



# THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis  
Volume 38, Number 7

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Delivered to 9,000 Households and Businesses in Orinda

12 Issues Annually  
July 2023

## Orinda Celebrates its 39th Annual 4th of July Parade



PHOTOS BY JEFF HEYMAN  
Returning this year to Orinda's 39th annual 4th of July parade are the Orinda Volunteer Marching Band, stilt walkers and more at what is popularly known as, "The Best Hometown Parade." See pages 11-13 for more parade-day information; schedule on Pg 13.

## Court Challenge to Plan Orinda, City Stands by Current Project Plan

By TRISTAN SHAUGHNESSY  
Staff Writer  
And KATHY CORDOVA  
Executive Editor

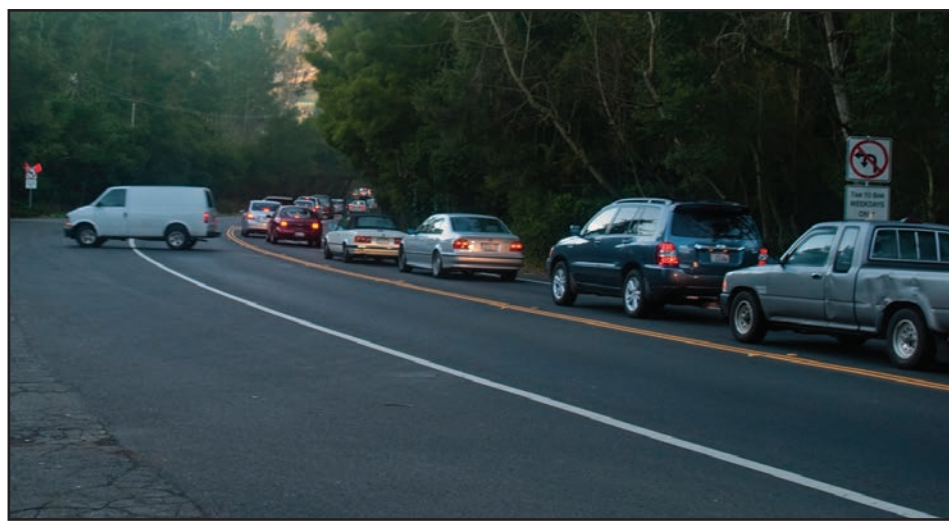
The future of new housing in Orinda continues to be a battleground for opposing forces.

On March 30 the state approved the city's Sixth Cycle Housing Element, part of Plan Orinda - an outline for redesigning downtown and expanding housing supply. Two years in the making, the approval represents a significant achievement for Orinda.

That same plan is not viewed favorably by all Orindans. A grassroots group, Orindans for Safe Emergency Evacuation (OSEE, [www.orindaSEE.com](http://www.orindaSEE.com)), filed a lawsuit, claiming the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is inadequate. The gist is the EIR does not sufficiently analyze or propose solutions to the wildfire evacuation risks created by increasing the number of people living downtown.

In the section dealing with wildfires, the EIR states the risk of congestion affecting an emergency evacuation during a wildfire

[SEE HOUSING page 14]



DAVID DIERKS  
Orindans for Safe Emergency Evacuation (OSEE) filed a lawsuit alleging Plan Orinda's Environmental Impact Report's wildfire evacuation analysis is inadequate, potentially causing dangerous traffic jams in the event of wildfires.

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4TH OF JULY



# Diary Detailing Labor of Love for Orinda's Best Hometown Parade

By ANDREA MADISON  
Staff Writer

When it comes to 4th of July events, Orinda's "Best Hometown Parade," has a little bit of something for everyone. A pancake breakfast, fun run, flag-raising, live music, and of course, the parade – all bring a celebratory spirit to the streets of the community.

The tradition dates back to the mid-1980s, around the time of the city's incorporation, when the idea was hatched by former mayor Bobbie Landers.

The event is a culmination of months of

planning, right up to the last minute.

### January ~ February: New Year, New Plans

"We start in January," said Sally Hogarty, The Orinda Association (OA) president and parade chairperson.

The first months involve recruitment of event captains to handle decorations, equipment rental, The OA float, Run for a Reason and the pancake breakfast. The list is long.

Dipping into March, the parade theme and Grand Marshal considerations are made. This year Earth Kindness is the theme and the Grand Marshal is Friends of the Orinda Nature Area.

Hogarty said the theme reflects how important it is to preserve our environment and our planet.

"It seemed appropriate to have a group which does just that as our Grand Marshal this year," she added.

### March: Marching Forward

Along with the advent of spring comes confirmation of a parade co-chair and committee volunteers. Advertising in *The Orinda News* and *Lamorinda Weekly* is secured, the website is set up and fundraising begins.

Funding for the parade comes from a combination of contributions from a few local families and "quite a few of the local businesses which have given us grants," said Hogarty. "We've received funds from some clubs, so it's just like the whole community puts in."

Parade costs fluctuate depending upon the need for new banners and flags and how extensive the activities and entertainment are. Since the pandemic, the cost ranged between \$21,000 and \$28,000, according to Hogarty.

"This year, we're at the high end [of costs] because we had to purchase new banners and the cost of helium for the balloon arches, etc., went way up," Hogarty explained.

### April: Preparations in Full Motion

Monthly meetings with the committees help track all aspects related to the parade and what those involved may need, said Hogarty. The BART parking lot is secured for parade staging at this point.

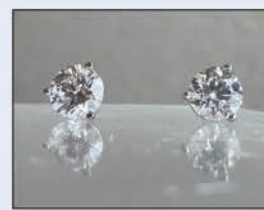
Permits, insurance and communication with governmental entities are secured.

Former 4th of July parade chairperson, Andy Radlow (2014 - 2018), leads the

[SEE 4TH page 6]



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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the President  
IT TAKES A VILLAGE

SALLY HOGARTY



I love July. It's a special month, not just because my birthday is the 12th and the weather is usually fabulous, one of my favorite holidays takes place – the 4th of July.

This patriotic day has taken on special meaning for me since becoming co-chair of the Orinda parade two years ago. I have photographed "The Best Hometown Parade" for *The Orinda News* for many years, but to oversee it is a new and exciting level of involvement.

An incredible number of dedicated residents have been meeting and planning this event for many months. As sponsor of the parade, The Orinda Association (OA) thanks them for their tireless efforts in making this parade a fun activity for the community.

A very special thank you to the generous donors who truly make the parade possible, including Steve and Tish Harwood, the Graue and Bloes family and the Pease family. More appreciation goes to the families and businesses for purchasing the beautiful banners, designed by Lisa Burlini, which are seen throughout town. Their names are listed in the July 4 section on page 12.

We are grateful to The Orinda Community Foundation, Park and Rec Foundation and to our local businesses – Chevron, Mechanics Bank, Republic Services, Village

Associates and Berry Brothers. Without their monetary support and in-kind donations, the parade and concert in the park afterwards would never happen.

The OA is thankful for the wonderful partnership with the City of Orinda. The Police Department makes sure the Fun Run and parade stay safe and Public Works and Parks and Rec personnel assist with so many things, too numerous to list. In addition to everything they usually help with, Parks and Rec's Todd Trimble and Steve Ehrhardt coordinated the food trucks this year.

We're thrilled to have Orinda Rotary's beer booth and Tabor Sister City Foundation's booth (serving Czech beer) and we love starting the day with Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary's pancake breakfast, assisted by Orinda Rotary members. And, if this isn't enough, Orinda Rotary's Yassodra Sudra volunteered to coordinate tables for non-profit groups in front of the Community Center.

As I look over this message, I realize how many diverse groups and people come together to celebrate this special holiday. It truly takes a "village" to make the 4th of July parade and concert happen.

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



LISA BURLINI

The Honor Guard will once again lead Orinda's 39th annual 4th of July Parade while holding The Orinda Association banner listing some of the many parade sponsors.

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.

OFFICERS

President - Sally Hogarty  
Vice President - Kelly Sopak  
Secretary - Eloise Sotelo  
Treasurer - Cindy Powell  
City Council Liaison - Latika Malkani

BOARD MEMBERS

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Barb Brawner  
Jacalyn Buettner  
Alex Drexel  
Chris Laszcz-Davis  
Marianne Moser  
Grace Paik  
Bill Waterman  
Kate Wiley



The Orinda Association  
26 Orinda Way (Library Plaza)  
P.O. Box 97  
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Phone: 925.254.0800  
[www.OrindaAssociation.org](http://www.OrindaAssociation.org)

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COMMUNITY

## Two Join Chamber's Board of Directors

By CELESTE ALTUS  
Staff Writer

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce is growing, adding two board members to their business networking group.

Meet Silvio Dobrovat and Christina Linezo, both working in the housing sector, but from different perspectives.

Dobrovat is a licensed contractor who owns Hometelligent, a company which designs and builds accessory dwelling units



COURTESY OF SILVIO DOBROVAT  
Licensed contractor and ADU builder, **Silvio Dobrovat**, recently joined the Orinda Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

(ADU)s. He grew up working alongside his father and took over the family business in 2000.

A native of Romania, he moved to the United States with his family at the age of nine and grew up in the East Bay area.

In 2021 Dobrovat, his wife and children moved from Pleasant Hill and bought an Orinda home built in 1906. Last updated in 1933, they are restoring the home with a lot of modernization to be done.

His two children attend Miramonte High School and on weekends, the family is typically boating at Lake Berryessa.

Giving and supporting charitable organizations is huge for Dobrovat. He is passionate about supporting Operation Underground Railroad (OUR), an Anaheim organization which fights child sex trafficking and sexual exploitation.

On joining the Chamber Board, Dobrovat said he aims to get to know other leaders.

"I'm involved in a lot of different business ventures and want to see how I can contribute in any way," he said.

Realtor Linezo, a native of Pensacola, Florida, lives in Orinda with her partner Dan Bartlett, who grew up here. She loves living on the coast and considers herself a beach-lover, listing scuba diving among her many hobbies.

## Rotary Club of Orinda Donates to The OA



JEFF HEYMAN

With funds raised from last year's Dancing with the Cars, Rotary Club of Orinda President **Rodney Lal** (right) handed a check for \$5,000 to The Orinda Association (OA) during the club's monthly luncheon held at the Founders Auditorium in the Orinda Community Center on May 21. Board member **Bill Waterman** (left) and President **Sally Hogarty** (center) of the OA, accepted the donation to the non-profit.

Linezo serves clients as a Realtor with Village Associates, but her career background is in teaching. She majored in art education and taught in K-12, then eventually worked at a children's museum where she designed and implemented an early children's program.

The idea of moving to real estate came from a good friend, an agent, who said the most successful real estate agents are people who master customer service, such as teachers, former bartenders and servers. Teachers, she said, can help break down and guide clients through these often life-changing events.

"It's the educational aspect," said Linezo. "I don't consider myself a salesperson. I'm educating my clients."

Linezo said she enjoys being an advocate for her clients, guiding them through the complicated and extensive home-buying and selling process. Her desire is to make the experience run as smoothly and stress-free as possible.

She joined the chamber board to contribute.

[SEE CHAMBER page 6]



COURTESY CHRISTINA LINEZO

Teacher-turned-Realtor, **Christina Linezo**, is now a member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

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NEWS BRIEF

# Gay Pride Flags Repeatedly Stolen from Orinda Community Church

By CHARLEEN EARLEY  
Editor-in-Chief

Orinda Community Church members committed to flying a Pride flag on their property as a sign of their welcome to and affirmation of LGBTQ+ people. Over the past year and a half, however, the flag has been stolen six times.

The church has received hate mail regarding the flag and also in response to a banner depicting a Black Jesus, which states “Black lives are beloved.”

Pastor Elizabeth Robinson said, “It appears some community members object to the progressive beliefs of this congregation.”

“Thanks to generous members, the church has a ready stockpile of Pride flags to replace any that are stolen,” she added. “We’ve also asked the fire department across the street on Orinda Way to remain

alert to vandals.”

