa, and with eight fitness centers in town, this would be a "saturation of a single industry."

Commissioner Ann Parnigoni said she is concerned with the reduction in parking spaces and does not support Orangetheory Fitness. She said she prefers family-owned health facilities.

Acting Chairman Willy Mautner said the plaza is an incredible space and "we're approving the building, not the tenants except Orangetheory. Hopefully, the project will be occupied and vibrant."

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

Council OKs El Toyonal Closures; Mayor Opposes Housing Bill

KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

Traffic disruptions along segments of El Toyonal will last through October as EBMUD upgrades and replaces water mainlines. On red flag warning days, new "no on-street stopping/parking restrictions" may be implemented in the future along El Toyonal and Loma Vista Drive.

Adopted June 16, Resolution 35-20, states in part, "the City Council authorizes the temporary full road closure of a portion of El Toyonal for EBMUD's system upgrade project." The stipulation that EBMUD suspend work if required by the MOFD Fire Chief on red flag days was added to the original resolution. Construction has started on the Westside Pumping Plant Replacement Project, which is expected to last 12 to 15 months.

On El Toyonal between Alta Vista Drive and upper Loma Vista Drive intersections, road closures are allowed Tuesdays through Fridays between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. through Aug. 12, then between 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. through Sept. 30. The longer workdays will shorten the length of the project, according to EBMUD and its contractor. No closures

are allowed Mondays to avoid impacting garbage pickup.

Full road closure is allowed on El Toyonal between upper Loma Vista Drive and just east of La Encinal intersections through Oct. 30. Work is scheduled Tuesdays through Fridays, except holidays, between 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The El Toyonal Parking and Access Recommendations report identified several El Toyonal and Loma Vista Drive locations along curving, narrow roads with limited sightlines. The report recommends all-day no stopping/parking restrictions signs be installed at these locations.

State Housing Bill SB1120

June 4, Mayor Darlene Gee wrote a letter of opposition to SB1120 which promotes construction of duplexes and multi-use zoning.

Addressed to Senators Anthony Portantino (D-La Cañada Flintridge) and Patricia Bates (R-Laguna Niguel), the letter stated: "This bill will override local jurisdiction for single-family zoning ... without any additional funding being provided by the state to offset the impacts

[SEE COUNCIL page 9]

Shellie Abbes Kirby
A Realtor for Lamorinda

Specializing in Lamorinda Real Estate

Your knowledgeable neighbor.

Office: 925-253-6321
Cell: 925-872-4257
email: shellie@shelliekirby.com

Advanced Therapy Center
NEUROFEEDBACK THERAPY - WHEN ITS TIME TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Medication-Free Treatment for:

- ADD/ADHD
- Anxiety
- Attachment Disorders
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Complex Childhood Trauma
- Depression
- Epilepsy
- Migraines/Headaches
- Peak Performance
- Stress
- Substance Abuse
- Traumatic Brain Injury

OUR OFFICE IS OPEN
with rigorous safety protocols

REMOTE TRAINING
available

CALL TODAY!

CANDIA SMITH, DMH
Founding Director, Licensed Psychologist
344 Village Square, Suite 344 - Orinda
(925) 254-7823
www.advancedtherapycenter.org

McDonnell **Nursery**

family owned since 1933

Flowers - Trees - Succulents - Pottery & Fountains
Benches - Garden Decor - House Plants
Gifts - Jewelry

www.mcdonnellnursery.com

196 Moraga Way • Orinda • (925) 254-3713 • Open Daily

PEOPLE

'Angel Stitchers' Come to Rescue, Providing Thousands of Masks

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

Barbara Bisel personifies the slogan, "Find a need and fill it."

Learning of the dire need for face masks, she set out to supply them. She has personally made 982 masks, and her team has stitched 1,800.

Bisel heard of the lack of masks from her friend, Susan Shelton, a nurse at Kaiser Permanente in Sacramento.

"At first we were overwhelmed, so much need and so few supplies and what we had were diverted to the front-line staff, ICU and isolation units, leaving most of us unprotected," Shelton said. "At first we couldn't use homemade masks, but then since we had none, they were approved. That's when Barbara stepped up and in an incredibly short time delivered enough masks to our department, the outpatient staff as well as outpatient chemotherapy."

As health care workers were able to obtain more masks, Bisel said she decided to focus on the most vulnerable populations where the virus could quickly spread. She



PHOTO COURTESY OF BARBARA BISEL
At work at her sewing machine, **Barbara Bisel** distributes masks with the help of Lamorinda volunteers.

contacted her rector, the Rev. Dr. Stephen Hassett of Orinda's St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, who connected her with the diocesan prison chaplain.

"I learned the prison population was a hotbed of COVID-19," Bisel said. "The Freedom Center needed 400 masks for formerly incarcerated people re-entering the community, and the staff which supports them. Immediately, I said 'yes' wondering how I could do it."

A post on Nextdoor brought the answer as 24 people stepped up to help. Soon Bisel was driving to the Freedom House, an apartment building in San Francisco's Tenderloin District.

She also has taken masks to the Bay Area Rescue Mission, which serves the homeless in Richmond, a prison chaplain, the Monument Crisis Center (MCC) in Concord where she left 400 masks, the Family Bridges Senior Center in Chinatown where 200 masks were supplied, and the Moraga Royale, an assisted living facility.

Bisel named her group the Lamorinda Angel Stitchers because women pick up materials from her porch, and leave completed masks a few days later.

"I don't see or meet them so they feel like angels to me. But I do hear comments from them that it feels good to do something tangible to help. We have no idea what impact we are having, but I think we could have saved a few lives and reduced the virus's spread," Bisel said.

One of the team, Betsy Donally, said making masks during quarantine has proven to be a better use of time than reading or watching TV.

"As I work, I think of the recipient of the mask and hope they will realize this is a handmade gift. Each mask contributes to public health and enables the wearer to perform essential errands. I enjoy the craft, while looking forward to the day when masks are no longer needed!" she said.

Bisel makes it easy for the Angel Stitchers by providing all the materials for a mask kit, which includes cotton fabric, Pellon interfacing and elastic. Each kit makes 20 to 30 masks.

As the project grew, Bisel decided to fund the material by selling masks. St. Stephen's has created a Food for Families program, responding to the urgent and long-term food need at MCC. That committee is buying food in bulk at very low prices from Grocery Outlet. She has been able to donate \$1,000 seed money from sales of masks for this program and estimates she will be able to give at least another \$2,000.

The cash donation provided food to more than 300 families and seniors, according to Sandra Scherer, Monument Crisis Center director.

About the masks, Scherer said, "They are expertly made, unique in color and pattern,

and so appreciated. It is a huge gift to our struggling clients who don't have access to safety masks and desperately need them. Being able to show colorful designs to a client and let them chose the one they like, is a delightful moment in these difficult times. They feel better and safer and we can feel their smile."

When she is not making masks, Bisel is an independent stylist for a clothing line. She also was a full-time volunteer at the Moraga School District for the past five years costuming Campolindo's musicals.

"Making masks is not that much different, but for a very different population." She said. "I care deeply for the vulnerable of our area."

To order masks (\$12 each), contact Bisel at bsmithbisel@gmail.com.

Bobbie Dodson can be reached at bobbie-dodson@comcast.net.

◆ COUNCIL from page 9

of significantly more residents in a community."

She pointed out Orinda recognizes the need for additional housing statewide and adopted an ordinance to "encourage the construction of accessory dwelling units."

Much of Orinda is in a high-fire zone with significant infrastructure issues, "potentially adding numerous additional residents through this housing measure without regard for the complex issues of fire/life safety and infrastructure needs is irresponsible... To impose this legislation without additional funding to address local needs or exemptions for special circumstances is unacceptable."

Reach Kathy Enzerink at kathy@theorindanews.com



BARBARA BISEL
Moraga Royale staff members **Lots Rickman, Al Pyne** and **Emmanuel Cabrera** don face masks provided by Barbara Bisel.

We've Got Your Automotive Needs Covered

- FREE limited pick up and drop off
- Use of clean car kit, with seat cover, floor mats, and steering wheel cover used on every car
- Use our early bird envelopes to avoid contact with anyone
- All communications can be done over the phone, by email or by text
- Frequently sanitizing of our office
- Accepting payments over the phone
- New gloves used on every vehicle

Orinda

AUTO RENTAL
(925) 254-2014

ORINDA CLASSIC CAR CENTER
(925) 254-5454

ORINDA MOTORS
63 Orinda Way • Orinda, CA 94563
(925) 254-2012
OrindaMotors.com

BLACK LIVES MATTER

1,500 Rally in Peaceful Show of Support for Black Lives Matter

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

Neil Pretlow said he was “feeling guilty for not being active.” He stood at the corner holding up a sign. Passersby waved, raised fists and honked horns.

Within 48 hours, more than 1,500 people gathered June 6 to peacefully show their support for Pretlow and his homemade sign that read, “Black Lives Matter. I Live Here.”

Demonstrators walked from the Camino Pablo and Brookwood Road intersection to library plaza, where they were joined by more supporters.

Spanning both sides of Highway 24, some protesters raised, closed fists while others held signs with BLM on pieces of cardboard. There were signs of protest. Signs of unity. Signs of hope. Signs for all people to come together to end police brutality, racial profiling, discrimination and the injustice.

