



THE ORINDA NEWS

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Orinda School Children Finally Back on Campus



KATHY ENZERINK

After 11 months of distant-only learning, Orinda school children returned to school in a hybrid model that combines in-person and distant learning. Transitional Kindergarten (TK) through second grade at the four elementary schools and sixth graders at Orinda Intermediate School began classes on Feb. 10 with third through fifth graders scheduled for the following week and seventh and eighth graders in early March. (above) This was the scene at Wagner Ranch Elementary where students were welcomed by Principal Jim Manheimer and the school mascot. Similar welcomes occurred at all of Orinda's schools where parents queued up to drop off excited students.

Orinda Essential Workers Chronicle Their Experiences



KATHY ENZERINK

Within one minute of receiving a 911 medical emergency call, firefighter and paramedic **Josh David** (above) at Orinda Fire Station 45, dons his gear before entering the ambulance as fellow firefighters climb into the cab.

By HILLARY HOPPOCK
Contributing Writer

Essential medical personnel who work or live in Orinda shared stories after their challenging last year facing the COVID-19 pandemic.

“A year like no other” repeated the frequent refrain of frontline workers dealing with medical emergencies at Fire Station 45 on Orinda Way in January.

Orinda Station 45 firefighter and paramedic Josh David voiced particular concerns for his patients at the start of the pandemic, “Our job is to calm and comfort the patient, but I’m sure we looked and sounded scary in our Hazmat ‘bubble’ suits

with goggles, masks with air filters and air bottles on our backs. It was heartbreaking to see patients with severe respiratory distress and weak with fever as we worked to make sure they were hydrated and breathing well.”

Orinda residents who serve as doctors of primary care, emergency medicine and pediatrics, both locally and in surrounding communities, echoed this sentiment as they [SEE WORKERS page 4]

Local Groups Honor Doctors and Nurses While Supporting Orinda Restaurants

By SALLY HOGARTY
Executive Editor

Restaurants have been hit especially hard during the year-long pandemic as they toggle between take-out only, outdoor dining and limited indoor dining. While a small light is gleaming at the end of a very long tunnel in the form of a vaccine, most of Orinda’s local eateries are still struggling to survive.

In the meantime, medical workers continue to work long shifts as they deal with large numbers of seriously ill patients separated from loved ones. Often these frontline workers provide the only connection to very

ill patients and their families. The physical and emotional toll on them continues to grow as these dedicated individuals keep others safe while worrying about their own families.

In efforts to acknowledge the tireless struggles of medical workers and to support Orinda restaurants, a group of seven Orinda organizations have partnered to provide meals from local restaurants, as well as thank you cards colored by Orinda students to the staff at several Contra Costa County hospitals the week of March 15.

“People are really excited about this,” said The Orinda Association Board Mem- [SEE RESTAURANTS page 2]

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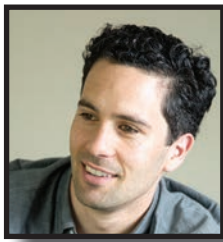
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FINANCIAL NEWS | FIRST FRIDAY FORUM

FINANCIAL NEWS

ORINDA HOMEOWNER'S INSURANCE WOES RESUME

DAVID BORN, CFA, CFP



Orinda homeowners continue to feel repercussions of the increased wildfire risk on their homeowner's insurance policies three and half years after the 2017 wine country wildfires.

The 94563 zip code temporarily benefited for one year after an emergency declaration from a directive prohibiting insurance cancellations if the cancellation is "based solely on the fact that the insured structure is located in an area in which a wildfire has occurred." That moratorium no longer applies to Orinda, as of the end of October. The resumption of cancellations has caught some residents off guard.

While Orinda is caught in an industry-wide trend, Nationwide and Farmer's are among companies that have most recently sent non-renewal notices to some Orinda homeowners. These non-renewal notices shock many recipients, though it is not a reason to panic; there are still some carriers dedicated to providing coverage such as the

State's largest carrier, State Farm.

"That's one of the reasons we are still writing new business in California where a lot of carriers aren't," says Orinda State Farm agent Bryan Silveira in reference to the firm's California presence. "State Farm has been in business for 99 years, and they've never been a business that has non-renewed due to location. When a State Farm customer is a customer, they are very loyal."

Silveira noted that the El Toyonal and areas near Briones were some of the first neighborhoods to see non-renewals from competitors, due to proximity to nature and the risk of northerly winds. Now he has seen competitors non-renew in all parts of town.