Installing security cameras is next on their list of theft prevention precautions.

The United Church of Christ, of which Orinda Community Church is a member, was the first mainline Protestant church to ordain an openly gay person. Rev. Dr. William Johnson was ordained to a church in San Carlos, CA in 1972.

Orinda Community Church voted to become Open and Affirming (ONA) in 2002. This is the United Church of Christ’s (UCC) designation for congregations and other bodies in the UCC, which make a public covenant of welcome into their full life and ministry to persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.

“Orinda Community Church was the first Open and Affirming congregation in the Lamorinda area to formally welcome



DAVE HOPPOCK

In the past year and a half, six LGBTQ+ flags were stolen from the Orinda Community Church. Continually being replaced by church members, the flag represents its stance on inclusivity of all people, no matter their race, sexual orientation, gender identities and gender expressions.

LGBTQ+ people and has had gay and lesbian clergy on our staff,” said Robinson.

She believes people are stealing the flag because they feel being LGBTQ+ is not compatible with Christianity – that it is sinful.

“Letters to the church have expressed this sentiment,” she said.

Robinson added, “We believe, however, that God is loving and inclusive and that beliefs and awareness can change and grow toward loving inclusion of all people.”

Senior Pastor of Orinda Community Church for four years, Robinson studied

literature and psychology at Bard College in New York and earned her MFA in creative writing at Brown University. She earned her Master of Divinity and Master of Arts in bioethics at the Pacific School of Religion.

During her vocational journey, she’s worked with autistic people, been a part of an intentional community in Los Angeles devoted to racial reconciliation and has taught at several universities.

In regard to the stolen flags, she quotes a scripture found in 1 John 4:18, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.”

[SEE PRIDE page 7]

## Orinda News Brief: Around Town

### Happy Valley Pipeline Construction

East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) began construction on the Happy Valley Pipeline Project May 30. It includes installation of a new pipeline to supplement and ensure greater reliability of fire flow capacity and meet future demands of the water system in the areas of Orinda and Lafayette served by the Happy Valley Reservoir.

Miner Road construction continues through the fall with most road closures during the school summer session.

Miner Road, between Lombardy Lane and Tiger Tail Court, will be closed to through traffic. A detour is in place.

Access through the closure zone by emergency vehicles, residents who need to

access their homes, weekly trash pick-up and daily mail delivery, will be accommodated by EBMUD’s contractor. Residents are requested to minimize deliveries and service requests which require traffic through this area.

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/EBMUDHappyValleyMinerRd>. Contact Community Affairs Representative Joe Voelker at [construction-east@ebmud.com](mailto:construction-east@ebmud.com) or 510.287.2053. After-hours, call 866.403.2683.

Visit the project and map at [www.ebmud.com/about-us/construction-and-maintenance/construction-my-neighborhood/happy-valley-pipeline-phase-ii](http://www.ebmud.com/about-us/construction-and-maintenance/construction-my-neighborhood/happy-valley-pipeline-phase-ii).

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

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Letter to the Editor

## Wildcat Canyon Road Closure

In March, a portion of Wildcat Canyon Road, near the intersection of Camino Pablo, was washed away. Initially one lane was open with a traffic light, but on March 26, access was blocked in Orinda and at Inspiration Point.

After contacting several government agencies, we learned Contra Costa Public Works initially planned to start repairs during summer 2025. After numerous letters and phone calls, Public Works updated their information June 8. They now plan to start repairs at some unspecified time in 2024.

In stark contrast, in 2016, the Miner Road sinkhole was repaired in six months.

This extreme delay is cited as being due to extensive damage, environmental concerns, request for federal funding and the need to work with Caltrans.

The undersigned have used Wildcat

Canyon Road many times a week for years to access Tilden Park and North Berkeley. We have needed this road for work, medical appointments and to see family.

Access for emergency services between Lamorinda and Tilden/Berkeley/Kensington has been impacted. The alternative routes are much lengthier and have resulted in increased traffic on Camino Pablo and Highway 24.


We encourage people whose lives are impacted by this closure to contact their elected officials, including District 2 Supervisor Candace Andersen, as well as Contra Costa Public Works.

Restoring safe, temporary one-lane access to Wildcat Canyon as soon as possible, would be an invaluable stopgap measure.

- Philip and Joan Chomak  
- Sharon Krause and Bruce Cohen  
- Joren Winge and Connie Tche

## List of *The Orinda News* Advertisers

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## POLICE BLOTTER

May 16 through June 15

<p><b>Calls for Service</b></p> <p>Accident with Fire/Ambulance: 1</p> <p>Burglary, Commercial: 1: Moraga Way</p> <p>Burglary from Motor Vehicle: 1: El Toyonal</p> <p>Burglary, Residential: 2: Silver Oak Terr., Estates Dr.</p> <p>CVC False Tabs/Registration - Misdemeanor: 1</p> <p>CVC Unlicensed Driver: 1</p> <p>Death, Non-Criminal: 2</p> <p>Failure to Obey Officer: 1</p> <p>Grand Theft: 1: Sleepy Hollow Ln.</p> <p>Hit &amp; Run Misdemeanor: 1: Orinda Way</p> <p>Identity Theft: 5</p>	<p>Outside Assist: 2</p> <p>Shoplifting: 2</p> <p>Tow: 3</p> <p>Vandalism: 1</p> <p>Vehicle Theft: 2: Loma Visa Dr., Wilder Ramp</p> <p><b>Arrests</b></p> <p>Drugs - Possession of Dangerous: 2</p> <p>DUI, Misdemeanor: 1</p> <p>Parole Violation: 5</p> <p>Property, Receiving Stolen: 1</p> <p>Warrant Arrest: 1</p>
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- Compiled by David Dierks  
Assistant Editor

◆ **4TH** from page 2

staging area and parade route operations. Typically, there are between 45 and 55 parade entrants said Radlow, with as many as 60 in some years.

As planning moves along, the event's reliance on volunteers lends to a "growing sense of urgency and energy," said Radlow. The final two weeks reveal a flurry of participants who want into the parade and some opting to drop out.

Including committee members, parade volunteers number more than 80, said Hogarty.

"Most all the bands in the parade have participated in the past," said Jacalyn Buettner, who oversees the music. Bands are selected according to their style, said Buettner, who aims for those exhibiting

"high energy, an upbeat, good vibe, foot tapping, [making] you smile and just feel-good groove. I don't want to see anybody yawning."

Performers on tap for the day include St. Gabriel's Celestial Brass Band, MJ's Brass Boppers, the Orinda All-Volunteer Marching Band and the ever-popular stilt walkers.

"This will be the biggest we've had since COVID-19," said Buettner.

### May: More to Do

Inventorying the storage unit is completed. How many banners need to be replaced? Do we have enough yard signs? The planning committee meets with the Orinda Police Department, Parks and Recreation and Public Works.

During the event the police close the pa-

rade route streets, as well as freeway exits directly affecting the parade and Parks and Rec and Public Works are "all over, helping us," said Hogarty.

"What makes this parade happen for The Orinda Association is its partnership with the city," she said.

### June: Just a Month to Go

Decorations, yard signs and tents are pulled from their storage unit and washed or replaced as needed. Large banners are hung at Theatre Square and the BART overpass. Parade banners and flags appear throughout the village. Volunteers deliver posters around town.

Steve Harwood, a parade announcer, has been involved with the annual celebration over 25 years. He emcees the flag raising and provides sound equipment for venues associated with the parade.

The planning process involves lining up fellow announcers, the singers for the Lamorinda Idol entry, hiring professional support for sound and reserving trucks to carry equipment.

One week prior to showtime, Harwood compiles a binder containing detailed information on each parade entrant for the announcers to use.

### July: The Moment Arrives

It is July 3. The eve of the big day. The park gazebo is decorated. The BART parking lot is transformed for the parade order.

Trucks deliver bleachers and port-a-potties.

Before the sun rises on The Day, teams are readying road barriers and participant tents. The events unfold according to a detailed schedule.

Food trucks will be in front of the community center with live music and two beer booths in the Community Center Park. Beer is offered by the Orinda Rotary and the Orinda/Tabor City Sister Foundation, which features Czech beer.

"It's a wonderful day to celebrate all the people in Orinda who are doing wonderful things in the community," said Harwood. "It's a wonderful day to celebrate the freedoms we have in our country."

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

### ◆ CHAMBER from page 4

"I enjoy connecting with my community and there wasn't a better way to meet other business owners and promote the community of Orinda," she said.

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce serves Orinda, Lafayette and Moraga. Its mission is to promote businesses in the area by providing communication, information and events which benefit the local residents. Visit [www.orindachamber.org](http://www.orindachamber.org).

*Celeste Altus can be reached at celeste.altus@gmail.com.*

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**Letters** to the Editor are printed on a space-available basis and should be no longer than 250 words. They must include the writer's first and last name, signature and telephone number. Send letters to: Editor, *The Orinda News*, P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563, or email to [editor@theorindanews.com](mailto:editor@theorindanews.com). **Letters to the Editor** for the **August** issue are due **July 8**.

For advertising rates, contact Carson Cordova at 650.646.1357 ([carson@theorindanews.com](mailto:carson@theorindanews.com)), Kathy Enzerink at 252.626.2109 ([kathy@theorindanews.com](mailto:kathy@theorindanews.com)) or Jill Gelster at 925.528.9225 ([jill@aspenconsult.net](mailto:jill@aspenconsult.net)). The deadline for the **August** issue is **July 8**.



OBITUARIES

## Bill White (1924 - 2023)

Contributed by daughter  
Elizabeth Monti (née White)

William (Bill) David White, age 99, a World War II veteran and 60-year resident of Orinda, passed away after a brief illness on March 2.

Bill proudly served as a fighter pilot Captain in the South Pacific during World War II, earning a Purple Heart flying the iconic Lockheed P-38. He carried a lifelong love for airplanes and would stop whatever he was doing to identify any plane flying overhead.

Bill's true passion was restoring cars, mostly British MG's and Jaguars. He could be found, during most of his free time, with his head inside an engine compartment in his garage surrounded by his vast

collection of parts and tools. There were never less than two or three car projects going on at any one time and several other beloved cars waiting their turn for restoration.

His two daughters recall doing homework or studying for final exams sitting in a car helping their dad bleed brakes or test headlights. The car hobby was shared with Bill's close brother, Jack, of Southern California, and united the two families of cousins through car shows, races, rallies and vacations focused around this passion.

Summers spent in Baker City, Oregon, visiting Bill's mother and family, often resulted in the discovery of the next project car which had to be gingerly driven or trailered back home to California.

Bill was born in Pendleton, Oregon

in 1924. After the military, he attended Pasadena Community College where he spent several years. He transferred to UC Berkeley, married and settled in the Bay Area where he worked as a fire protection engineer and made lifelong friendships. Bill loved the Bay Area and constantly referred to his life as "living in paradise."

Bill was a character with a great sense of humor. Friends and family all have favorite Bill-stories and sayings that always bring laughter and smiles to their faces.

Bill is survived by his devoted daughters, Lauren White and Elizabeth Monti (née White); sons-in-law Steve Shea and Mark Monti; grandson Charlie Kokernak and wife Charlotte; niece Janet Steinbach and nephews Mat and John White. Bill will be greatly missed and fondly remembered.

Donations in William D. White's honor can be made to The Orinda Association.