“Orinda is a community that welcomes everyone; values diversity and expects everyone to be treated with respect and dignity,” Mayor Darlene Gee said in a statement released June 3. “I am saddened and outraged at the murder of George Floyd and



SALLY HOGARTY

A Special Thank You to a Hero
Ben Ho, M.D.

- U.S. Navy Captain, Ret. USNS Mercy (United States Naval Ship Mercy)
- Works for State Office of Emergency Services
- Dispatches dogs for CA Office of Emergency Services (OES)
- Serves as a volunteer police officer
- Member of U.S. Search & Rescue Team, Oakland
- U.S. Army Reserve team, Oklahoma City bombing & 9/11

Vicki Nakamura
DRE License #00685265



Neil and Tatiana Pretlow.

KATHY ENZERINK

so many others who have been the victims of racial injustice.”

Pretlow’s wife and event organizer Tatiana (Tanya) said, “The goal was to show solidarity with the Black Lives Matter protests around the country but also, on a local level, to show people of color who live in Lamorinda (such as our family) that they are welcome, seen, loved and matter.”

#BlackLivesMatter was founded in 2013 by three women in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin’s murderer, George Zimmerman.

Neil Pretlow grew up in Orinda. He walked to Del Rey Elementary, Orinda Intermediate and Miramonte, where he graduated in 2004. During his 12 years attending Orinda schools, Pretlow said he could count on less than two hands the number of black students at all campuses at any one time. He first experienced racism at the age of five when a white classmate announced, “Neil has to sit in the back of the bus,” after studying Martin Luther King, Jr.

Neil, 34, and Tanya moved from San Francisco to Orinda two years ago. “It was weird to be back, at first,” Neil said. “Orinda looks very much the same; the lack of diversity is the same as when I grew up.”

The deaths of Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd “brought up a lot of trauma and it hit me, what if I’m perceived as a threat?” When out walking his dog after dark, Pretlow said fear is “in the back of my mind,” but “feeling this kind of support, I have hope now.”

Corey and Christin Hill moved from the Montclair district in Oakland to Orinda with their two children about the same time.

“People always assume we moved for the schools. That’s not true at all (we moved for the yard space),” wrote Christin on social media. “The schools are a hotbed of social issues and have the potential to be a very dangerous environment for our children. Moments like today give us hope.”

Both families said lack of racial and cultural diversity are significant concerns. While the Hills said, “we’re taking it year

[SEE BLM page 11]



KATHY ENZERINK

“ Vicki, Thank you isn’t enough for all the help you provided to my mother before and during the sale of her home. You were spot on with regards to professional advice, and I am overjoyed that my mother had faith in you and followed it. She made prudent decisions for repairs and improvements for the highest return. This was proven with the multiple offers and ultimate sale for well over list price. Thank you for all your hard work.”
David D. Earle

Call your TRUSTED BAY AREA REAL ESTATE ADVISOR today for a free market analysis or any other questions.

Vicki Nakamura

- Knowledgeable and informed of current market.
- Understanding and compassionate in helping seniors.
- Strong negotiator and problem solver.
- Experienced over 40 years.
- Love of architecture and homes.

(925) 708-1915
rossmooragent88@comcast.net

1641 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek CA 94595. DRE #00685265

AAAA RENTSPACE
Store It Yourself & Save

25% OFF

FOR 3 MONTHS ON SELECT UNITS
LIMITED AVAILABILITY

WE’RE HERE FOR YOU!!! RENT FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME : WWW.5ASPACE.COM

Hours of operation during the shelter in place
Mon-Sat 10am-6pm
Or call for an appointment.

455 Moraga Rd. Ste. F
(925) 643-2060
www.5Aspace.com

MORAGA ROAD
RHEEM SHOPPING CENTER
RHEEM BLVD.

YOUR SMILE IS EVERYTHING

MARY H. SMITH, D.D.S.
A Professional Corporation
Family & Cosmetic Dentistry

25 Anniversary

We are celebrating our 25th anniversary of making and maintaining beautiful smiles.

We always welcome new patients.

Our office delivers the highest quality and service.

Consults are always complimentary.

NEW ADDRESS:
1 Bates Blvd. Suite 210, Orinda, 925.254.0824

BLACK LIVES MATTER



KATHY ENZERINK

◆ BLM from page 10

by year, and so far we've been very happy with our school," Neil questioned, "Do I want Miles (his 20-month-old son) to go to school here?"

During the 2018/19 Orinda United School District (OUSD) school year, race and ethnicity statistics show African American students were the lowest populated segment at 30, followed by Filipino students numbering 40. Remaining categories are Hispanic at 145, two-plus races at 201, Asian at 487 and white at 1,676. The overall African American population in Orinda is 1.29 percent compared to Asians at 15.51 percent and whites at 76.4 percent.

Speaking of the Black Lives Matter movement, Christin Hill said, "This time is different. I am gratified at the movement."

Tanya Pretlow, who moved to the United States from Russia in 2008 said, "All lives

can't matter until black lives matter ... maybe together, we can be a better Orinda."

Reach Kathy Enzerink at kathy@theorindanews.com



KATHY ENZERINK



KATHY ENZERINK

Unity March at Wilder

A Children's Unity March took place at Wilder June 13, prompted by the following conversation between five-year-old Soven and his father, Chirag Patel.

"Daddy, what are those people doing?"
 "They are protesting."
 "What is protesting?"
 "They are showing that they are unhappy that a man was hurt because of the color of his skin."

"Who hurt him?"
 "A bad person."
 "Why are there bad people?" (struggling to answer him)
 "I want to protest bad people."
 And so he did.

An estimated 200 people, from retirees to those too young to walk, marched with Soven and the Patel family in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

— Kathy Enzerink, assistant editor



KATHY ENZERINK

Members of the Patel family display signs at the Wilder Children's Unity March.



A very special
THANK YOU
 to Fotos for Food
 from Mayor Darlene Gee



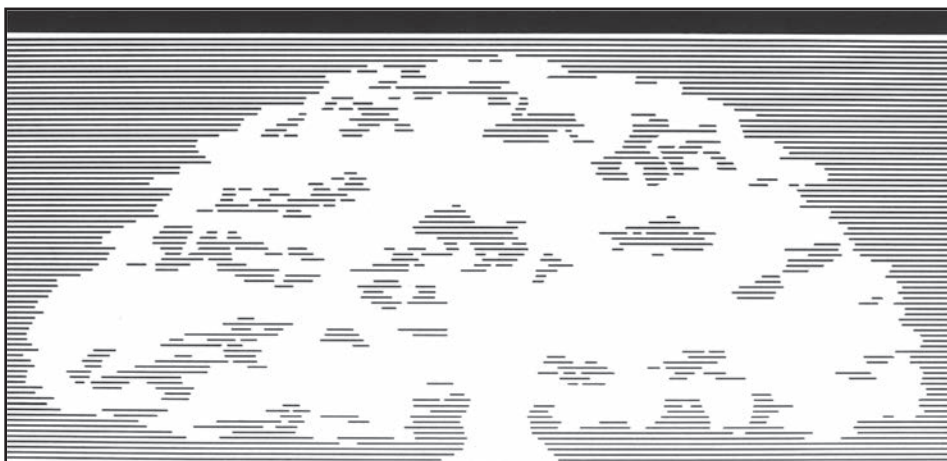


The creativity, energy, and funding donated by:

Terry Riggins	Mimi Bommarito
Laura Traxler	Wes Riggins
Betsy Shandalov	Orinda Rotary
Leslie Darwin O'Brien	

Provided a donation of \$8,200 to the Contra Costa Food Bank while making Orinda memories!





TREE SCULPTURE

COMPLETE TREE CARE

Proudly serving the East Bay since 1965!

Fully Insured ❖ Certified Arborists ❖ License #655977

(925) 254-7233 ❖ www.treesculpture.com




**It Doesn't Take Much....
 To Be in the Best Shape of Your Life**



As long as you know what to do.

- Online Personal Training and Nutrition Program
- 45 minute strength/cardio combination workouts.
- We can lend you a few pieces of equipment you may need.
- Workouts specifically designed for your level... beginners welcome.

Check us out at
www.livingleanprogram.com
(925) 360-7051

AROUND TOWN

Everyday 😊 rinda

Wishful Thinking

MIMI BOMMARITO



“A Dream is a Wish Your Heart Makes” True, I’m quoting a Disney song, but after raising three daughters, it’s hard to remove the Cinderella residue.

Back in my youthful days of collagen and deep slumber, I was an elaborate dreamer. Maybe it’s aging or too much screen time, but I rarely dream at night anymore, and I miss the bizarre antics of my subconscious.

But every once in a while, the old dream machine kicks back in. One night, in the earlier stages of quarantining, I had the most vivid dream that, thankfully, did not involve a biology class I never attended or a flight I would never catch.