Companies that haven't sent out non-renewal notices have had to pay for higher risks with premium increases; even State Farm increased rates by a relatively modest 6.9% in 2020 to account for the higher

[SEE FINANCIAL page 10]

Vaccine Specialist Speaks at Forum

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

COVID-19 came into our vocabulary a year ago, and it's still very much with us. There are new things to learn about it almost daily. To bring us up-to-date, eminent vaccine specialist, Dr. Margaret Liu, will speak at First Friday Forum (FFF) March 5 at 10 a.m. via Zoom.

Her talk is called, "COVID-19: What you Need to Know and Do in March 2021."

Dr. Liu, a resident of Lafayette, will answer questions about COVID-19 and the vaccine. She said subjects will include: addressing concerns raised about vaccine safety, since they were developed so quickly; which vaccine should one take if there is a choice and worries about the new strain(s) of virus that are spreading.

"We are all tired of COVID-19, but because of new developments for vaccines and treatments – and for the virus itself – we need to stay up-to-date on recent findings," said Liu. "How different are the vaccines



COURTESY MARGARET LIU

Dr. Margaret Liu, eminent vaccine specialist, speaks about COVID-19 at the First Friday Forum March 5 at 10 a.m. via Zoom.

that are next in line? How worried should we be about the new mutant viruses? If you have been vaccinated, can you spend time with people face-to-face? This presentation will address the science behind all these [SEE FORUM page 12]

◆ RESTAURANTS from page 1

ber Chris Laszcz-Davis. "It reaches the soul, takes us out of our own little bubble and allows us to nurture and appreciate both our restaurants and our frontline workers."



LYNN KALMAR

Evie Kalmar, a 4th grader at Sleepy Hollow Elementary School, colors a thank you card for inclusion in lunch packages to frontline workers. The cards were designed by Tim Hancock of the Lamorinda Arts Council.

The Orinda Association (OA) provides the logistics for the March event in partnership with the Orinda Community Foundation, Lamorinda Arts Council, Orinda Chamber of Commerce, Orinda Garden Club, Lamorinda Rotary and Rotary Club of Orinda. Artist Tim Hancock from the Arts Council designed the thank you cards the students will color before they get packed with each lunch and the Garden Club will deliver flowers to the hospitals.

"The restaurants I've been coordinating are so surprised and pleased people are thinking of them and their welfare," said OA Board Member Diane Lautz. "I've also been working with the hospitals to be certain the box meals we provide meet their criteria and County Health Department standards."

To fund the lunches, the organizations have set up a GoFundMe account, which can be accessed on the OA's website at www.orindaassociation.org.

"Many people want to thank our frontline workers, but they don't know how," said Laszcz-Davis. "This is one way to start."

Sally Hogarty can be reached at sally@theorindanews.com

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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA Board



BILL WATERMAN

Hello fellow Orindans! All of us on The Orinda Association Board hope you and your families are staying healthy and virus-free. And, we all hope everyone in our community can receive the COVID-19 Vaccine as soon as it becomes widely available.

As you can see, we are recasting this column to be more about all our Board Members and the programs and initiatives the Orinda Association (OA) is engaged in every day. So, you will see all Board Members share more about the community activities they and the OA engage in as well as informing you what they and our Board hope to contribute to the community.

Speaking of such initiatives, by the time you read this, the OA will have begun spearheading a new "Front Line Workers Appreciation Initiative." The OA, in partnership with many other community groups, will run a GoFundMe campaign to raise funds to pay for a lunch for many dedicated health care professionals working in five area hospitals.

At the same time, we will organize a campaign to let kids in our schools contrib-

ute by creating messages and artwork for thank-you cards to go with these lunches. Our goal is not only to thank our "Front Liners," but also to support our struggling local restaurants.

We hope to complete our campaign by mid-March so we can deliver up to 1,000 lunches along with the cards. To contribute, go to the OA website and look for the contribution link on our home page. And we thank partners OCF (Orinda Community Foundation), Lamorinda Arts Council, Orinda Garden Club, Orinda Chamber of Commerce, and our two outstanding local Rotary clubs – Rotary Club of Orinda and Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary.

This initiative has been propelled forward by our wonderful Board Members Chris Laszcz-Davis (longtime board member) and Diane Lautz (current Fourth of July Chair) and with huge support and energy from our newer members, Latika Malkani and Kyle Arteaga.

We thank each for "jumping in" and creating this concerted effort on a special one-
[SEE OA MESSAGE page 12]

Moser Joins OA's Board of Directors

By SALLY HOGARTY
Executive Editor

The Fourth of July parade and Orinda Classic Car Show are two of the events drawing The Orinda Association's newest board member, Marianne Moser, to the organization.

"I went to high school in a small town



COURTESY OF MARIANNE MOSER

The Orinda Association's newest board member, **Marianne Moser**, joined the organization in February and hopes to be involved with the Fourth of July and Classic Car Show.

where Friday night football games were 'the' event, and the homecoming parade wound through town with the 'royalty' in classic cars. I love that Americana," Moser said.