COURTESY LAUREN WHITE

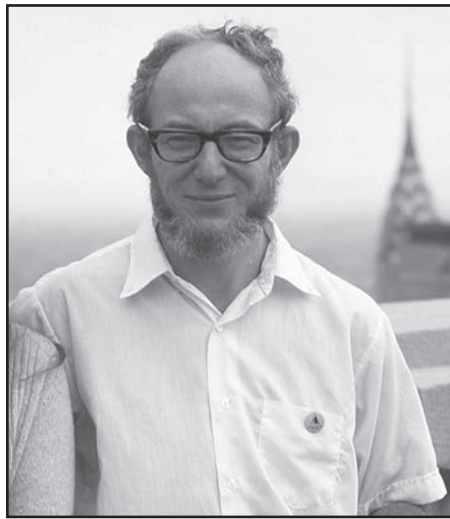
William (Bill) David White (1924-2023)

## Arthur Klatsky (1929 – 2023)

Contributed by  
Eileen Klatsky

Dr. Arthur Klatsky, a cardiologist and epidemiologist, died April 30 from complications of multiple myeloma and Parkinson's disease. A child of the Great Depression, Dr. Klatsky was born in the Bronx, NY, on October 24, 1929, known as "Black Thursday." His parents, Martin and Rose Klatsky, were both attorneys. He graduated from Yale University, Magna Cum Laude in 1950 and graduated from Harvard Medical School with honors in 1954. From 1956 - 1958, he served as a captain in the U.S. Army Medical Corps.

From 1961-1999, Dr. Klatsky practiced as an internist and cardiologist in the Oak-



COURTESY OF EILEEN KLATSKY

Arthur Klatsky (1929 – 2023).

land Kaiser Permanente Medical Center, establishing one of the first Coronary Care Units in the Bay Area. He served as Chief of Cardiology for 20 years.

In 1974, Dr. Klatsky authored the first modern epidemiological report showing lower heart attack risk for alcohol drinkers than for abstainers. In 1977, he published one of the first reports indicating heavier alcohol consumption increases the risk of high blood pressure. The publication was cited by the National Institute of Health as one of 16 seminal articles in alcohol research.

His interests included a lifelong love of classical music, travel, hiking and running. Together with his wife Eileen, he did

many footraces, including six marathons. In 1989, they climbed to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro.

He was grateful to many people in the Oakland and San Francisco Kaiser Permanente facilities for much superb care. He is survived by his wife of 69 years, Eileen; two children, Jennifer and Benjamin; three grandchildren, Gabriel (Katie), Rebecca, and Joshua Ferrer and his brother Stephen.

At his request, burial will be private. Anyone wishing to offer a gesture of respect can make a charitable contribution to Doctors Without Borders in his honor. Alternatively, or additionally, they might purchase a good bottle of wine and dedicate the first glass to his memory.

### ◆ PRIDE from page 5

Robinson said their church members, who are continually donating new Pride flags, want to offer a profound welcome to any spiritual seekers who wish to join their church.

"Church should not be a place where people feel isolated or fearful of revealing their whole selves," she said.

Though Robinson said it's discouraging that the congregation has repeatedly seen its Pride flags stolen, "we will not be deterred and will simply replace the flag each time it is taken down."

"In an era of book-banning and 'Don't Say Gay' laws, it is singularly important for people of faith to unite in empathy," she said. "And to work together for justice, continually seeking signs of God's presence

in a changing world."

Forgiveness for those stealing the flags, Robinson said, is not at the core of the issue. The church feels sadness rather than anger.

"The motto of the United Church of Christ is 'God is still speaking.' So religious beliefs should not be static, but dynamic. With that in mind, it's not a matter of forgiveness for thefts of the flags," said Robinson. "Rather, we want to keep opening the door to conversation and affirmation. God loves all of us no matter what our sexual orientation or gender affiliation or race or ethnicity are."

For more information about the church, visit [www.orindacommunitychurch.org](http://www.orindacommunitychurch.org).

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




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LOCAL INSPIRATION

# Wisdom on Running and Life from a Boston Marathon Record Holder

By AMY MOELLERING  
Contributing Writer

If you see Patty Hung, Boston Marathon record holder, on the local trails this summer, she won't be wearing ear plugs, forcing a certain distance, or checking time on her watch. She'll probably be with her dog running a favorite trail, soaking up nature and letting her body dictate the run distance of the day.

"It's my meditation time," said Hung. "Running brings me joy and is something I can do any time of day and doesn't require much, just a good pair of shoes."

Come February, she starts marathon training, using a three-month program she's developed over the years.

At 77, she broke the women's record in April for most consecutive years of running the Boston Marathon. In 37 years, she's seen its evolution. When she first ran in 1987, there were approximately 800 women finishers and this year, more than 10,000.

She's endured storms, sunshine, the 2013 terrorist attack and the 2020 virtual pandemic version. Hung's discipline, ability to enjoy the journey and the conviction it's never too late to learn something new, are traits she applies to both running and everyday life.

After graduating from Smith College, Hung's love for mathematics led her to teaching. When her husband's medical career brought them to California, she taught highschoolers in Fremont and Piedmont.

In the late '70s, Hung was walking around Lake Merritt when runners passed her and she thought, "I can do that." So she began, in the clothes and shoes she was wearing.

Through the birth of three boys and a couple of moves, which ended in Orinda, Hung found running provided balance. When she first ran Boston, she was weathering a divorce.

"Having grown up in a strong family, this experience shattered my hopes," she



COURTESY PATTY HUNG

Boston Marathon record holder, **Patty Hung**, said smart training, good nutrition, good shoes and support from loved ones helps in her runs. The 77-year-old runner can be found running along several local trails.

said. A Boston native, her first reaction was to move home, but she committed to staying. "The decision to run the Boston Marathon gave me a goal that kept me going."

In 1990, she began teaching at Miramonte High School, connecting her more closely to her sons, their friends and the community. There, she became the assistant track coach and then head coach.

"My 19 years at Miramonte was a wonderful experience," she said.

Her growing interest in running physiology and nutrition inspired a career switch to nursing school at age 63.

"Nursing, for me, was coming full circle. My mom was a nurse and it felt like something I always wanted to do," she said.

Hung recently retired from the medical surgical unit at Oakland Children's Hospital.

What's next? She has her sights on earning a Diabetic Certificate to educate

families, combining teaching, exercise and nutrition. She will continue to run Boston, because breaking the record was never the goal; running and reconnecting with family is her inspiration.

Hung dedicates a mile to a loved one, writing their name on her wristband; this includes her son, Kevin, who passed away in 2017. At Mile 13, she knows she will finish the race: "It's downhill from there, though technically I still have Heartbreak Hill," where her family traditionally appears in force, with cheers and hugs.

What's her secret to success? "I attribute not having injuries to strong Polish blood!" Smart training, good nutrition and support from loved ones also play an important role. When aspiring runners ask for advice, she'll say, "Buy good shoes. Build up slowly. Enjoy."

Amy Moellering can be reached at [ajmoellering@gmail.com](mailto:ajmoellering@gmail.com).



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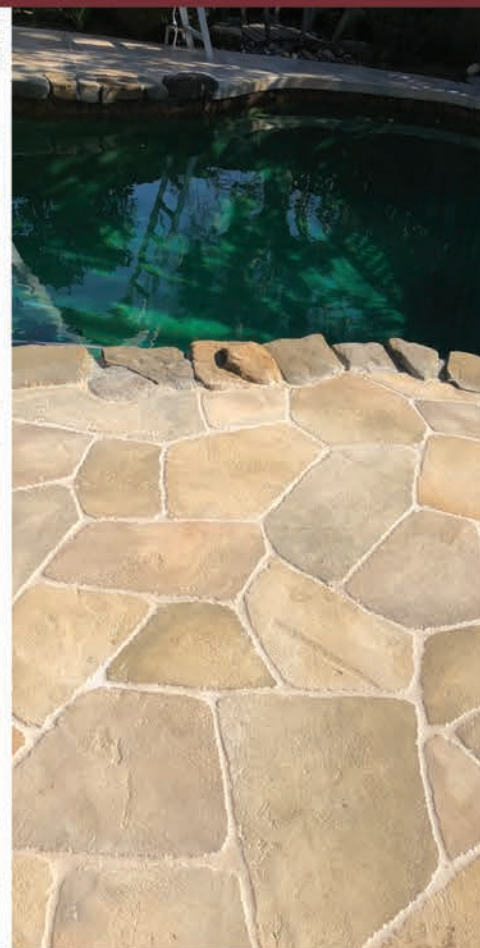
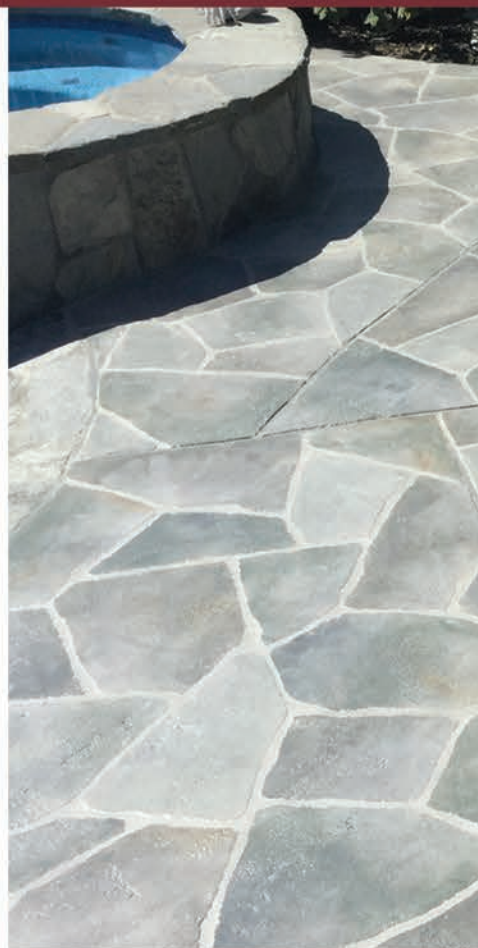
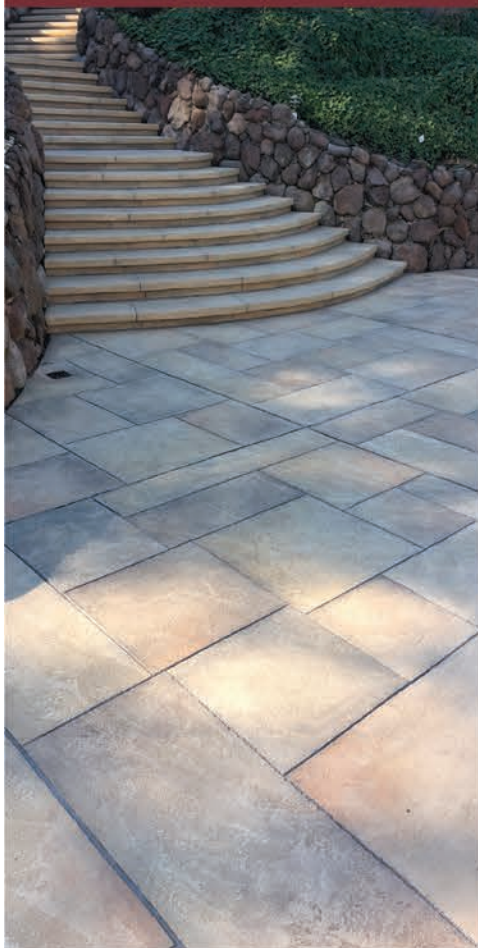
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ORINDA LIBRARY / COMMUNITY AWARDS

# Educational Summer Programs for All Ages at the Orinda Library

By CHARLEEN EARLEY  
Editor-in-Chief

School is out, but it doesn't mean the learning or fun has to stop. At least not while there are interactive and educational summer programs for kids and families at the Orinda Library.

The Summer Reading program theme, "Find Your Voice," runs to Aug. 5.

"All ages can pick-up Summer Reading passports and log reading and other learning activities," said Senior Community Library Manager, Michael Beller. "Once the passport is full, it can be returned at any Contra Costa County library branch for prizes."

Passports can be downloaded at <https://ccclib.beanstack.org/reader365> and patrons can enter drawings for grand-

er prizes. For more information, visit <https://ccclib.org/summer/>.