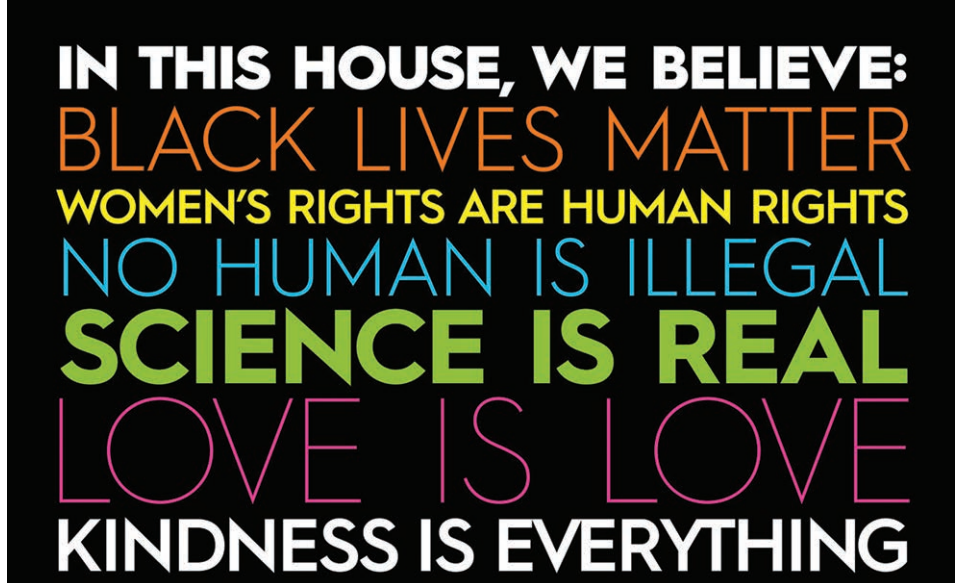
In this dream, I was courageous and unstoppable, arguing passionately for the inclusion of a certain statement in a children’s book about the coronavirus. It was not clear if I was the editor or the author. But I had power and was not afraid to use it.

The statement we were debating described the scientists studying Corona, the misunderstood little virus. I was on fire, insisting the copy must read “And the scientists, most of whom were women, said ‘Aha!’” That phrase, “most of whom were women” had to be included, or the whole publishing deal was off.

My future Newberry-Award-winning children’s book about the misunderstood little virus contained whimsical, colorful illustrations that would delight both child and adult. I dreamt the vivid illustrations in exacting detail. The spiky coronavirus molecule was especially charming, even though Corona originated as the villain.

As we know all too well, Corona came along and ruined everything. No one could visit their grandparents, play with their friends, or go to soccer practice. It was all this nasty little virus’ fault.

The scientists, most of whom were



KRISTIN JOINER

These yard signs can be seen all around Orinda following George Floyd’s death.

women, worked every single day to find a vaccine. Everybody wanted a vaccine, even though some were too little to understand that word vaccine actually meant a “shot.” With a needle. But the bigger kids didn’t even care if they had to face a needle. They would gladly take that shot, just so they could start having some fun again.

Nobody could find a vaccine that worked. Nobody liked Corona.

One day, a black man and a white man saw each other in the hospital. They were old friends, but at first they barely recognized each other. They both had coronavirus. “Is that my old friend Joe?” wondered Sid. “Is that my old friend Sid?” wondered Joe.

They both were so happy to see each other, they slowly crawled out of their hospital beds, and greeted each other.

“Maybe I’d better not hug you, Joe,” said Sid, “because I (cough cough) have coronavirus.”

“That’s okay if you hug me, Sid” said Joe, “because I (cough cough) have coronavirus too. What have we got to lose?” The two friends shared a giant bear hug, with as much strength as they could muster.

“It’s okay,” said the healthcare workers attending to them. “We’ll allow it. They are both pretty sick but neither has seen any family in a long time.”

The virus molecules swirled around Joe and Sid while they hugged. Some of Sid’s molecules left with Joe, and some of Joe’s molecules left with Sid. (Cute illustration here of all the little virus molecules waving bye to each other.) The funny thing is, the very next day, Joe and Sid were healthy.

And the healthcare workers thought, “Hmmm.”

Joe and Sid told all the other patients what had happened. How the next day after their hug, they were well. And to prove it, Joe and Sid did a lot of jumping jacks and pushups. After that, all the sick patients started hugging.

Some patients got better, but some didn’t. The healthcare workers started making a chart. And they started tracking why some

huggers were cured and others were not. Finally, a pattern emerged: Only when you hugged someone who was different than you, did the virus go away.

The scientists, most of whom were women, devised all sorts of experiments to study this phenomenon.

Of course, social media being what it is, rumors quickly spread: The way to cure the coronavirus was to hug somebody different than you.

The scientists, most of whom were women, figured out that you only had one curing hug in you. In other words, one generous person couldn’t hug 100 different people. The cure would only work one person to one person.

The scientists, most of whom were women, figured out that it didn’t matter if boys hugged girls, or girls hugged girls, or boys hugged boys. All that mattered was that physically, two people couldn’t look alike. You had to be different.

What a frenzy the world was in. Everyone was rushing to hug someone with different colored skin. They hugged each other tightly and they didn’t let go. It felt pretty good to hug somebody different. Some people even decided to hug and kiss, just for good measure. As long as nobody matched, sick people were cured, and healthy people were considered vaccinated without ever having to get a shot.

Life could resume. Sports, playdates, concerts and weddings could happen again, once the scientists, most of whom were women, said “aha!” Every person only carries half of the antibodies needed to ward off Corona. But someone who looks different has the matching molecules. It’s like one special lock and one special key.

The world stopped blaming Corona for everything that had been ruined and cancelled. The whole world realized they needed the little virus to make us realize how much we all loved and needed each other, especially when we looked different on the outside.

That’s the happily ever after ending of the [SEE EVERYDAY page 15]

Authentic Cuisine of Thailand

- Family Owned
- 3 Generations of Thai cooking experience
- All sauces made fresh
- Full Bar

Lunch: Mon.-Fri. 11-2
Dinner: Mon.-Sun. 4:30-9:00

23 F Orinda Way, Orinda
(925) 253-1975

Achieving the Real Estate Goals of clients, friends and family in your neighborhood since 1989. Native & lifelong resident of Orinda.

DEDICATION □ TRUST □ INTEGRITY □ RESULTS

DEXTER HONENS II
Real Estate Broker
Cell: (510) 918-8911
Email: dex@dexrealtor.com
www.dexrealtor.com

DRE # 01029372

Area Rug Cleaning Specialist

Area Rug Free Pick Up & Delivery

(925) 254-2866
www.kirbycarpetcleaning.com

Services include

- Carpets
- Tile & Grout
- Upholstery
- Outdoor Cushions

St. Mark's Thanks You!

Rev. Ann Marie

Paid for by Inga Miller and Leslie Johnson

SCHOOLS

2020 Poul Anderson Creative Writing Contest Winners Announced

By SALLY HOGARTY
Executive Editor

While the school year may have come to a close in a rather unorthodox way given the shelter-in-place order, it certainly didn't close without its share of honors for



Sophia Kofoed.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Audrey Lambert.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

students.

In addition to academic achievements, four students received scholarships from the American Association of University Women and three became winners of the Orinda Junior Women's Club's Youth Ink contest, both groups were lauded in the

◆ SCHOOLS from page 1

through is the California State Department of Education's new set of guidelines released June 8. The 62-page guidebook includes a number of recommendations for schools opening in the fall such as face coverings for all students and teachers, social distancing inside classrooms and the continued presence of distance learning.

The guidelines do not include suggestions for when school districts should reopen. State Superintendent Tony Thurmond said a hybrid model combining distance learning with in-person classes could be a possible scenario. He also noted schools could potentially be shut down if another wave of COVID-19 cases happens in the fall.

"There is so much to consider in order to start in-person classes again," said Seaton. "We'll be implementing safety processes such as limited class sizes, wearing masks and frequent hand washing to name a few. We'll have to hire additional custodians and staff to keep up with the increased cleaning required and to monitor social distancing on the playground as well."

OUSD surveyed its 2,500 students regarding attending classes in the fall and 75.4 percent said they would be back. Six percent, including children who are immune compromised, said they would not be returning until a vaccine is developed and widely available.

"In the governor's proposed budget, the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is drastically cut, which translates to a reduction of 7.92 percent per pupil funding. If students don't attend school, we don't get paid," said Seaton.

According to Seaton, 81 percent of OUSD's budget goes for salaries and benefits. Currently, district personnel are looking at \$34 million in expenditures and

only \$32 million in revenue for the fiscal year ending 2020-21.

"Based on the governor's proposed budget, we're \$2.2 million roughly in the hole before we start," said Seaton. "Even with the strong support and generosity of our local community, we don't have enough. Given how much of our budget is for salaries that means cutting people's jobs, their livelihood. That's incredibly difficult to do."

Adding to the difficulty is the State Legislature's Budget Act approved on June 15 that rejects the Governor's cuts to LCFF. The governor and the legislature continue to negotiate with a final state budget expected by July 1. Additional revisions may take place in August and September.

The District Budget Task Force decided to make its recommendation to the board on June 22 based on the Governor's budget. These incorporated across the board cuts by departments including district office reductions; a partial hiring freeze that would affect two elementary teachers and one OIS math teacher; a temporary pay freeze and a reduction in instructional aide hours by 25 percent. The complete task force report can be found at www.orindaschools.org.

"Everyone will be hurt and angry to some extent with our final budget. These are all great programs and wonderful staff. But to not make cuts is irresponsible. We have to somehow live within our means, and it will only get worse if we kick this can down the road," Seaton said.