Moser moved to Orinda in 2019 with her son Jonathan (now four-years-old) and her malamute/husky puppy Rosie. The Orinda Oaks resident immediately became active in WUDO (What's Up Downtown Orinda), the OrindaVision Steering Committee and the Parks and Recreation Commission as a resident volunteer.

"I'm also interested in the music events around the parade and in fundraising and bringing more music events to the park," said Moser. "I was recently made aware that CCR (Creedence Clearwater Revival) was originally from this area and had faithful followers in the late '60s who went to Miramonte. I really want to play on that history – even if it's a cover band!"

Moser hopes to leverage her background in administration, city planning, commercial real estate development and financial planning to further the OA's many programs and events, as well as to revitalize Orinda's downtown and its connectivity to the city trails and parks.

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

The Orinda Association

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

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

Visit our office at 26 Orinda Way
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EDITORIAL

Letter to the Editor

Question How Much our MOFD Firefighter's are Paid

This year the MOFD firefighters' employment contract is coming up for renewal. While everyone in the community respects our firefighters and value the service they provide, the question of how much they are paid is an issue.

This is especially true this year with the renewed awareness in the community that we need to start allocating money to fire prevention, not just fire suppression.

Currently, out of a \$30 million budget, MOFD only allocates \$800,000 for fire prevention. One third of that is for the Fire Marshal and only \$100,000 is for fuel mitigation. Meanwhile, its total employee compensation budget is \$27 million. Over 80% of this (\$22 million) is for MOFD's 51 firefighters. This means an average annual compensation cost of over \$400,000, with senior firefighters costing over \$500,000.

Much of this expense goes to support the employees' retirement benefits negotiated over the years by their union. Currently the pension and retiree medical plans have total liabilities of \$250,000,000. While the plans have significant offsetting assets (\$180 million), they have been adding \$1.40 of benefits for every dollar they have been putting away over the years to fund those benefits. Why? So there would be more

money for salaries.

Everyone deserves a living wage; especially valued municipal employees. The average MOFD firefighter receives \$180,000 in annual salary and overtime. Even after contributing about \$30,000 to the pension (in addition to the \$12 million contributed this year by MOFD for employee retirement benefits), the average firefighter takes home \$150,000 with some senior firefighters exceeding \$200,000.

This is not sustainable.

Especially when it is apparent that we need funds for wildfire prevention as much as we do for responders to emergencies after they occur.

We need to tell our MOFD Board members that when negotiating the new contract, they need to think hard about where our MOFD dollars go. We need to allocate more to fire prevention and we need to pay down our \$70 million debt so we don't pass it onto our children and grandchildren.

If you would like to contact your MOFD board members directly, here are their names and emails: Craig Jorgens, Craig.Jorgens@gmail.com; Steven Danziger, stavedformofd@gmail.com; Michael Donner, mdonnermofd@gmail.com; John Jex, mmjjex@gmail.com; Gregory Baitx, gbaitx@mofd.org.

— Ian Baird

◆ WORKERS from page 1

chronicled their experiences. To protect co-workers and families, including their own, doctors noted healthcare pivoted to virtual delivery, which in turn ushered in a whole new dynamic for the families of their patients.

Still, in response to the increasing need for care, many doctors volunteered for additional duties in ICUs or followed up with recovering patients. Along the way, unanticipated outcomes emerged, fostering stronger teamwork and communication in their departments as well as an outpouring of patient appreciation for these undeniably empathetic essential workers.

Oakland Kaiser primary care physician Dr. Kristen Sueoka Hoover noted adaptations to meet COVID-19 challenges were remarkable, "We were surprised how acute medical needs could be handled virtually. We can send a patient home with finger probes to measure oxygen saturation, and patients can send us blood pressure logs and help us monitor their diabetes."

Hoover, along with other doctors on her team, volunteers to help post-hospitalization patients with the transition home. She said patients have been exceedingly grateful. She also praised family help getting elder relatives online, "The mix of virtual and inpatient care can translate into less

social isolation for the elder patient, while an adult daughter appreciates not missing work to take the patient to us."

Pre-COVID-19 it was helpful to have family members bedside, according to Kaiser Oakland emergency medicine physician Cheryl Lynn Horton. She said, "The family could share important patient information with the ER staff and ask questions. They could actually see the purpose of a patient's tubes, for example, allowing them to put the pieces of the puzzle together for better understanding."

During COVID-19, Horton noted, patients typically come to the emergency room alone, making it much more difficult for the family to understand that a patient is comfortable and not suffering when they get a phone call from ER or the ICU, where Horton also volunteered during the worst of the pandemic. Horton termed 2020 a year full of surprises as she witnessed staff continually checking in with co-workers through the seemingly endless health crisis.