Toddler Storytime, a combination of stories, movements and rhymes developed for children ages one to three and their caregivers, is every Wednesday from 10:30 to 11 a.m. No registration is necessary.

Paws to Read, which runs Thursday afternoons in the Gallery Room, is for children in grades kindergarten to fifth. Summer Reading minutes can be earned by reading to a certified therapy dog. Registration is required.

The anticipated "Story Walk," is a fun, educational activity where a children's story is placed along a popular walking trail in the community. Beller said he's hopeful it will be installed before the end of summer.

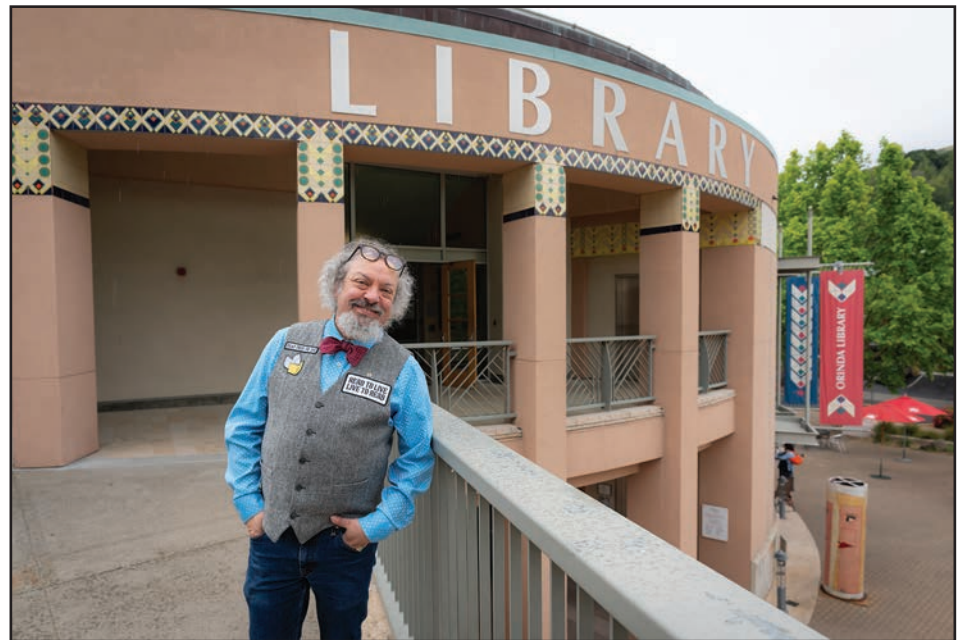
"The story walk is being shipped. I don't know how long it will take or how long it will be before the City installs it," said Beller. "Once it's in place, I'm hoping to have a special event to kick it off."

Beller, who was a librarian at Mills College for nearly 15 years, joined the Contra Costa County Library System in 2017 and has been at the Orinda Branch since 2019.

He believes reading is important because it transmits information and sparks the imagination.

"My all-time favorite book is *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster. I've been reading and rereading that book since I was about eight," said Beller. "I love books where people learn to be better versions of themselves. I especially love books that explore what it means to be good, what it means to be human and what it means to live in a community. I also love biographies and PG Wodehouse."

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



JEFF HEYMAN

Senior Community Library Manager, **Michael Beller**, talks about interactive and educational programs for kids and families this summer at the Orinda Library.

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## William Penn Mott Jr. Environmental Awards for 2019, 2022, 2023

By ANDREA MADISON  
Staff Writer

The 2019, 2022 and 2023 William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Awards were presented June 4 at the Wilder Art and Garden Center. The prior years' in-person ceremonies were delayed due to the pandemic.

The award is named after Mott, the 12th National Park Service Director who lived in Orinda. It is given by The Orinda Association to a citizen or group with outstanding contributions to environmental preservation and/or education.

Friends of the Orinda Nature Area

(FONA) was honored for this year, presented to President Erica Bains and committee member and naturalist Toris Jaeger.

Since 2004, as a grassroots organization, FONA supports environmental education programs and works toward the conservation of its natural and historical resources.

Projects range from the removal of invasive species, to cleaning in and around area creeks, to holding nature camps for youth.

"I hope you will join us and become part of the nature conservation solution and start, even in your own backyards, to reverse various and critical biodiversity loss

[SEE MOTT page 20]



ANDREA MADISON

The William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Awards, held at the Wilder Art and Garden Center on June 4, honored 2023 recipient, the Friends of the Orinda Nature Area (FONA). Recipients of the 2019 and 2022 awards, **Barbara Leitner** with Friends of Orinda Creeks and the Orinda Eagle and Gold Scouts, respectively, were also presented with awards. (L-R) **Jane Voll**, FONA board member, materials; **Latika Malkani**, city council member; **City Mayor Inga Miller**; **Reg Barrett**, FONA wildlife; **Toris Jaeger**, FONA naturalist; **Brad McCullough**, FONA treasurer; **Erica Bains**, FONA president; **Kathy Barrett**, FONA secretary; **Ellie Gkatzimas**, student board member; **Rebecca Dahlberg**, FONA vice president.

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JEFF HEYMAN

It was raining "stars and stripes" with 4th of July spirit at last year's patriotic celebration.



### 2023 July 4 Celebration Volunteer Team

Planning and preparing for the 4th of July celebration begins long before summer. In early March, our team captains began meeting and sharing ideas to make this annual event as much fun as possible. A very big thank you to the following dedicated volunteers who gave countless hours and their copious talents to making this year's parade and concert possible.

- Announcers:** Scott Butler, Bill Cosden, Steve Harwood
- Co-Chairs:** Sally Hogarty, Carson Cordova
- Decorations:** Eloise Sotelo
- Flag Raising:** Terry Murphy and VFW Post 8063
- Fundraising/Sponsors:** Sally Hogarty, Cindy Powell
- Marketing/Publicity:** Lisa Burlini, Carson Cordova
- Music/Bands:** Jacalyn Buettner
- Office Support:** Liza Chooi, Cathy Goshorn, Cindy Powell, Marie Waterman, Kate Wiley
- Parade Headquarters:** Nicole Radlow
- Parade Operations:** Andy Radlow, Bridget Meagher
- Pole Banners:** Chris Laszcz-Davis, Susan Meyer
- Run for a Reason:** Meghan and Alex Frey
- Social Media:** Lisa Burlini, Liza Chooi
- Sound Systems:** Steve Harwood, Desired Effect Sound
- Volunteers:** Carson Cordova
- Website:** Lisa Burlini

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# 4<sup>TH</sup> JULY

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**FOURTH OF JULY VOLUNTEERS**

Got a news tip, success story, sports achievement, great human-interest idea for the *The Orinda News*?



JEFF HEYMAN

This year's 39th annual 4th of July in Orinda has something for everyone – from creative and energetic floats to those dressed in red, white and blue patriotic attire.



JEFF HEYMAN

MJ's Brass Boppers won "Most Entertaining" with their lively performance and lead dancer at last year's 4th of July parade.

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**Why We Volunteer for the Parade**

Compiled by Kathy Cordova  
Executive Editor

“When we moved over from the Berkeley hills many years ago (for the schools), one of the first events our family (with kids ages 5 and 2) experienced was the annual parade. It was magical—a red wagon with two young uns and proud parents weaving in with the parade crowd. After the parade, we ended up in the park—a petting zoo, face painting, food and beer and music! What could be better!”  
– Chris Laszcz-Davis

“These [busy] days, there are fewer opportunities to engage and contribute to your community than ever. The Orinda 4th of July Parade is the best combination of community involvement and fun that I’ve ever found.”  
– Andy Radlow

“Volunteering gives me a sense of purpose and a chance to give back to the community. The 4th of July parade was something our family always looked forward to, especially when my sons, AJ and Dan, were young boys. I enjoy being a part of the parade and seeing all the families having fun and smiles on so many faces.”  
– Jackie Buettner

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# 4<sup>TH</sup> JULY

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**9:00 AM LIBRARY BOOK SALE**  
**10:00 AM PARADE STARTS**  
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★ [WWW.ORINDAASSOCIATION.ORG](http://WWW.ORINDAASSOCIATION.ORG) ★

### Know Before You Go

- ★ Street parking will not be available along the parade route on Moraga Way or on Orinda Way. All other street parking is available, as well as Orinda BART's west parking lot. For handicapped parking, drivers may drop passengers off in front of the Community Center on Orinda Way until 9 a.m.
- ★ Street closures planned from 9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. include: the Westbound Highway 24 on-ramp (East side of Camino Pablo); Moraga Way from Wells Fargo Bank to the Davis Road intersection; a portion of Santa Maria and all of Orinda Way. [Highway 24 access for both on and off ramps will remain available at St. Stephens Drive].
- ★ Volunteers will serve as Parade Route Monitors, helping keep the parade moving and ensuring safety.
- ★ Porta potties, provided by Republic Services, will be on the North side of town in the Community Center parking lot and the East BART parking lot.
- ★ Need more info? Visit [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org).



JEFF HEYMAN

Some parents creatively decorated their children's pull-carts at last year's 4th of July parade.



JEFF HEYMAN

Orinda parade-goers of all ages from last year's event brought their lawn chairs and patriotic spirit as they watched floats, marching bands and stilt walkers pass by.

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### Let The Fun Begin!

### Orinda's 4th of July Parade!



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*Laura Abrams*





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## July 4th

## Orinda's Favorite Holiday!



## WILDFIRE EVACUATION

### ◆ HOUSING from page 1

is “significant and unavoidable.”

OSEE alleges, by adopting Plan Orinda, the city is acknowledging risk but moving forward with the project.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines allow cities to weigh the benefits of a project against the unavoidable adverse effects and accept those risks if the benefits are greater than the potential harm.

#### Moving Housing Away from Downtown

Arran Schultz, who serves on Orinda’s Parks and Rec Commission and is a member of OSEE, believes the city could address this evacuation issue by moving some of the planned housing from downtown to different parts of the city.

Schultz gives as an example, the Caltrans Gateway, an undeveloped plot of land the city is currently trying to acquire from California’s transportation department.

This solution is not feasible within the next eight years since, even though the Caltrans property was included in Orinda’s plan submitted to the state, California’s

Housing and Community Development (HCD) rejected that site as part of housing it required for this cycle. Please see “State Approves Orinda’s Sixth Cycle Housing Element” in the May issue of *The Orinda News* for more details. This is a new development since OSEE filed its lawsuit.

#### Wildfire Evacuation Analysis

Most importantly, Schultz thinks the city needs to do more evacuation analysis. “We can’t just keep saying it is going to have an impact but there is nothing we can do about it. We need to know, and it needs to be public, and it needs to be analyzed what these impacts are,” she said. “If you keep adding housing, fundamentally, at some point it is dangerous - we need to know where that point is.”

#### Wildfire Behavior Modeling

Another issue is the city’s lack of wildfire behavior modeling in its EIR. In a Nov. 1 email to Orinda Planning Director Drummond Buckley, MOFD Fire Chief David Winnacker wrote, “The fire scenarios do not appear to include modeled spread. In the absence of an understanding of both

### Prevention as Important as Evacuation

Discussing the area’s historically unprecedented amount of vegetation and potential wildfire fuel, Ethan Elkind, Orindan and director of Berkeley Law’s climate change program, said there needs to be more aggressive fuel abatement programs in the city.

“Orinda is incredibly overgrown and it’s a ticking time bomb. That’s really the core issue here, not [if] a few people living downtown are going to stop a procession of cars coming out of El Toyonal, or Miner Road or Moraga Way,” said Elkind.

Mayor Inga Miller said a myriad of strategies have been employed to protect Orindans: the city has recently hired two employees for community outreach about fire safety, is undertaking fire-safe landscaping projects and residents can apply for grants to harden their homes against wildfires.

the spatial and temporal factors associated with a dynamic event, the analysis appears incomplete as it may not include impacts to the very evacuation routes that are being analyzed.”