"There may be a silver lining that's hard to see right now," said Seaton. "But sometimes when forced to make drastic cuts, you find new ways to do things that actually work, or maybe in a very positive scenario, work better."

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

May issue of *The Orinda News*. More recently, the Friends of the Orinda Library announced its winners for the 2020 Poul Anderson Creative Writing contest.

Named in memory of the Orinda resident who was a popular science fiction writer of more than 80 books, the contest recognizes winning entries selected by a panel of judges drawn from the professional ranks of reading, writing or publishing. The contest features four genres: poetry, essay/memoir/biography, science fiction/fantasy and short story. The four winners receive \$500 each with six honorable mentions selected this year as well.

The 2020 winners include: Sophia Kofoed, Miramonte High School, 12th grade, poetry – *Alabaster Skulls*; Audrey Lambert, Miramonte, 11th grade, essay/memoir/biography – *Ode to Grandma's House*; Emma Leibowitz, Miramonte, 10th grade, short story – *That Night*; and Julie Lima,



Julie Lima.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Miramonte, 12th grade, essay/memoir/biography – *Dear Class of 2020*.

The six honorable mentions comprise: Eloise Anagnost, Miramonte, 9th grade, short story – *The Curse of Chance*; Laura Boifort, Miramonte, 10th grade, science fiction/fantasy – *Invisibility*; Jenna Foster, Miramonte, 11th grade, poetry – *Running Through the Neighborhood*; Emma Leibowitz, Miramonte, 10th grade, science fiction/fantasy – *Conversations with Satan*; Casey Marriner, Miramonte, 12th grade, short story – *Not Good Enough*; and Matthew Muren, Orinda Academy, 10th grade, poetry – *The Light*.

Winning and honorable mention selections can be found online at www.TheOrindaNews.com.

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



Emma Leibowitz.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

36 Years of Experience
No individual broker has **SOLD** more homes.

CLARK THOMPSON
REAL ESTATE BROKER
VILLAGE ASSOCIATES

Office: 925.254.8585 Cell: 925.998.7898
ct@clarkthompson.com
clarkthompson.com

License# 00903367

LUXURY REAL ESTATE
Village ASSOCIATES
It's Village. Of Course.

CASA ORINDA
RESTAURANT

Dinner served nightly from 4 p.m.

925.254.2981 ■ 20 Bryant Way ■ Orinda, CA 94563

CLAIRE PETERSON
Thank you for your
leadership.
You are our Hero!



Paid for by Inga Miller
and Leslie Johnson



SCHOOLS

Despite Petition, No Change Planned on High School Grading Policy

By PAUL KILDUFF
Staff Writer

Parents and students of the Acalanes High School Unified District (AUHSD) have been circulating a petition demanding the district give students the option of receiving traditional letter grades for the spring semester instead of the credit/no mark (NM) scores the district has chosen to provide.

The petition asks the district to give students the option to take a letter grade for the whole semester based on their grades during the third quarter.

The district switched to the system due to the statewide shutdown of schools because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Like all students throughout California, AUHSD students took their classes online in spring.

Despite the petition, AUHSD's board has no plans to change the policy or discuss it further. There is no AUHSD board meeting planned for this month.

"Given that 92 percent of California high school students will be able to receive letter grades and Washington state has mandated it, we firmly believe that the district is putting our students at a grave disadvantage," said Janet Tarkoff, one of the leaders of the parents group opposing AUHSD's action.

Not giving AUHSD students a grade option may impact their ability to get in to the college of their choice – especially sophomores and juniors. College admissions counselors make their acceptance decisions based on student performance during those two years.

In a letter to the AUHSD board and California's Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tony Thurmond, Tarkoff

said, "I understand the difficult nature of distance learning and the struggles unique to every teacher and student in the district. For those who elect it, credit/no credit is a great relief to those pressures. But for those students who worked very hard for their third-quarter grades and are looking to improve their GPA in advance of college and scholarship applications, nullifying those grades disadvantages them and sends the message that their efforts were wasted."

Henry Hill, who will be going into his junior year at Miramonte High School in the fall, knows all about the downside of the credit/no credit option. Had he had the option to take a letter grade based on his third-quarter performance last semester, Hill's grade point average would have jumped from a 3.85 to a 3.9.

"I think it's crazy that the school district is not offering the choice," said the 16-year-old. He said AUHSD is in the "extreme minority" of districts not just statewide, but nationally. "Only five percent of districts nationwide are not offering the grade option" said Hill.

"The students that did well third quarter are really upset," said Hill. "If they didn't, it doesn't matter to them."

Although colleges have said they will not penalize students for only having credit/no credit for the spring semester, Hill said it's obvious they will favor grades in the admissions process.

Not having grades could also hit students in the pocketbook. The University of Oregon, as well as many other schools, have scholarships for incoming freshmen based partly on GPAs. For an out-of-state student, having a 3.85 could mean \$40,000 off tu-

[SEE GRADES page 15]



Team members (left to right): **Sophia Kan, Isaac Reader-Taates, Santiago Jordan, Diego Aguilar and Lauren Angsupanich.**

Odyssey of the Mind World Champs

By Susan Jordan
Contributing Writer

An Orinda Odyssey of the Mind team took home the highest honor by winning the 2020 World Finals, held online this year due to the pandemic.

The champions are a team from Orinda Intermediate School consisting of 8th graders Diego Aguilar, Santiago Jordan, Isaac Reader-Taates and 7th graders Lauren Angsupanich and Sophia Kan.

This team took on the vehicle challenge "Longshot Solution" in Division II, which consisted of 52 teams from around the United States and the world. The problem, sponsored by Arm & Hammer, required the construction of three autonomous vehicles of differentiated designs to send materials (including Arm & Hammer baking soda) to a reaction area to create a reaction that will save the world from a disastrous event.

Along the way, the vehicles have to overcome obstacles and the hero characters must overcome and gain the respect of those who don't believe in their ability to save the world.

The team's presentation of their solution centers on the story of the world being threatened by the increasing level of acid released by the villain Acidio. While Pepto and Bismol think they already have a handle on the world's acid problem, the longshot

heroes - Flour and Power - must convince Pepto and Bismol that they need to further reduce the world's use of acid in baking by using Arm & Hammer baking soda instead of baking powder (which contains acid).

The team put together a humorous and entertaining presentation that included singing, rapping and dancing interspersed between their vehicle runs. In addition to an original "Baking Soda" rap, the team also created eye-catching costumes and set pieces with paint-injected bubble wraps, shredded CD glitter, lighted Jell-O cups and hand-cut duct tape flames.

Since 1978 Odyssey of the Mind is an international creative problem-solving program that aims to engage students by allowing their knowledge and ideas to come to life. The program promotes creativity by challenging teams to solve divergent problems with more than one solution.

The teams bring their solutions to competition on the local, state and world level. The solutions are presented in a live performance. Thousands of teams from all over the globe select and solve the same problem but no two solutions are ever the same.

All Orinda teams are coached by parent volunteers but the solutions are created by team members without the help of others, which is a key component of the competition.



Ann Sharf

Top Producer. Strong Negotiator. Proven Results.

During such uncertain times, it's more important than ever to nurture your relationships and stay connected—and that's what makes our community so unique and extraordinary.

Let me help you navigate through this ever changing real estate market.

(925)253-2525
ann@annsharf.com
www.annsharf.com
DRE# 01156966



Village
ASSOCIATES
It's Village. Of Course.
93 Moraga Way, Orinda

How to Access the Orinda Library

As of June 22, no reopening date had been set for the Orinda Library. However, it is possible to access library materials.

Using the library catalogue, a patron may place items on hold. Once the requested items are located, the patron will be notified by text, email or phone that the items are ready for pick up.

To pick up an item, make an appointment. Once at the library, have your library card number ready and call 925-254-0120 or text (925) 438-0886 before approaching the door. Staff will notify you when items are ready to go.

Pick up your items in a bag with your name on the table at the front door. Use the book drop to return items.

The library is at 26 Orinda way. For



SALLY HOGARTY

A sign at **Library Plaza** explains how to retrieve items.

more information, go to <https://ccclib.org/locations/19/>.

What's
On
Deck
With
Parks &
Rec!

Hello Parks and Rec Family,
As you are aware, we canceled our original summer schedule due to the pandemic. However, we worked hard to create a new program within the guidelines of the health order and featuring your favorite instructors. We have 1/2 day and full day options. Check out the Parks and Rec website, www.OrindaParksandRec@CityofOrinda.org

We Will Get Through This Together




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

Local Essential Workers

Thank You!


Managing Directors—Investments

Dean Akazawa



David Clarke

Alan Metheny



2 Theatre Square, Suite 210 Orinda, CA 94563

www.WellsFargoAdvisors.com 925-253-4300

Investment and Insurance Products: NOT FDIC Insured / NO Bank Guarantee / MAY Lose Value

Wells Fargo Advisors is a trade name used by Wells Fargo Clearing Services, LLC, Member SIPC CAR-0620-01273

AROUND TOWN



Seasoned Shopper

It's That Thyme of Year...

BARBARA KOBSAR



Summer herbs are revered for flavoring fruits, vegetables and long cool drinks. If you're not already growing some of your own, come down to the farmers market and find fresh-cut bunches ready to go.

Herbs are the fragrant leaves of plants that do not have a woody stem. Dried herbs are more potent than fresh but lose their pungency after 6 months. You can substitute 1 teaspoon of dry herb for 1 tablespoon of fresh.

Here is a list of some of the most common herbs.

Basil is particularly alluring and a must with nice thick slices of vine-ripened tomatoes. Most prevalent is the sweet or common basil, and a favorite choice for making pesto. Herb gardens may boast other varieties including purple opal basil and lemon, cinnamon or anise flavored basil.

Cilantro or Chinese parsley are leaves of the coriander plant (which also produces coriander seeds). As a member of the pars-

Speaking on his own behalf, not the board's, Severson said he finds it terribly ironic that he's received "email after email from some Orinda parents highly concerned that the board's decision to issue credit will put their student at a 'disadvantage' while, by nearly every measure, our Orinda students are some of the most advantaged in the U.S. and in the world."

Paul Kilduff can be reached at editor@theorindanews.com.

◆ GRADES from page 14

ition for four years at the school while a 3.6 would reduce it \$30,000 over four years.

AUHSD Superintendent John Nickerson said the board's decision was "not a perfect solution," but believed that it was "the best solution for the students. Clearly, there is a group of parents that disagrees and has been advocating for a different letter-graded approach."

In an e-mail explaining the policy to parents, Nickerson addressed the grading option by saying that while it was allowable it has shortcomings.

"The third-quarter grade is only designed as a progress report, and we have determined that there are significant inconsistencies in how the teachers use this progress report and what the grade represents. We believe it would not be an accurate reflection of student achievement as a semester grade or even a representation of performance in the third quarter consistent between teachers and classes," said Nickerson.

"While credit/NM is inherently not precise, the integrity of the grade would stand. Allowing students to improve a third-quarter grade is also fraught with challenges and issues of inequities given the wildly different circumstances we all experience with the pandemic. While many California public school districts have not yet made decisions, it appears that the majority of districts, and certainly most all of the highest performing districts, will be implementing some form of credit/NC system for the semester."

Board member Chris Severson said providing accurate grades under distance learning would be nearly impossible and giving some students "As and some credit is grossly inequitable and biased against middle- to lower-end learners for a host of reasons."

He said the board also felt "this is a global pandemic and all universities understand the state of high school learning."

◆ EVERYDAY from page 12

imaginary children's book. And I woke up before the issue resolved about adding the phrase "most of whom were women." But I'd like to think I won the fight to keep it in there. It works.

The next day, I was walking, socially distanced of course, with my good friends Ariele and Leslie. I told them all about this dream and the imaginary book.

"Oh wow, we have chills!" exclaimed my friends. Fortunately, not the kind induced by illness. "You should totally do something with that," Leslie suggested.

"I wish I could," I replied. "but — the hugging and kissing part. We're supposed to be staying six feet away from each other." Dr. Fauci would not approve. But then again, who knows what Mrs. Dr. Fauci would say.

It's interesting to note this happened prior to the protests and rallies that followed the tragic death of George Floyd. But I'm no soothsayer. I'm pretty sure this little dream resulted from enjoying the wonderful yard signs all over Orinda that read:

- In This House, We Believe
- Black Lives Matter
- Women's Rights Are Human Rights
- No Human Is Illegal
- Science Is Real
- Love Is Love
- Kindness Is Everything

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

ley family, the leaves are lacy but flat with a stronger flavor and aroma than parsley.

Rosemary, sage and thyme are the grilling herbs of summer. Sprigs of each can be placed between meats and vegetables on a skewer or set on the coals to smoke.

Mint leaves just make iced tea and mojitos better on a hot day.

Oregano complements many tomato-based recipes like pizza and pasta. Combine chopped leaves with olive oil to create your own marinade for chicken, lamb and beef dishes.

Dill plants provide feathery green leaves (the herb) and the flat, oval fruits produce the dill seed spice. Loosely chop the leaves to add to salmon dishes, mix with sour cream for a dip and combine with eggs in salads. Dill seeds are used to make tasty pickles.

Tarragon offers a hint of licorice and used widely in French cuisine (fish, chicken, vinaigrettes and sauces). It's an essential ingredient in Bearnaise sauce and popularly used in flavored vinegars.

The Orinda farmers' market is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Orinda Way in Orinda Village. More information



BARBARA KOBSAR
Nelsie De Jesus from Ibarra Farm in Reedley (Fresno County) shows off fresh cilantro at the Orinda Farmers' Market.

is available at www.cccfm.org, facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket and Instagram@OrindaFarmersMarket.

Barbara Kobsar sells her Cottage Kitchen jams and jellies at the JAM STAND on Saturdays at the Orinda and San Ramon markets, and on Sundays at the Walnut Creek market. She is also president of CCCFM Association Board of Directors.

THANK YOU!

To the Orinda Community Foundation (OCF)

for the fundraising drive to purchase the needed COVID-19 test kits for seniors living in care facilities.




Carlos Baltodano, President
The Orinda Association




Elegant Entertainer's Estate



3540 Springhill Road, Lafayette | \$4,250,000 | 3540Springhill.com

4,590 Square Feet +/- | .880 Acres +/-
5 Bedrooms/3 Full & 2 Half Bathrooms

- Secluded on a Cul-De-Sac with Detached Guest Cottage/Office
- Stone Fireplace • Wine Cellar • Walk-in Closet in Master Suite
- Outdoor Living/Dining Area with Fireplace and Barbecue

Virtual & In-Person Showings Available



Ann Newton Cane
415.999.0253
a.newtoncane@ggsir.com
AnnNewtonCane.com
Lic. #02084093



Michael Dreyfus
650.485.3476
m.dreyfus@ggsir.com
www.Dreyfus.Group
Lic. #01121795

Each Franchise is Independently Owned and Operated.






SATURDAYS
9AM-1PM

Notice to our Community

Certified Farmers' Markets have been given essential status during the current crisis. Your market will operate with the following modifications:

- No samples will be available
- No communal seating areas or music
- Social Distancing will be enforced
- Face-covering is required

Your market has transitioned from a community gathering place to an essential food source. Come shop in the sun for food picked fresh, handled less! Please help by sending only one member of your household to shop.



"Good to Go" Pre-order a produce box for drive-thru pick-up!
www.orindafarmersmarket.org

AROUND TOWN

CAR TIME

Getting Ready to Hit the Road



By JOHN VANEK

I know we are feeling a bit cooped up while still sheltering. Even if we are sheltering while working, we just go home after work. We yearn to drive somewhere to eat or stay over.

At this writing, we are in stage two of California's Pandemic Roadmap. What that means is we have learned to be responsible, testing systems have been put in place, and the curve has somewhat flattened.

Low-risk businesses are starting to open. However, we have to be patient and wait for stage three. That means we get to go to "higher risk venues" like restaurants, concerts and movies. We can do things like drive up the coast to get oysters or take a weekend to Lake Tahoe and actually go out to dinner!

Some of you folks may avoid a flying vacation and would rather take a road trip. We do have to be smart when we go out into the world because the pandemic is far from over. We still must consider the interactions

we will have and think about the safety of our families.

How do we stay safe when we travel? Remember the virus is everywhere. When we go out, we see and talk to people we do not know. We wear masks, but what else? When you stop at roadside a rest stop, you will end up touching many surfaces without even thinking about it.

When this occurs you will then go and touch things in the car. So routine wipe downs of your interior are recommended.

Is the family trip-mobile road ready? Local motorists report their vehicles have been idle during the pandemic. Sitting for long periods is not great for your vehicle. It is always a good idea to have it checked out before you hit the road.

An extended sitting period will accelerate the failure of your battery. Check the maintenance history of your vehicle and understand what services may be required. Once you know your vehicle is ready, then I suggest the normal pre-trip preparations.

Even if your car is checked out, you could run into trouble on the road. It is better to be prepared. It is good to bring along a kit, which includes items like jumper cables, road flares, a flash light, water, blankets, snacks and spare masks.

It is also a good idea to make sure your road service/towing is up to date and you have the information you need with the correct phone numbers. Always let someone know you are traveling, how to reach you and when you plan on returning.

As usual, I implore you to be a good consumer of automotive repair. Trust your local car care provider and hit the road!

John Vanek can be reached at John@orindamotors.com.



CHRISTOPHER ROBSON

Classic cars, like this convertible T-bird, will take part in an on-the-road Car Show Sept. 12.

Classic Car Show to Hit the Road

By BOBBY DODSON
Staff Writer

This year, the venerable Orinda Classic Car show is coming to you – literally.

With the new name and format, the Orinda Classic Car Road Show will feature 100 cars driving a route through each Lamorinda town before returning to home base in Orinda.

"In the past, the Car Show, which has been going on for 16 years, has sported some 200 cars in a venue for about five hours. But because of the pandemic's restrictions on large gatherings and also the need for social distancing, we knew we had to find a creative way to continue the show. So, this year it is a road show," said event co-chair Diane Lautz.

With an Orinda starting point, cars will travel down Moraga Way to Moraga Road in Moraga, following it from Moraga to Lafayette, and then drive back on Highway 24 to Orinda.

"Though all kinds of cars are welcome, this year special emphasis will be placed on exotic cars, which, in automotive terms, means unusually powerful cars, advanced in engineering, like Ferrari, Porches, and

some higher end cars made by BMW, Corvette or Ford Mustangs," said Bill Waterman, the other co-chair.