Placeworks, the consulting firm advising the city for the project, confirmed that wildfire behavior was not modeled in the evacuation analysis.

In minutes from the presentation of the city’s Evacuation Analysis to the City Council on Nov. 15, it was noted, “This is a citywide, programmatic study of evacuation scenarios, not a plan of operations for future evacuations.”

When *The Orinda News* asked Winnacker if he thought the additional housing included in Plan Orinda presented a real and valid fire danger to residents in the event of a wildfire and need for evacuation, he responded via email, “I defer to the City with regard to land use planning, zoning, and evacuation as these are municipal functions.”

#### The City Responds

The city disagrees with OSEE’s arguments. Referencing state law, Orinda’s city manager, David Biggs, explained the purpose of an EIR is to offer policymakers enough context about a project’s environmental consequences to make an informed decision.

However, he noted, “It doesn’t require us to do hundreds of different iterations to find one [scenario] that a select group of citizens believe is the needed analysis.”

Compared to other EIRs, Biggs argues the city’s wildfire analysis was not only adequate but went above and beyond what was required.

“We did extra analyses that weren’t required because there were concerns and I think for where this is globally, as far as cities and evaluating these types of issues, the city did a stellar job,” said Biggs.

#### Remembering the Oakland Hills Fire

A current resident of Orinda, Tom Lavin narrowly escaped the Oakland Hills Fire in 1991, giving him a real-world perspective on wildfire evacuation. “We were fortunate to get out,” he said. “We lived in

a cul-de-sac and by the time we made the determination to leave, the fire was coming over the road. If we had been 30 seconds or a minute later, we wouldn’t have made it.”

Two people Lavin knew well were among those who lost their lives, including his son’s teacher and a schoolmate. “The girl, who my son walked to school with, was leaving in a car and her mother was in another car in front of her,” he said. “Her mother made it, but she didn’t.”

“The whole point is that they didn’t die from the fire, they died from poor planning. There should never be a one-lane street that’s expected to handle two-way emergency traffic, especially when that road is located in an urban forest that is known to burn. When gridlock occurred, people tried to flee on foot, but the smoke was too heavy, the fire was too fast and 25 people died.”

#### Plan Orinda Status

As of this writing, the court case is ongoing and Biggs said the city will proceed with Plan Orinda unless the judge instructs otherwise.

Reflecting on these clashing developments - OSEE challenging Plan Orinda while the project gets the go-ahead from the state - Mayor Inga Miller expressed an optimistic outlook. “It [Plan Orinda] is the product of several years of community input on how to continue this friendly, this beautiful, this vibrant community into one that can meet our state-mandated housing numbers, be more diverse and provide more options for our residents,” she said.

Lavin believes the city is not focusing on the right priorities. “A fire will happen in Orinda,” he said. “It’s not a question of if, but a question of when.”

“I want to stress the importance of evacuation. I feel the city should take a look at the problems of accommodating these housing issues. They need to make the number one issue the consideration of lives.”

*Kathy Cordova can be reached at cordova@theorindanews.com.*

**ORINDA UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Volunteers needed for Citizens’ Bond Oversight Committee**

**The Independent Citizens’ Bond Oversight Committee (CBOC) will:**

- Inform the public about expenditures of bond proceeds from recently passed Measures E & I.
- Review expenditures to ensure bond proceeds are spent for authorized purposes.
- Provide an annual report to the Board of Trustees at a public meeting.

**CBOC Member Terms and Meeting Information**

Terms of service are two years, and no CBOC member may serve more than three consecutive terms. CBOC meetings must occur at least once per year and will not exceed quarterly.


**Committee Representation**

The CBOC vacancies are:

- Business representative (1)
- Taxpayers organization (1)
- Parent/guardian of a student enrolled in OUSD (1)
- Parent/guardian of a student enrolled in OUSD who is active in support of the District (1)
- Community at large (1)

**More Information**


For more information or to request an application, contact Kathy Schwarz at [kschwarz@orindaschools.org](mailto:kschwarz@orindaschools.org) or by phone at (925) 258-6200. **Deadline to apply is 4:30 p.m. on July 7, 2023.**



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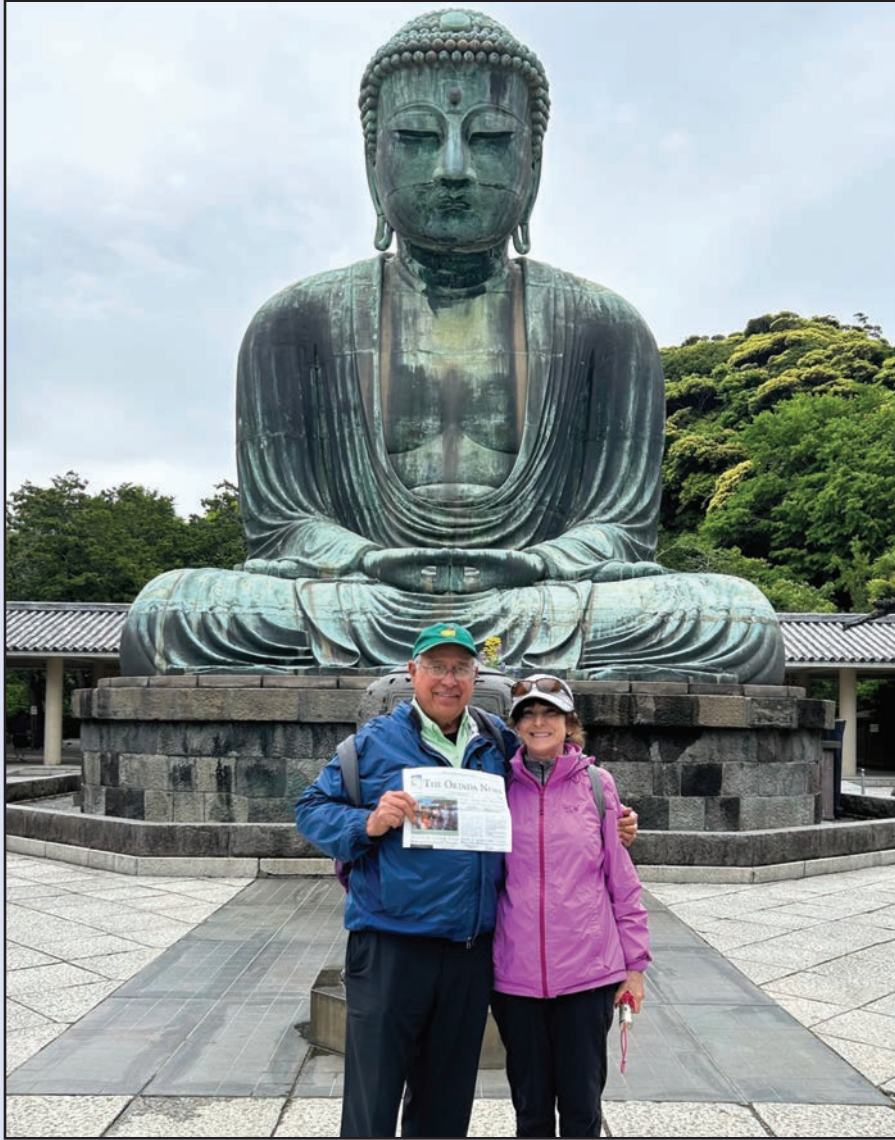


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SEASONED SHOPPER / EVERYDAY ORINDA

Oh, the Places You'll Go with *The Orinda News*



FUJITO KATO

Sue Bradrick and John Gegner visited the Great Buddha of Kamakura with *The Orinda News* on a recent trip to Japan. The bronze statue was completed in the 13th century, is 44 feet tall and weighs 130 tons. Tourists can walk inside the statue, just like the Statue of Liberty. Send your photos to editor@theorindanews.com.

Seasoned Shopper  
Bread and Tomatoes?



BARBARA KOBSAR

There are two special items available simultaneously at the Orinda Farmers' Market ready to make one of my favorite salads. Rustic bread and vine-ripened tomatoes combine to make a delectable summer Panzanella salad and here's where to find what you need.

Melo Bread joined the market more than a year ago to sell a variety of organic, slow fermented sourdough loaves made mainly with wheat flour, reverse osmosis water and Himalayan pink salt. Whole Wheat, Farmer's Rye and Ancient Grain are top of the list for my salad, but Cinnamon Raisin and Cinnamon Buns are breakfast staples served with a fresh harvest peach or a bowl of sliced strawberries.

Several stands sell vine-ripened tomatoes and any variety will work well with a Panzanella Salad, but be sure they are not overripe. Early Girls are a wonderful all-purpose tomato and Brandywine are most commonly thought to be the best tasting with the perfect balance of sugar and acidity. Other heirloom varieties, including Purple Cherokee and Marvel Stripe, are possibilities. Choose tomatoes which are heavy for their size and very aromatic where the stem was attached.

**Panzanella Salad**

Feel free to add sliced cucumber or red pepper, a spoonful of capers or fresh baby mozzarella.

- 6 cups rustic bread, cut into 1-inch cubes
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil

- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- 2 large tomatoes, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 3 tablespoons white wine vinegar or champagne vinegar

- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 3 tablespoons minced shallots
- ½ teaspoon each salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat ¼ cup of oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add bread and ½ teaspoon kosher salt. Cook, stirring frequently until bread is golden brown.

Place tomatoes in a colander over a large mixing bowl and sprinkle with ½ teaspoon kosher salt. Allow a few minutes for the tomatoes to release their juices into the bowl. Move the colander with the tomatoes to the sink and use the bowl with the juice to make the dressing. Whisk vinegar, ¼ cup of oil, garlic, shallots, salt and pepper with the tomato juice. Add tomatoes and bread. Toss together gently then top with basil. Serve immediately or allow flavors to blend for up to 20 minutes. Serves 6.

The Orinda Farmers' Market is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Orinda Way in Orinda Village. Visit [www.cccfm.org](http://www.cccfm.org), [facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket](https://facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket), Instagram at OrindaFarmersMarket or call 925.322.6228.

Barbara Kobsar can be reached at [barbara@cotkitchen.com](mailto:barbara@cotkitchen.com).

Everyday 😊 Orinda

MY PHAIR LADY

MIMI BOMMARITO



What if we built a float for the 4th of July parade devoted to "People Who Transacted Actual Business at Phair's." Fitting, as back in its heyday, Phair's held an annual "Fifth of July" sale, according to a 1974 issue of *The Contra Costa Times*.

This "phloat" would surely create intrigue, as it's difficult for many of us to imagine the lonely brick storefront as anything other than an overlooked has-been. But just like the proper setting in any classic ghost story, Phair's was not always lonely and decaying. Just the opposite –

Phair's was once the lifeblood of Orinda. Documented as our very first store, Phair's was born in 1924, a general mer-

chandise establishment crucial to attracting and servicing the original inhabitants of the fledgling community of Orinda.

This business was owned and initially operated at a loss by Edward DeLaveaga, a passionate early developer. As Orinda flourished, the store evolved from selling the necessary goods and implements of the Great Depression era to more of an upscale grocery store, to yet another transformation in the 1970s, offering fine China, crystal, silver, specialty gift items and a bridal registry.

Phair's enjoyed glorious decades of popularity and profitability, shining as brightly

[SEE EVERYDAY page 21]



BARBARA KOBSAR

Kay Frank offers baked loaves of Melo Bread, made fresh every Saturday morning by her son Kevin Grenz in his San Francisco kitchen.

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EBT Welcome



HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



On June 2, four graduates received their diplomas at Holden High School in Orinda. Standing back row (L-R) **Libby Vega** (teacher), **Kiersten Yount** (teacher), **Kailee Blackwood** (graduate), **Liv Catalano** (graduate), **Giacomo Guiducci Ortiz** (graduate), **Catalina Alexander** (graduate), **Ally Swayer** (teacher), **Kristin Lamoureux** (director), **Jenn Payne** (director), **Jack Fendell** (teacher) and **Ryan Justice** (music teacher/tutor). Front row (L-R) **Rikki Edelman** (teacher), **Kate Knox** (director), **Nora Orton** (counselor), **Katie Montgomery** (teacher) and **Abby Tuttle** (director).