The event is an annual fundraiser for Seniors Around Town, a door-to-door, on-demand transportation program for Orinda seniors and other local non-profit groups. About 1500 rides a year are provided at no cost, but this year the organization started delivering groceries to seniors because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"This is to help seniors, who are more prone to catch the virus, stay safely in their homes," Waterman said.

The car show is scheduled for Sept. 12. Organizers plan to space the cars in groups of 25 and encourage residents along the route to line the streets. A video of the road show narrated by Steve Harwood also is in the works.

To register a vehicle or motorcycle, go to OrindaCarShow.com.

Other event organizers are Mike Robinson, John Vanek, Bill Criswell, David Alverado, Todd Mercer, Tom Pearson, Kate Wiley and Ray Kunz.

Bobby Dodson can be reached at bobbydodson@comcast.net.

McCaulou's
and
Hollyhock
always
FREE Gift Wrap!
on items 15.00
or more.
Orinda Village Square

PROFESSIONAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
CA BRE 01902148
SPECIAL FULL MGMT only \$125.00
Leasing • Rentals • Management
Residential | Commercial | Retail
LAMORINDA SPECIALIST
925-254-5636 ppm4rent.com
Serving the East Bay Area *Restrictions apply - Ad must be presented at time of signing.

Thank you to all the Orinda grocery store clerks, first responders, teachers, and city staff for your commitment to keeping our community connected, healthy, and safe.

JULY 4 2020 ORINDA DDCCD

California Senator
Steve Glazer
REPRESENTING THE 7TH DISTRICT
<https://sd07.senate.ca.gov/>

◆ SURVEY from page 7

Asked to suggest "Buildings elsewhere that would fit in Downtown Orinda," 554 respondents suggested the neighborhoods of downtown Lafayette and Danville along with Rockridge and parts of Walnut Creek. Market Place in Rockridge was by far the most-frequently mentioned building in the survey. Others included Mill Valley Lumber Yard, Oakridge Health Club in Lafayette, Leshner Center in Walnut Creek, Larkspur Landing, The Shed, Oakville Grocery and H2 Hotel in Healdsburg, Hacienda and Canyon Club Brewery in Moraga, the Berkeley Rep, Oxbow Market in Napa, and Marketplace in Alameda.

Streetscapes included Danville, Los

Altos, Calistoga, Walnut Creek, Ojai, Carmel, Burlingame and the Napa Riverfront. On a larger scale, a seven-story building proposed in Berkeley, Bishop Ranch (City Center) and the Claremont Hotel were suggested.

A workshop between Planning Commission and Downtown Precise Plan subcommittee members Kosla and Miller was Tuesday, June 23, after this issue went to press. The next subcommittee meeting is July 8 and is open to the public.

Complete survey results can be viewed at www.CityofOrinda.org.

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

UNLEVEL FLOORS? DOORS STICKING?
Call & mention this promotion and receive
10% OFF
UP TO \$1,000.00

Bay Area UNDERPINNING LIC#867128
707-310-0602

FOUNDATION SETTLEMENT? WE CAN HELP!
www.BayAreaUnderpinning.com

FIND US ON yelp, facebook, linkedin, instagram, youtube

ARTS / CLASSIFIEDS

Galleries: View 'Tattoo Series,' Block Prints, Tranquil Watercolors

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

The Lamorinda Arts Council's July exhibit features the artwork of Bill Carmel, Marie Cotter, George Ehrenhaft and Hallie Strock in the Art Gallery in the Orinda Library.

At press time, it was unknown whether the gallery will be open to the public due to the shelter-in-place order. If the building is open in time for the artists to hang their show, the exhibit will go forward. Otherwise the exhibit will be rescheduled.

Carmel, of San Ramon, is a member of the Lamorinda Arts Council and co-curator of the Orinda Library Art Gallery. He says he loves to draw and painting is an extension of drawing. Originally he painted with oils but developed an allergy to turpentine so turned to watercolor and pastels. It wasn't long before he tried acrylics and developed techniques that gave him the kind of results with acrylics that rivaled the results with oils. He especially likes the fluid, buttery feel of the paint and the ability to use underpainting and glazes for brilliance and saturated color.

His exhibit includes four large *giclées* of paintings on vinyl and a few drawings. The large paintings are from his ongoing "Tattoo Series" because, "It's as if the canvas and my skin are the same."

These paintings begin as abstractions and as the work progresses the association of random marks and shapes coalesce into things that contain meaning, similar to seeing shapes in the clouds. He says he enjoys the process of chaos becoming recognizable.

See more of his work at www.fineartamerica.com/profiles/bill-carmel.

Cotter, of Berkeley, paints using watercolors and acrylics and also works with pastels. She began painting at age nine, took lessons in oils, painting through college in oils. She received a lot of training for creating renderings for an architecture firm, all of which were done in watercolor.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Inspiration Point by Marie Cotter.

Like Carmel, she converted to acrylic because she found ways to do everything with acrylics that she could do with oil and watercolor.

Her favorite artists include Granville Redmond, a California artist who was unable to hear or speak, J. M. W. Turner, Monet and other Impressionists. "Art is a self-generating engine that keeps me tuned; I paint every day because I need to self-express. I work at not being attached, the hardest lesson of all. It's the doing that's important, not being attached to the work," Cotter said. To sample her exhibit visit <https://bit.ly/2Njpo33>.

Ehrenhaft, of Moraga, is a prolific painter of watercolors, more so while sheltering in place.

"During the last three months I've done 30 paintings," he said. Most of his paintings come from photographs he's taken rather than *plein air* excursions. He has a file on his computer with 2000 photographs he peruses for ideas.

He is showing about 24 watercolors, most of which are outdoor scenes in Lamorinda as well as paintings from other California locations.

People familiar with his artwork have repeatedly told him it is very calming and tranquil. "I think my paintings serve as a temporary escape from politics, the police and pandemics; it's the opposite of reading or listening to the news," he said.

View more of his *plein air* watercolors at www.mesart.com/indexps.jsp?artist=3939

Strock is a painter, printmaker and mixed media artist with a studio in the Berkeley hills. She is exhibiting a large group of linoleum block prints, hand painted with watercolor. She says she never thought she would enjoy printmaking as it is a fussy process. But she has found endless interest and challenges in the process, especially how it pushes drawing further. She loves the unmistakable graphic look of block prints and the opportunity to interpret lots of subjects.

Using images from source photographs and her own inspiration, she develops them into drawings, then designs which may be carved into linoleum. "Pre-design thinking involves my personal point of view, how much I want to abstract the images, and how much black to incorporate into the design. At some point it becomes all about shapes and patterns, negative and positive space, rather than subject matter," she says.

Her prints are made on printmaking paper on a professional printing press. Carved linoleum is inked with black then run through the press. Each print is then hand painted with watercolor, then mounted on a cradled wood painting panel. She is showing 25 pieces.

See what she's up to at www.halliestrock.com/home.

Meet the artists at their reception scheduled for 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. July 12. Check with www.lamorindaarts.org/gallery-2 for updated scheduling. To learn more about the Lamorinda Arts Council, go to www.lamorindaarts.org. The Art Gallery at the Orinda Library is at 26 Orinda Way. Call 925-254-2184 for more information or visit <http://ccclib.org/>.

Wilder: Inspired by Aboriginal Art

The paintings of Sherry Ravazza are scheduled for July if shelter-in-place restrictions are lifted. A reception for the artist is set for 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. on July 25. For updated scheduling information, go to www.lamorindaarts.org/current-exhibits-wilder/.

Ravazza, who lives in Lafayette, became interested in Aboriginal art eight years ago when she was in college. As an art history major, she learned about a huge variety of artistic designs, styles and art forms dating from prehistoric to contemporary times.

She receives inspiration in different ways. Sometimes a flash of an image appears in her head and she makes note of it.

Other times she is inspired by something she sees in nature. At other times she expresses a climactic transformation in her life emotionally, mentally and physically in her artwork. Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OqJCjTZ3fcs> for a sample of the artwork in her show.

Contact co-curators Denise Nomura or Aniston Breslin at wildergallery@lamorindaarts.org for more information about the gallery.

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



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Sherry Ravazza's *Healing Effect*, an 11" x 14" acrylic and fabric painting on canvas.

The Medicine Shoppe
100% Pure PharmacySM



Naomi Yuen, Pharm D.
Custom compounding available.
Now offering FREE Deliveries
282 Orinda Village Sq. • 254-1211
<http://orindamedicineshoppe.com>

...classified ads**Services**

Fire Safety weed cutting. Local resident. Fair price. Charles (h) 254-5533 (c) 925-528-9385.

Wanted

I buy Danish Modern & 1950's Modern furniture, fine art, sterling silver, & estate jewelry. Will buy 1 item or entire estate! Call Rick at 510-219-9644. Courteous house calls. Rick Hudson Estate Liquidation, LLC.

Unwanted Eye Glasses are collected for Lions Club at The Orinda Association office, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda.