JEFF HEYMAN



EMILY ALLEN

Sponsored and funded by ONE Orinda, an inaugural Cap & Gown Parade was held by 150 Miramonte High School graduates in May at four Orinda elementary schools (Wagner Ranch Elementary pictured above). Children cheered and were high-fived by seniors in caps and gowns – the graduates paying homage to where their elementary school education experience first began 13 years ago.

**Nominations Open for Orinda Citizen of the Year**

Do you have a person in mind to nominate for outstanding community service in 2023 and/or over many years of lifetime service?

- Must be a current Orinda resident
- Must be someone who has given of their time, talents and energy as a community volunteer helping make Orinda better
- Must be someone who models excellence and good citizenship in everything they do
- Must be someone who brings our community together making us proud and promoting community spirit

Deadline for nominations is Sept. 30.

Email nominations to [orindafoundation@gmail.com](mailto:orindafoundation@gmail.com) or mail to Orinda Community Foundation, P.O. Box 21, Orinda, CA 94563. Include your name and contact, along with the name and contact of the nominee.

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STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Three Orinda Odyssey of the Mind Teams Compete at World Finals in Michigan



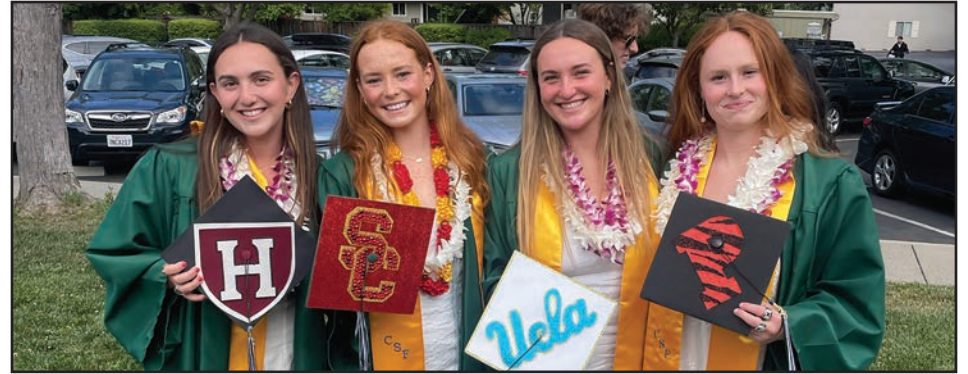
CRAIG TAATJES

After success at the State Tournament, three Orinda-based Odyssey of the Mind teams advanced to the World Finals, which took place in late May at Michigan State University in Lansing. Wagner Ranch Elementary School took 30th (out of 46 places) in Problem 1 (Vehicle), Division 1; Rotary Club of Orinda team took 7th (out of 38 places) in Problem 4 (Structure), Division 2; and the Financial Women of San Francisco took 20th (out of 40 places) in Problem 3 (Classics), Division 2.

In Odyssey of the Mind, teams of students choose one of five possible problems, then work together for months to create a solution that takes the form of an eight-minute skit presented to the judges at the tournament. With Odyssey of the Mind, all aspects of the solution – script, costumes, props, scenery, technical elements, and more – must be entirely devised and created by the students.

The Financial Women of San Francisco team tackled a problem called “The Walls of Troy,” which required them to create a skit with the theme of using creativity to overcome obstacles. Their solution has ties to Greek mythology, but the team gave it their own creative twist. This is the team’s first year working together. They were coached by **Nicole Reader, Isaac Reader-Taatzes and Diego Aguilar.** (L-R) **Emma Howe, Chiara Poletto, Laurel Reader-Taatzes** (standing), **Avery O’Connor** (kneeling), **Anshika Salgia, Elle Johnson and Narayani Chandra.**

Water Polo Club Advances Athletes’ Careers Towards Elite Colleges



ANDRA BERKMAN

Miramonte High School graduates (L-R) **Lucy Berkman, Meghan McAninch, Dania Innis and Ally Lurie** have played together with the Lamorinda Water Polo Club since the sixth grade. All were recruited to attend and play water polo at elite NCAA Division 1 universities.

By CAMERON SULLIVAN  
Contributing Writer

Back in sixth grade, Meghan McAninch might have dreamed about studying at an elite university and playing NCAA Division 1 water polo.

“But I never thought it was in the cards for me,” she said humbly before a recent Lamorinda Water Polo practice at the Miramonte High School pool.

“I don’t think I was able to think about the future at that point,” her teammate Dania Innis added with a self-deprecating grin. “I was a bench player just having fun.” Seated with the duo were teammates, Lucy Berkman and Ally Lurie. The four 2023 Miramonte graduates first met as Orinda Intermediate School sixth graders and Under-12 Lamorinda Water Polo members.

This year, UCLA, USC, Harvard and Princeton are acquiring the four Orinda gems, who are academic All-Americans, as well as top USA Water Polo players.

McAninch will attend USC, Innis at UCLA, Berkman at Harvard University and

Lurie at Princeton University. They will all play water polo at their respective schools

Fellow graduating teammates, who will play for D1 schools, are Kaia Levenfeld of Moraga at the University of Michigan and Sofia Corbett of Oakland at Villanova University.

[SEE POLO page 19]



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Thank you to our Business & Realtor Partners for preserving the tradition of excellence in Orinda schools. The Orinda community has maintained a long-standing tradition of bridging the gap between state funding and the actual cost to educate each student in Orinda on an annual basis. ONE is grateful that we are able to count on you to support our schools and our students.

**Great schools translate to outstanding communities.**

ORINDA NETWORK for EDUCATION





CALENDAR / FILM / CLASSIFIED

# On the Calendar in July

- Orinda Library** presents Contra Costa County Library's Summer Reading Program through Aug. 5. For all ages. Visit <https://ccclib.org>. See article p. 10.
- Art Gallery at Wilder:** Portraits, figurative and surreal paintings by Jennifer Granat through Aug 5. To schedule a viewing, contact Curator Ani Breslin at [anistonbreslin@berkeley.edu](mailto:anistonbreslin@berkeley.edu). See article p. 22.
- 1 **Orinda Farmers' Market**, 9 a.m. Orinda Way in front of Rite Aid and the Community Center Park. Visit [www.cccfm.org](http://www.cccfm.org) or 925.431.8361. Also July 8, 15, 22 and 29. See article p. 15.
- Orinda Books** presents Dorothy Lazard reading *What You Don't Know Will Make a Whole New World*. 2 p.m. Register at <https://bit.ly/43HT3Z9>.
- 5 **Orinda Library Toddler Storytime** for one to three-year-olds and their caregivers. 10:30 a.m. Also, July 12, 19 and 26.
- 6 **Orinda Books Pat's Book Club** discusses *Foster* by Claire Keegan. 11 a.m. Email [info@orindabooks.com](mailto:info@orindabooks.com) for reservations.
- Taste of the World** food trucks Orinda Community Center parking lot, 5 - 8 p.m. Also July 13, 20 and 27.
- 7 **Movie in the Park**, *Minions: the Rise of Gru*. Orinda Community Center Park. Begins at dusk.
- 8 **Art Gallery at the Orinda Library** Reception 3 p.m. Visit <https://lamorindaarts.org/ekphrasis/>. See article p. 22.
- 13 **Orinda Books Story Hour** for ages 2-6 for a reading of popular children's books with Megan. 11 a.m. Also, July 27.
- Concerts-in-the-Park** with *Lamorinda Idol* 6 p.m. Orinda Community Center Park.
- 14 **Movie in the Park**, *Night at the Museum*. Orinda Community Center Park. Begins at dusk.
- 15 **Chiller Diller Theater** presents *Die Monster Die*, 8:30 p.m.
- 20 **Orinda Theatre Free Movie Night** presents *Back to the Future*. 6:30 p.m. See article this page.
- 21 **Orinda Starlight Village Players** present Ray Conney's *It Runs in the Family* through August 17. Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 6 at 4 p.m. and Thursday, Aug. 10 at 8 p.m. Orinda Community Center Park Amphitheater. See article p. 20.
- Orinda Theatre Comedy Night** with Kabir Singh and Friends. 8 p.m.
- 27 **Concerts-in-the-Park** with *Grateful Bluegrass Boyes* 6 p.m. Orinda Community Center Park.

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### FIRSTS AND LAST



TOM WESTLAKE

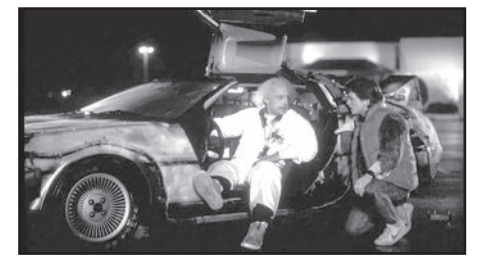
There's a lot to choose from in this, the most patriotic month of the year, so let's get right to it.

The Summer Movies in the Park leads off July 7 with *Minions: The Rise of Gru* at the Orinda Community Park. Who knew these small yellow creatures would become so popular? Illumination Studios, that's who. This installment shows how Gru (Steve Carrell) became so despicable. Bring blankets and lawn chairs. Movie starts at dusk.

Second in the series of outdoor summer movies is *Night at the Museum*, Friday, July 14. Starring Ben Stiller and the late, great Robin Williams as Teddy Roosevelt, with Dick Van Dyke and Mickey Rooney making memorable cameos. This mad-cap fantasy shows what happens after the museum closes and trust me, it's not what you expect.

The Chiller Diller Theatre with Lord Blood-Rah presents *Die, Monster, Die*, starring Boris Karloff. Though the title may indicate a certain cheese-factor, it could be argued this film might have a slightly

elevated literary inspiration as much of what goes on seems directly inspired by the works of well-known horror author H.P. Lovecraft. See it July 15 at 8:30 p.m.



COURTESY AMBLIN ENTERTAINMENT  
**Christopher Lloyd** (L) and **Michael J. Fox** star in *Back to the Future* showing for free on July 20.

The July 20 free-movie screening features *Back to the Future*. Thought by many as a near perfect trilogy, this is where the adventure starts. Bring a scorecard to track the timeline adventures of stars Michael J. Fox and Christopher Lloyd, or just enjoy the show. Directed by Robert Zemeckis, a director known for pushing the envelope when it comes to technical cinematic effects, this film has everything without feeling bombastic or forced. It starts at 6:30 p.m.

I'd like to step a little out of my usual milieu to mention other offerings at the Orinda Theatre. The third Friday of every month is Comedy Night. This month features Kabir Singh and Friends. No stranger to the spotlight, he was on America's Got Talent. The laughs begin at 8 p.m. Tickets for the upcoming 2023-2024 live concert season go on sale in August. The schedule is to be announced.

And remember to always watch out for those wonderful images made of sound and light, for that's where the reel magic lies.

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

## The Orinda News classified ads

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2023 Publication Schedule	
Issue	Deadline
August	July 8
September	August 8

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FIREWISE

**FIRE ADAPTED  
COMMUNITY NEWS**

**INSURANCE COMMISSIONER  
LARA VISITS ORINDA**

MELANIE LIGHT



The first words from Commissioner Ricardo Lara’s May 31 visit were, “Orinda is a model for the state. The Orinda Firewise Council is a powerful example of how neighbors can work together to be safer from wildfires,” referring to transforming the town into a wildfire adapted community.

Lara travels around the state to “focus on people doing good work.” He met with local folks who have been in the vanguard of these changes. Attending were Mayor Inga Miller, Moraga Orinda Fire Department (MOFD) Fire Marshal Jeff Isaacs, MOFD Board member Craig Jorgens, Orinda Firewise Council Chair Marc Evans and Leader Sue Wecht, United Policyholders Program Specialist Joel Laucher and City Chipper program representatives Micki Cronin and Will Thorn.

The group met on Red Coach Lane where two residents hired goats to clear grasses and brush. The Commissioner learned how community members developed Firewise groups and then partnered with the City and MOFD. Were it not for the leadership of MOFD Chief Winnacker, and his neighborhood talks, none of our stellar work would have developed.

Of particular interest to the Commissioner were the Fire Adapted Community Ambassador assessments, so powerful as it is a peer-to-peer experience with no threat of a citation and how streets and Firewise groups organize the chipper usage together. The Commissioner thinks the state could benefit from Orinda’s requirement for

homes to be in fire code compliance for all real estate transactions.

He was also struck by the enormous citizen engagement through the Orinda Firewise Council and the Firewise groups. The bottom line is that the excess fuel must be removed and residents are the ones to do it.

Lara’s department is working hard to meet the challenge of increased disasters due to climate change.

“While there is no doubt climate change is contributing to more extreme wildfire behavior, we can do something about it,” said Lara. “Under my new Safer from Wildfires regulation, residents in Firewise communities are able to receive an insurance discount.” He said the best way is to encourage insurance companies to move from an adversarial position to that of an ally because in the long run, it is more cost effective and will keep people safer.

One idea is to establish Climate Resilient Communities which will be eligible for funding to address mitigation for climate change risks like wildfire and flooding. Lara co-sponsored SB852 with Senator Bill Dodd, D-Napa, which was signed into law last September. This creates a path for local government and public and private funders to work together to mitigate dangerous conditions. Over time, fewer homes will be lost and the cost of insurance should stabilize.

“When everyone does their part to bring down the risk to our homes and businesses, it helps my efforts to expand insurance options for everyone in our state,” said Lara.

[SEE FIREWISE page 24]

◆ POLO from page 17

Having six members from the same small club commit to elite universities in a single graduating year is unusual. But their success comes as no surprise to those who’ve seen them at work in the water and in life.

“They are the epitome of good teammates,” said Lamorinda Water Polo Head Coach Guy Baker. “They’ve created a culture that unites them and all the others on the team.”

Baker joined Lamorinda as a consultant in 2016. At the time, no one knew he would remain its permanent head coach and executive director. After all, Baker was a legend in the water polo world.

While serving as head coach of UCLA men’s and women’s water polo, the teams earned seven national championships combined. In addition to coaching two USA teams to World Championships, Baker coached three consecutive Olympic medal-winning USA women’s water polo teams.

“Everything changed for the better when Coach Guy got here,” said Lurie, noting Baker helped them value the importance of doing their best as team members. “We have common trust in each other that translates to friendship and support outside the water.”

Baker deflected the opportunity to discuss his water polo pedigree. Instead, he turned the subject to the new graduates who are preparing for their final USA Water Polo National Junior Olympics.

He has witnessed each embrace the values of the team’s acronym, BE GREAT: Behavior, Excellence, Grit, Respect, Effort, Awareness and Team.

“From an early age, each of these young women were highly intelligent and motivated, setting standards that they played by and lived by,” said Baker. “They work hard, they’re gritty and they also have fun.”

The born-and-bred Orindans bounce off each other in conversation with respect,

patience, humor and interpersonal skills beyond their years. They demonstrate that building sportsmanship, trust and encouragement throughout their formative years can foster group and individual success.

Berkman said their families deserve significant credit for their success.

“It’s crazy how much our parents have done; our dedication is their dedication,” she said. “Every family sacrifices so much and misses so many weekends or events just to be here for us. We feel their support.”

Although the foursome will head to different universities, their paths are destined to keep crossing in the water and out of it. McAninch and Innis will compete against each other several times a year for USC and UCLA, while Berkman and Lurie will compete against each other several times a year for Harvard and Princeton.

Will they bring their Lamorinda Water Polo grit to the NCAA? No doubt. And each one knows how fortunate she is to have a built-in family of water polo players to help them navigate the newness of college life.

Cameron Sullivan can be reached at [cameronsullivan@cameronsullivan.net](mailto:cameronsullivan@cameronsullivan.net).

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PERFORMING ARTS

# Enjoy Zany Farce Under the Stars

By DAVID DIERKS  
Assistant Editor

The Orinda Starlight Village Players' (OrSVP) production of Ray Cooney's *It Runs in the Family*, directed by Suzan Lorraine and Jill Gelster starts July 21 at the Orinda Community Center Park. Set in a hospital, this British farce sees Dr. Mortimore fend off a paternity suit, an ex-wife, a punkish son and various lunatics running in and out of doors mistaking everybody for someone else, all while perfecting his speech for an international conference.

Performances, come rain or shine, are Friday and Saturday nights at 8:30 p.m., July 21 through Aug. 17, with a Sunday, Aug. 6 matinee at 4 p.m. and a Thursday night, Aug. 10 performance at 8 p.m. General admission is \$20 with senior and child discounts at \$10. Tickets are available at the door or can be reserved in advance online at [info@orsvp.org](mailto:info@orsvp.org). Coffee, tea, hot chocolate, apple cider and cookies are available for \$2 each.

"There's nothing quite like a good farce with a great cast to make theater the fun it should be – lots of laughter, action and good camaraderie," said Lorraine. "Cooney has written some of the best and audiences always leave with huge grins."

Gelster added "I cannot wait. Both Suzan and I are very excited about this show and are so lucky to have this cast. It is going to be a blast."

Farces present a unique set of difficulties for the stage.

"It translates into a fast-paced series of comic situations that happen to real people," said Gelster. "With a farce, the characters are not trying to be funny. Their lives are just pushed into comic situations."

"Farce can't drag or it becomes too real rather than funny," added Lorraine. "Farce is at the top of my list of favorite genres. There's so much good energy."

Lorraine and Gelster are long-time volunteers with OrSVP and other community theaters in the Bay Area.

"I've directed over 60 shows during the last 30 years and this is the first time I've worked with a co-director," said Lorraine. "I couldn't ask for a better partner than Jill Gelster."

The all-volunteer Orinda Starlight Village Players is the city's only non-profit community theater and has performed at the park for 40 years.

"We are very grateful for our sponsors, the Orinda Community Foundation, Zamboni's Pizza, Casa Orinda and Geppetto's Café, as well as our program advertisers," said Gelster. "Without their support, we



CHARLIE JARRETT

William Spongberg, Bill Chessman and Miriam Michels appeared in Agatha Christie's *The Secret of Chimneys*, Orinda Starlight Village Players first show of their 40th anniversary season.

would not be able to continue to be part of the fabric of Orinda."

"This entire theater community is one of the best and a great place for newbies, directors and actors, to get their feet on the

boards," said Lorraine.

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

David Dierks can be reached at [david@aspenconsult.net](mailto:david@aspenconsult.net).

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◆ MOTT from page 10

right here in Orinda," Bains said.

"A group like ours does not happen without dedication," said Jaeger. "They come in and just put things together and make things community-friendly."

The Orinda Eagle and Gold Scouts earned the 2022 recognition and was accepted by Eagle Scouts coach and Briones District Advancement Chair Bruce McGurk and Jan Cushman, Northern California Girls Scouts Gold Award Coordinator.

"Wherever you walk in Orinda, you're basically tripping over scout projects," said McGurk.

Improvements contributed by Eagle and Girl Scouts include a decorative tile bench located at the Nature Area entrance and a monarch butterfly garden bed.

Botanist Barbara Leitner, recipient for 2019, served as president of the East Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society and is now a board member for Friends of Orinda Creeks.

Leitner rallied for environmental causes in the community, compiled a list of suitable landscaping plants, which the city distributes to residents and worked with Caltrans to eradicate invasive stinkwort plants along Highway 24.

Mott spent decades devoted to California's state and local parks. He held various roles, including Oakland's parks superintendent, general manager for both the East Bay Regional Park District and East Bay Zoological Society and as director of the State Department of Parks and Recreation.

He was a founding member of The Orinda Association, serving as its first president.

"It's just an honor and a privilege to live in a city that cares so much about the environment and it gives an environmental award every year," said Leitner. "And there are so many deserving people and organizations here, that it is really a great tradition."

Andrea Madison can be reached at [drea.madison.05@gmail.com](mailto:drea.madison.05@gmail.com).

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BUSINESS BUZZ

# Fish Enthusiast Opens Aquarium and Fish Store in Orinda Village

By NICOLE LAMISON  
Staff Writer

When fish enthusiast, AJ Glassman, noticed a lack of local options in the fish and aquarium market, he decided to swim upstream to provide a solution. Welcome The Fish Barn, Orinda Village's newest retail store.

Located next to Village Barber Shop, The Fish Barn opened June 3. It features a variety of colorful, tropical freshwater fish and high-quality aquariums. Its walls are lined with beautifully aquascaped fish tanks which house a multitude of swimming species.

Glassman graduated from UC Berkeley in 2017 with a BA degree in urban studies. He worked for several tech start-ups and soon became a category analyst for Walmart eCommerce. For the past year, he worked at the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce enhancing his retail, marketing and business skills while working alongside Lamorinda small business owners.

"It kind of ignited a spark in me because all these people are doing things to build community and contribute to our local economy," he said.

In 2022, Glassman moved to Orinda and discovered the lack of options to buy aquarium supplies and fish, forcing a trek all the way to Hayward.

"I found that people are very much will-

ing to drive long distances, up to 45 minutes, to a good fish store," said Glassman.

With the lack of aquatic stores on both sides of the Caldecott Tunnel and with easy freeway access, Glassman found Orinda to be a convenient central point for The Fish Barn. His experience is that aquarium addicts take extremely good care of their tanks and thus, The Fish Barn anticipates casting a long net of customers from the Bay Area and, of course, from its own backyard.

Fish and aquarium keeping has been a longtime hobby for Glassman. It all started when, as a youngster, he won a goldfish at the fair.

His interest grew dramatically when his parents gifted him a ten-gallon tank on his tenth birthday. While many start this hobby early on, Glassman assures it's never too late to begin.

"Don't be intimidated. If you're interested, just try it. It's a hobby that is all about learning," he said. "We are very family and very beginner-friendly. Education is a huge piece of the store for me."

Glassman appreciates aquariums mainly due to the pocket of nature they provide inside one's home. They serve as a reminder to appreciate the beauty of nature and the outdoors.

Glassman encourages customers to purchase fish from local vendors rather than big box stores, as small businesses sell healthier fish. The Fish Barn quarantines



JEFF HEYMAN

Now open for business, **AJ Glassman's** The Fish Barn, features a variety of colorful, tropical freshwater fish and high-quality aquariums. Located in Orinda Village at 19 Orinda Way, Suite F, it's the only nearby aquatic store for miles on both sides of the Caldecott tunnel.

all its fish before a sale. Additionally, all fish are treated for a variety of commonly held parasites and diseases.

"The goal is really to build community," he said. "A place where new hobbyists can come in and ask whatever question they

want and not feel judged."

Visit the Fish Barn at [www.thefishbarn.com](http://www.thefishbarn.com).

Nicole Lamison can be reached at [nlamison34@gmail.com](mailto:nlamison34@gmail.com).

◆ EVERYDAY from page 15

as the golden bird featured on its logo.

All this, yet an entire generation has grown up in Orinda only knowing Phair's as an abandoned, and dare I say, haunted building.

Of course, I don't have proof the old building is haunted. I'm just saying it has all the makings of a perfect haunt. You wouldn't catch me within 50 yards of it alone after dusk.

Think about it. The space has remained isolated and virtually untouched for almost 25 years. A quarter of a century. Word spread among spirit realtors: Phair's? Now there's a fine spot where The Living will never disturb you. Unless you count a few mischievous kids, easily scared away. Plus, those squirrely hooligans never tattle, seeing as how their parents will suspiciously demand answers to "What in heck were you doing around that empty old Phair's building in the first place?"