In-Home Personal Training
For Individuals with Parkinson's
Or Recovering from Injury

Nancy Henderson
Pilates Instructor & Personal Trainer
Careful Social Distancing

Phone: (925) 254-0329
Email: sersuave2003@yahoo.com

THANK YOU

Cathy
Cindy
Kate
Marie
Pamela
(925) 402-4506



For keeping Orinda seniors mobile,
independent and able
to get where they
need and want to go!



It is my honor and pleasure to be a
part of SAT—It's More Than A Ride,
It's the wonderful people I meet!

SAT—One of so many local,
essential, workers/heroes

KATHY

Park Place
WEALTH ADVISORS, INC.
A Registered Investment Advisor

Retirement & Income Planning • Estate Planning • Charitable Planning • Educational Funding
401K Rollover Specialists

18 Orinda Way, Orinda • 925-254-7766

Registered Principals with and securities offered through Securities America, Inc.

Member FINRA, SIPC. Park Place Wealth Advisors Inc. and Securities America are separate entities.

Thank you, Orinda,
as we celebrate
35 years
of delivering
quality eye care
to our community.

HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY!



Orinda Optometry Group

20 Orinda Way • www.OrindaOptometryGroup.com

To schedule your appt, call (925) 253-1320.

ARTS

THE REEL LESS TRAVELED
SOMETHING NEW, SOMEONE FAMILIAR
Tom Westlake

Now that July is upon us, and with us still observing our collective but still new lifestyle, it is important to point out that we will be able to still celebrate the month – just not necessarily in the way we’re used to.

Both the International Film Showcase (www.internationalshowcase.org) and the Orinda Theatre (www.orindamovies.com) continue to function by streaming services or by ancillary means. The most exciting example of the latter is a new program that Derek Zemrak, owner of the theater, is instituting.

He’s calling it Under the Marquee. It is not only an opportunity for all to enjoy the finest that Cine Cuvee has to offer, it’s a chance to expand beyond the boundaries of their small wrought iron patio space, inviting people to dine and drink under the neon and flashing lights of the Orinda Theatre.

There will be theme nights every Friday and Saturday, including live music with Patti Leidecker. When not tickling the

ivories, she will accompany participants during live mic nights. It’ll be like attending a big Hollywood premier where you are the featured guest.

And now, onto other things. Last month, it occurred to me that you know very little about the guy who actually writes this column. It’s all very well and good to read about cinematic events in Lamorinda but what about all the content and knowledge that goes along with it?

Since about 1968, I have been an avid follower of film. What’s so special about 1968 and why do I remember it so clearly? Though I won’t tell you how old I was that year, I can say two movies came out that not only made a significant impression on me but also forever changed the cinematic landscape.

They were *Planet of the Apes* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*. For this impressionable mind, to see these two films on the big screen was life altering.

Another landmark moment happened in 1977, and I’m sure many of you already know what I’m talking about. *Star Wars: A New Hope* (back then, it was just known as *Star Wars*) was released. Anyone who remembers knows that’s all that anyone talked about.

Unlike *Planet* or *2001*, though, there was something different at work there. *Star Wars* awakened a kind of primal, mythological part of the general gestalt to where the rabid fan base (and I was one of them) wanted not only to watch that movie again

and again but to be a part of it.

Thus was born ‘the geek’ aspect, a group of people who fancied themselves closet Jedis or members of the Rebel Alliance. I, on the other hand, had long since gone through this phase. (I already had a fairly good sized collection of *Planet of the Apes* and *2001* merchandise, not to mention magazines and comic books.)

I had also expanded my horizons and was branching out beyond the science fiction and fantasy genres, focusing on directors like Stanley Kubrick, Bob Fosse, Ken Russell, Robert Altman, Woody Allen and Mel Brooks to name a few.

I also took a film course at the junior college I attended, and I learned there were just as many memorable films made *before* 1968 as there were after. (Seeing *Metropolis* – made in 1927 – for the first time was

just as mind bending.)

From there, my interests just grew exponentially. Watching Siskel & Ebert also helped a lot from a critical standpoint. They helped me understand why a film is either good or bad. From then until now, I’ve continued to learn and absorb all things movie-related and would like to think that I have a pretty good handle on the art form.

I believe cinema is one of the more vital art forms. I will always gladly enter into a discussion about what’s going on in film to anyone who’s willing to listen.

Until then, always veer toward those wonderful flickering images and lights for that’s where the reel magic lies.

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

Starlight Players Bring Mystery and Fundraising to Zoom



DAVID DIERKS

The empty stage at the Orinda Community Center Amphitheater, for the last 36 years the summer home of the Orinda Starlight Village Players, bears testimony to the effects of COVID-19.

By DAVID DIERKS
Assistant Editor

Like many theatres, both community and professional, the Orinda Starlight Village Players (OrSVP) had to cancel their 2020 season due to COVID-19.

Unlike some theater companies, OrSVP is entirely volunteer run and does not have to worry about paying employees during the pandemic. However, they still have storage expenses for sets, props, furniture and costumes that have to be paid.

Suzanne Lorraine, one of OrSVP’s regular directors, set up a GoFundMe page to help generate donations for the theatre group at www.gofundme.com/f/Orinda-Starlight-Village-Players.

“For 36 years, Orinda Starlight Village Players has delighted audiences of all ages in the outdoor Orinda Community Park Amphitheater,” said Lorraine. “With no performance income to pay for storage or play rights for our 2021 season, we are dangerously close to losing this valuable community theatre.”

Another OrSVP director and playwright,

Malcolm Cowler, is organizing a Zoom mystery game, *A Night of Creeps, Haunts and Murder*, which is free to play (donations are appreciated). The Zoom events have a cast of OrSVP regulars portraying murder suspects in a haunted mansion. The players are locked in the mansion and must determine who the murderer is in order to escape.

“The game can host up to nine players along with the murder suspects,” said Cowler. “Get a couple of friends, sign up and log on with some snacks and your beverage of choice for an evening of fun and mystery.”

Cowler will be running the Zoom mystery game starting July 9 at 7 p.m. and running Thursday nights into August. To register for the game, email info@orsvp.org.

Those interested in supporting the Orinda Starlight Village Players should visit www.orsvp.org, email info@orsvp.org or call 925-528-9225.

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

This Month Under the Marquee

July 3: Karaoke USA
July 4, 11, 18 and 25: Live music with Patti Leidecker
July 10: Tiki night
July 17: Sci-Fi karaoke night
July 24: Pirate Island Night
For details, check out the Cine Cuvee Facebook page.

Baan Thai RESTAURANT
Eat Healthy, Live Healthy
ORGANIC SALADS MADE FRESH DAILY. MANY VEGETARIAN OPTIONS.
WE COOK FROM FAMILY RECIPES.
FOOD TO GO, CATERING & GIFT CERTIFICATES ARE AVAILABLE

Now Offering Curb Side Pick Up

Lunch: Mon. - Sun. 11.30 a.m. - 2.30 p.m.
Dinner: Mon. - Sun. 4.30 - 9.00 p.m.
99 Orinda Way, Orinda
(925) 253-0989

The Murphy Team
Leaders in Lamorinda Real Estate

Karen Murphy
(925)788-6322
karen.villageassociates@gmail.com
License #00699318

Hillary Murphy
(415)309-5061
hillary@murphyteamRE.com
License#01967218

JULY 4th 2020

Thank you to all the volunteers, business owners and workers who have worked so hard to keep our community safe during the Covid-19 crisis.

Amy Worth, Vice Mayor

BUSINESS

Reopenings Under Way But its Not Business as Usual

by MIMI BOMMARITO
Staff Writer

When Gov. Gavin Newsom proclaims certain establishments can re-open, it doesn't mean instantly reverting to "business as usual" as in the days preceding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Individuals might have the green light to shop, dine in restaurants or attend theatrical performances, but astute business owners are realizing it may take some time before the masses feel comfortable venturing into public, indoor spaces, especially in Orinda.

Maureen Brown, owner and proprietor of the popular upscale consignment boutique Rechic used the down time provided by "The Great Pause" to pivot and completely re-imagine her "pre-loved clothing" business model.

"I wanted my store to better serve this community," she said. "I now provide online shopping, personal shopping services, shipping and local delivery options,

curb-side pickup, gift cards and additional benefits to my consignors."

As much as people are eager for life to return to normal, business owners, and especially small business owners with close ties to the community, carry the added weight of feeling responsible for customers' health and safety.

Brown said she feels fortunate she has other sales platforms on which to build, to keep her business alive. Customers can now shop online via ShopRechic.com and on Instagram and Facebook.

"I feel very responsible for my customers' and my employees' health and safety. I never judge anyone for the degree to which they choose to open their business. I'm just grateful I can explore new ways of growing my business right now," she said.

Given the community-based nature of the consignment industry (the shorter the distance consumer goods must travel, the lesser the carbon footprint), Brown said she has always envisioned her boutique as a friendly gathering place, complete with a comfy sofa. She also offers handcrafted cocktails and wine tastings at social hours.

For now, however, "re-opening will look different," she said. While her shop at 101 Orinda Way will not be open for walk-in traffic in the immediate future, she is available by phone, email or the website.

In addition, Brown signed the Fifteen Percent Pledge, a nationwide petition urging wholesalers to tag black-owned vendors so that business owners may more easily and intentionally support this market. The end goal is for 15 percent of Rechic's retail merchandise to be supplied by black-owned vendors. Fifteen Percent was chosen because black Americans comprise 15 percent of the population.

Meanwhile, across the highway in the Theatre District, Orinda Theatre owner Derek Zemrak reassures patrons the iconic

theater eventually will reopen for business, but, like Rechic, many details of what a reopening will actually entail are yet to be determined.

"My most frequently asked questions these days are 'Will your theater reopen?' and 'What will it look like?'" Zemrak said.

Even though the governor approved movie theaters to open in June, Zemrak said the timeline remains ambiguous. "We're in a wait-and-see mode right now. We're doing everything we can to generate some revenue to keep the lights on and pay the landlord."

Zemrak described another roadblock: Studios don't even have new films to release at this time, as all production ceased during the shutdown. The film industry has only recently been given the okay to cautiously resume shooting, so the entire supply-chain process is unpredictable.

Zemrak said that while studios have generously offered to release classic films at discounted prices, with the popularity of Netflix, HBO and Amazon Prime, consumers are not really interested in spending money to view older films. "It's not simply a matter of flipping a switch and picking up where we left off," he said.

The process of reopening involves planning and changes. He must revamp ticket sales to adhere to the new mandate of socially distanced seating and reduced seating, as well as implement new regulations involving health and safety.

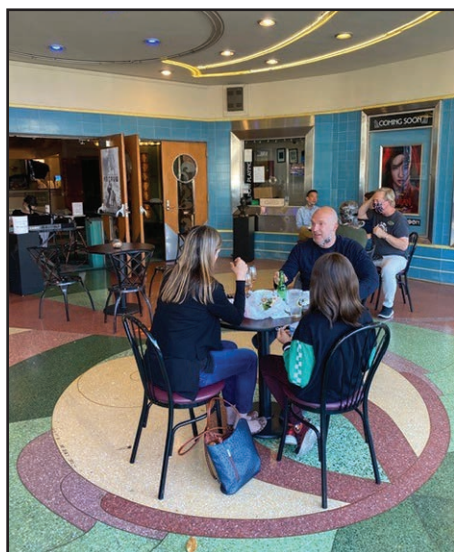
To provide "life support" for the Orinda Theatre until it resumes full functionality, a Go Fund Me account was created. At press time, they were within \$5,000 of making their \$25,000 goal.

"Many people don't realize how much money it takes to keep a business alive when you can no longer operate," he said. "My electricity bill alone is at least \$1,800



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Maureen Brown, owner of Rechic, says the pandemic gave her time to expand services online.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Patrons enjoy an evening outside the Orinda Theatre where theme nights are planned on Friday and Saturday.

◆ BUZZ from page 20

and garden." Their collection of intriguing, often fragrant items for gifts or home décor by top designers will tempt. Then there are orchids, plants and flowers – potted up differently every time you visit. Or, bring your own container. They will make it shine.

"We've got the best, most talented and customer-driven service staff in the industry armed with knowledge and skills," said Benkowski.

Tesfamariam, customer service maestro, anchor and core of the store, studied interior design at UC Davis; Joana Muriel is a graphic designer and nursery expert extraordinaire; Heather Woodiwiss is a passionate florist, exquisite soap maker and jewelry designer; Claudia Cruz is the queen of service, kindness personified –

just ask and you shall receive; and Patricia Dempsey contributed 21 years keeping things organized.

Services include floral and plant care information, in-house design consultation, imaginative arrangement making (faux or real), often on the spot. Community involvement includes giving back to local schools, events, places of worship, garden clubs, Lamorinda Arts Council, UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital and other nonprofit organizations.

Sanvitalia Home and Garden is at 2 Theatre Square, Suite 110, Orinda. Open 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tues. – Sat. Call 925-258-6900, email sanvitaliahg@gmail.com or go to www.sanvitaliahomeandgarden.com.

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

P
I
L
A
T
E
S



CoreKinetics
www.CoreKinetics.com

*Nationally Certified, experienced teachers.
*Innovative Classes and Private sessions
*We work with every **BODY** and All ages

Visit our website for great offers.



The Well Balanced Workout
925-708-3279
Please call for an appointment
50 Vashell Way, #120, Orinda, CA 94563

Orinda Community Foundation (OCF) Presents:



CANCELLED

Saturday morning, August 15, 2020
Mamonte High School in Orinda, CA

Register online today: NorCalKidsTri.org



Thank you to our Heroes:

Medical Professionals, Scientists, Grocery Workers, Teachers, First Responders, Faith Leaders, Mask Makers, City Leaders, Volunteers, Food Bank Workers, Bus Drivers, Homeless Outreach Teams, Delivery People, and the Citizens of Orinda who have Sheltered in Place!

Working Together we have Saved Lives and Kept our Community Safe!



County Supervisor
Candace Andersen



CONTRA COSTA
District II

BUSINESS BUZZ

Business Buzz Putting a Personal Face on Local Business

Elana O’Loskey



Orinda Shoe Repair

Orinda Shoe Repair has been a black-owned family business for three generations.

“My stepfather James Pinkney worked for Al Baer, who opened his shoe repair store in the 1940s,” said current owner Torre Major. “When Mr. Baer closed his business in 1952 my stepfather bought the business and reopened it as Orinda Shoe Repair.”

The location was near Oakland where he lived, and he liked that Orinda was a quiet, friendly town with much character,

Major said.

Major’s training began when he was a teenager and included shoe repair, orthopedic elevations/adjustments, customer service and running the business. Major chose to begin his son Tyler’s training a bit earlier – age nine.

Some say shoe repair service is going the way of the dinosaur but not at OSR. Torre was able to stand side-by-side a master craftsperson to learn how the work was done, start to finish. Tyler, who often manages the store, has had the same train-



Master craftspersons **Tyler** (L) and **Torre Major** welcome patrons back to business at Orinda Shoe Repair, at 19 Avenida De Orinda on the Village Square side of town.



Sanvitalia Home and Garden reopens for business as **Joana Muriel** (L) and owner **Helen Bentkowski** prepare the day’s flower arrangements at 2 Theatre Square, Suite 110.

ing. Other OSR staff includes Antonio Hernandez and Ashley Franck.

A sample of the brands they service include Gucci, Louboutin, Allen Edmonds McAllister, Birkenstock, Chanel, AGL, Timberland, Rag and Bone and Alden. They work with the highest quality Italian, German and French materials. Bring in shoes, leather goods of any kind or stop by for an orthopedic corrective shoe adjustment. Their Yelp reviews are off the chart and their loyal clientele spans generations.

Outside OSR, Torre has many interests and talents. Since the age of five, Torre wanted to be a pilot; at 17 he received his private pilot’s license. Over time, he became a flight instructor, charter pilot and type rated Learjet Captain. The aircrafts he piloted include the Dassault Falcon 50 and Gulfstream, among others.

The shop, at 19 Avenida De Orinda, is open for business 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Mon. – Sat. through July; check their Yelp page for updated hours. For more information, call 925-254-5088 or visit go to www.orindashoes.com/.

Sanvitalia Home and Garden

When you enter Orinda Theatre Square from Moraga Way, just past the fountain on the right, you may have seen beautiful orchids, roses, bunches of lavender and other fragrant florals on your way. Glimpse inside and you’ll see Sanvitalia Home and Garden (SV) manager Leelye Tesfamariam layering tall stems with pastel hues and green lemon leaves into a swirling bouquet of subtle colors.

Owner Helen Bentkowski had her hands full in 2015 at Terrace Gifts and Coffee near the Claremont Hotel in Oakland. Her café patronage had expanded, edging out the gift, plants and orchid portion of the business. The solution was to bifurcate and relocate the gift and orchid business. Theatre Square had an opening and the retail climate matched her market; perfect fit. In 2016 she added fresh florals to the mix.

Bentkowski’s tagline for SV is: “We explore the country and abroad for unique and interesting items to accessorize your home

[SEE BUZZ page 19]

Orinda Motors Presents



The 16th Annual Orinda Classic Car Show Enter Your Car In The “Orinda Classic Car Tour” - We Will Drive Again!

The Orinda Association Is pleased to announce that instead of hosting our regular Car Show, on the morning of Saturday September 12th we invite all car owners to enter their vehicles in this exciting “Tour” and enjoy driving along with up to 100 fellow car enthusiasts throughout the area.

Other fun activities will include:

- **ORINDA CLASSIC CAR SHOW HOSTED VIDEO:** All who enter their vehicles will be featured in a special video tribute hosted by Steve Harwood going out to more than 2000 show supporters.
- **OWNERS: YOUR ENTRY FEES WILL SUPPORT GREAT LOCAL CAUSES** - the Orinda Seniors Around Town Ride and food delivery program (SAT) and three other local charities.

Other great details to follow!

So enter your car into this year’s show!

Register all cars and motorcycles online today!

All vintage, modern or exotic cars are welcome, plus motorcycles of any years or makes and more!



2005 Ford GT Coupe



1955 Mercedes Benz 300SL Coupe



1975 Porsche 911 Coupe



Buzz Weldy with his 1965 Ford Mustang 2 Door Fastback

Enter Your Car Today at www.OrindaCarShow.com

We thank our partners and sponsors including: Alliant Insurance, Orinda Motors, Mechanics Bank, John Muir Health, Canopy Health, Clark Pest Control, Finola Fellner, Compass Real Estate, Clark Thompson, and many more.