We should be proud as Phair's is OG retail wasteland. (OG slang: someone or something that is original and authentic.) She's comfortable in her solitary afterlife, like a resilient widowed grandmother who refuses to remarry.

Rich with transformative potential, it has garnered zero results. There have been a few worthy attempts over the years. Fountainhead Montessori Preschool had high hopes of setting up shop in 2013, but after much controversy, the project was stymied. Traffic congestion and zoning were cited, but to me, this supports my haunted theory: young children are noisy and rambunctious. The ghosts made that idea go away.

Whatever her fate, facelift, funeral or status quo, this Grand Dame deserves a salute. Find her between Orinda Motors and Szechuan Chinese Restaurant on the Village side of the 4th of July parade route.

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

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ART SCENE

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Library Gallery: Paintings, photographs and altered books

Monterey Peninsula artist Cheryl Kampe (<https://cherylkampe.com/>) shares her abstracts in oil and cold wax from her tapestry series. Kampe described mixing oil and



KELLY GENTRY

On display this month at the Orinda Library gallery is artist **Kelly Gentry's** patriotic altered books.

cold wax as her "latest evolution."

Karl Stinson displays his photography. He lived in Orinda for more than 25 years before moving to Rossmoor in Walnut Creek. Stinson's "People of the World" exhibited last year at the library.

Danville artist Kelly Gentry describes her altered books exhibit as "bringing new life into pre-loved books, page by page." Visit her work at [www.instagram.com/folds\\_from\\_the\\_heart/](http://www.instagram.com/folds_from_the_heart/).

The talents of these artists are showcased through July 29, with a reception Saturday, July 8 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Orinda Library.

Wilder Gallery: Portraits, figurative and surreal paintings

Jennifer Granat's figurative work is a major feature of her portfolio. It represents her love for the works from ancient cave artists to Baroque masters to the Bay Area Figurative Movement.

"While much of my work is a visual re-

cord of times I enjoyed hiking, walking and exploring the Bay Area with my husband and our two dogs, my overall body of work also marks the many hours I've spent in classes, online or in a studio session with live models," said Granat.

"I also enjoy creating surreal or composite landscapes and trees in a variety of styles, media, substrates and color palettes," she said.

She's editor for the Lamorinda Arts Alliance (LAA), a member of Concord Art Association, the Lamorinda Arts Council and the Mt. Diablo Branch of the California Writers Club. Granat was part of the library's "Ekphrasis" exhibit in May.

This virtual exhibit runs through Aug 5. To schedule a viewing, contact Curator Ani Breslin at [anistonbreslin@berkeley.edu](mailto:anistonbreslin@berkeley.edu). For more information, call the Lamorinda Arts Council at 925.359.9940. Visit [www.jennifergranat.com](http://www.jennifergranat.com).

De Young Museum Bouquets to Art: Soho Sakai and Mari Tischenko

Two Orindans participated in San Francisco's de Young Museum's display of floral designs, inspired by works of art in its permanent galleries. Mari Tischenko and Soho Sakai were a part of last month's *Bouquets to Art*, also known as the "Floravaganza" event of the year.

Tischenko is a member of the Orinda Garden Club and a student of Japanese flower-arranging. She was featured in *Sunset Magazine* for her uniquely remodeled Orinda home that was transformed



JENNIFER GRANAT

Artist **Jennifer Granat's** friend and model in this 24" x 18" acrylic painting came to U.S. from the Philippines as a young girl to escape possible ill fate. She's depicted as a "Babaylan" (a Filipino shaman or healer) based on her advocacy for those who are marginalized and underrepresented.

into a contemporary tranquil retreat using Japanese art techniques as key components.

Sakai, founder of the Soho Study Group ([www.sogetsu-sohostudygroup.org/](http://www.sogetsu-sohostudygroup.org/)) is a renowned master teacher and artist. Many of her students have graduated and become strong and devoted teachers of Sogetsu, which is a school of ikebana or Japanese floral art.

David Fonseca can be reached at [davef52@gmail.com](mailto:davef52@gmail.com).

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Pet of the Month

DEBRA CARR

**Bandit**, a Maltese/Yorkie mix spends his days staring out at the Orinda hills. "He especially loves snuggles, rub downs and cat poo," said **Debra Carr**. "He's basically the friendliest guy around, even **Santos** our old man Havanese, has come to love him."

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

For a schedule of all July 4th festivities, please go to [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org).

**Summer Camp Sessions run through Aug. 11 - Register Now.**

**OYS Fall Soccer Registration closes July 9.**

**Thursday Night Food Truck Events occur each week, 5 - 8 p.m. at the Community Center.**

**Thursday night concerts this month are July 13 and 27, 6 to 8 p.m.**

**Friday night movies this month are July 7 and 14. Movies begin at dusk.**

Go to [www.orindaparksandrec.org](http://www.orindaparksandrec.org) or call 925-254-2445 for questions and registration.

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28 Orinda Way – Orinda Community Center



MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

# Q&A with Steve Harwood: Voice of Orinda's Favorite Announcer

By KATHY CORDOVA  
Executive Editor

If you've attended a public event in Orinda, you will instantly recognize his booming yet melodic voice.

Steve Harwood has been the unofficial "Voice of Orinda" for decades and, at 78-years-old, he has no intention of slowing down.

An avid philanthropist and community volunteer, Harwood is generous with his time, money and positive outlook on life. Having given countless hours and thousands of dollars to Orinda organizations, he insists he gets more back than he gives.

**You are well known as the announcer of the 4th of July parade, the Classic Car Show, youth sports and just about every other event in the city. How did you get started?**

My career as a sports announcer started 40 years ago when our oldest was six, and a new swimmer at Sleepy Hollow Swim and Tennis Club. The team needed an announcer and I grabbed the mic and haven't let go since.

I've also announced Miramonte football, basketball, baseball and other sports, wheelchair basketball and soccer and college rugby. Most of my sports announcing has been done jointly with my pal Bill Cosden and we've loved every minute.

My first involvement with the 4th of July celebration was playing "Elvis," singing from the backseat of a gaudy convertible. We were surrounded by screaming ladies who were held off by "security guards," all pals.

Approaching the judges' platform, the

generator in the trunk powering my sound system conked out. So there was Elvis (me), sweating and pulling on the generator rope in a failed attempt to get it started. Not a great moment for Elvis.

I moved over to be the 4th of July organizer and then into the role of providing sound gear and announcing the parade, which I've done for over 25 years. I love celebrating the freedoms we have in America and the contributions to the community so many individuals and organizations make.

**You are also a singer and have written and directed musicals. Have music and performing always been a part of your life?**

Yes, they have. I played the trombone and guitar when I was young, have been a singer most of my life and have acted occasionally. I wrote two musicals for a men's organization to which I belonged, and when word of that leaked out, I was asked to write a musical for Sleepy Hollow School. That led me to writing and directing six musicals for the school. That was lots of fun, as the themes I created had to do with the issues I saw my kids facing.

**You were named Citizen of the Year in 2011 and you've led or been involved in many community organizations. What has been most fulfilling for you?**

I've enjoyed it all. Each organization has brought the rewards associated with being of service to others, the pleasure of meeting complex organizational challenges and the enjoyment of many wonderful friendships.

Chairing Lamorinda Idol is a natural fit for me, as I've been a singer all my life



CHARIS WOO

Steve Harwood, the unofficial "Voice of Orinda," has announced the 4th of July parade for over 25 years.

and I really enjoy mentoring young people. Every year, after the finals, I say to myself, "This is the good stuff in life."

I love being involved with Derek Zembrak in helping to produce the *Live At the Orinda!* concert series. Right here in little old Orinda, we've created a cabaret series with top-notch, nationwide talent.

I've been involved one way or another with sports every year of my life since second grade, as an athlete, coach, fan or announcer. I love the world of sports, particularly at the high school level, where the purity of the contest still exists. Announcing wheelchair sports is especially rewarding.

**You made your living as president of an investment company. When did you retire?**

The word retire doesn't have much meaning for me. I started my company in 1984 and finally wound it down in 2019. I always blended my business activities with

other activities, so there was a gradual shift to emphasizing the others as time went on.

**Tell us about your marriage and family life.**

Tish and I have been happily married for 50 years this month. We're very close to our three children and their families. Will lives in the Chicago area with his wife Shirley and children Chloe and Ben. Tim lives

[SEE Q&A page 24]



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MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

◆ Q&A from page 23

in Sausalito with his fiancée, Liv. Alison lives in Orinda with her husband Chris and children Leo and Cora.

**How long have you lived in Orinda and what brought you here?**

We've lived here since 1976. What brought us were great schools, a classic suburban neighborhood, nice neighbors, agreeable weather and good commuting options.

We live in Sleepy Hollow and absolutely love the neighborhood. When we moved in, we were the youngest and now we are the oldest. We have been blessed with wonderful neighbors who have become family to us. We all look after each other, love chatting in the street or driveway and share in the joys and challenges of the kids as they grow from infants to young adults.

**What's your favorite thing about Orinda?**

I love many aspects of life in Orinda, especially:

◆ FIREWISE from page 19

According to Deputy Insurance Commissioner Michael Soller, the Department of Insurance has several tools to help consumers shop for insurance, including links at [www.insurance.ca.gov](http://www.insurance.ca.gov) for *Tips for Finding Residential Insurance* and *Insurance Finder*, a tool to locate local agents. Contact the consumer hotline at 800.927.4357.

Orinda may be a model for wildfire mitigation, a phenomenal feat in a three-year span, but according to Evans, only 30% of homes are in Firewise groups with defensible spaces and hardened homes. Keep at it, Orinda!

Melanie Light can be reached at [melanie@melanielight.com](mailto:melanie@melanielight.com).

The respect citizens show each other, the acceptance of varied cultural backgrounds and the tolerance for diverse views.

The assumption, proven valid over the years, that our fellow residents have integrity.

The community spirit and the tradition of volunteerism.

**What are the most significant changes you've seen in Orinda and what would you like to see happen in the future?**

Most significant over the 45 years we've lived here has been the absence of change. While Lafayette has grown dramatically and Walnut Creek has become a major shopping destination, Orinda is much the same as it was when we moved here in 1976.

I would like to see Orinda realize the potential that was set forth by Pete Haselmann in his Orinda Vision artistic portrayal of what Orinda might look like in 50 years, incorporating many of the city planning techniques currently used in other cities. That Orinda would have more apartment living options in town, would be pedestrian-friendly, would have more indoor and outdoor dining options, while still preserving the semi-rural feel we all value

**Any other fun facts about you?**

A few years ago, Tish and I had a car swap and I ended up with our big white minivan. So I figured, what the heck and decided to fulfill my lifelong dream. So now I'm the guy you see around town driving a Toyota Sienna with large red, orange and yellow flames on the side of the car!

Please visit [www.theorindanews.com](http://www.theorindanews.com) to see a list of Steve Harwood's community involvement over the years.

Kathy Cordova can be reached at [cordova@theorindanews.com](mailto:cordova@theorindanews.com).



COURTESY OF STEVE HARWOOD  
Steve Harwood and his wife of 50 years, Tish Harwood, on vacation in Portugal in April.

**Orinda Chamber of Commerce's Ribbon-Cutting**



KATHY CORDOVA  
The Orinda Chamber of Commerce sponsored a ribbon-cutting and networking event at Orinda Chiropractic on June 14. The Chamber is a resource to help support and promote local businesses, engage the community and impact city and state policies. Visit: [Orindachamber.org](http://Orindachamber.org) to join and check out future events.

**BEFORE**

**Tractor Mowing  
Weed Cutting  
Brush Clearing  
Chipping  
Fire Breaks  
Fire Department  
Compliance**

**AFTER**

**Will Thorn • Wildland Corporation • (510) 306-6285 • CSLB #1089268**  
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