Serving newborns to 18-year-olds, Kaiser pediatrician Lubna Hasanain found many of the adults who often brought teenagers, otherwise marooned at home during the pandemic, to the clinic had themselves come to her as kids during her 21-year Walnut Creek practice. Hasanain said that even at a time when teenagers tend to identify



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with peers more than parents, "not a day goes by that we don't hear from parents concerned about their child's anxiety." For that reason, she recounted, during this pandemic year "we decided to keep our clinic open in combination with remote delivery through video and telephone appointments – which in themselves necessitated a deep learning curve among the eight pediatricians on our staff." Hasanain added with a laugh, "we also found the cookies and cards received from appreciative families during the pandemic particularly rewarding."

Nazia Sheriff launched Olive Leaf Pediatrics in Orinda two years ago in a quest to practice personalized medicine as a community doctor. She specializes in newborns and still makes house calls with safety precautions. She said, "It's

a tough time for struggling new parents who are disheartened that support systems they envisioned can not be put in place. I try to reassure them that the baby has parents who love them and in many cases are more bonded with them as one or more parents work from home with fewer distractions."

Sheriff also heralded the fact that despite the post-holiday surge of the virus, younger children often have milder cases of COVID-19 and that an unexpected pandemic outcome of sheltering-in-place had been the reduction in colds, fever, tummy and earache illnesses common during the winter months among newborns.

Hillary Hoppock can be reached at Hoppock@msn.com.

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MEASURE R OVERSIGHT | E-BOOKS ON THE RISE

Orinda City Council Names Ten to New Oversight Commission

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

In response to the voter-approved half-cent sales tax increase effective April 1, the Orinda City Council announced the Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission (SSTOC), with Jud Hammon acting as temporary chairman. Measure R revenue is estimated to generate \$600,000 from April through June and approximately \$2.4 million per fiscal year thereafter.

This 10-member Commission will make recommendations, provide advice and report on the expenditures incurred by the City Council and staff for programs, services and projects. They include efforts to impact wildfire threats, disaster planning and emergency response, critical public storm drainage infrastructure and long-term road repair and maintenance.

Meet the appointed Commissioners:

Kyle Arteaga moved to Wilder in 2019. "In the recent election, it was difficult to un-

derstand who to believe related to Measure R. I want to clarify the communications so that all residents can learn more if they are interested and help them understand how and why decisions were made."

Brad Barber, a Glorietta neighborhood resident since 1988 served four years on the Moraga Orinda Fire Department Board. He said, "We need to work with MOFD and neighboring communities," to recommend a program to reduce the risk of wildfire and "a plan to finish all road and storm drain repair and restoration that was begun with the last two bond issues." He is interested in examining plans for responses to other emergencies too, such as earthquakes.

Chris Decareau, an architect by profession, served on the Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Committee and has "expertise in building performance with respect to fire." He said, "I can continue to contribute on infrastructure as well as provide a take on neighborhood and building fire resiliency."

Jud Hammon, a resident since 1993,

served as Chairman of the Citizens' Oversight Infrastructure Committee and was a member of the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee. He ranks wildfire risk mitigation and disaster preparedness as the top priority, followed by storm drain and road maintenance. He said, "Larger, corrugated metal pipe culverts have a typical lifespan of 50 years. Many of ours are 60 to 70 years old."

Rachelle Latimer, a native Orindan who moved home to the Bates-Muth neighborhood 14 years ago, served six years on a board with similar issues and priorities. "Because our roads are in good shape, I feel we can focus our energy over the next three years on developing and implementing a plan to address wildfire threats, including fire fuel reduction, disaster planning and emergency response," she said.

Yasaman N. Lee, a 14-year resident on Tahos Road, served on the Finance Advisory Committee and is a CERT and Firewise member. "My goal is to understand and assess the needs and priorities. Without understanding the depth of issues at hand, a rationale for this committee, it is premature to set a specific agenda," she said.

Melanie Light, a resident since 1998, lives in the Country Club neighborhood. Serving on this Commission is, "a natural

extension of my work with Firewise and the Orinda Firewise Council." She wants education and outreach programs established, excess fuel removed from all city property and partnerships established with stakeholders in place and active.

Latika Malkani, an 18-year, South Orinda/Del Rey resident, identifies fire preparation and emergency preparedness as priority goals. She also notes the need for better vegetation management and maintenance on Orinda properties, public education, access to a chipper program and assisting residents with fire insurance renewal. "I want to help formulate and recommend strategic plans – for not only the next three years, but for the next 20 years," she said.

[SEE COMMISSION page 12]

ebooks Breathe Life into Contra Costa Library System During Quarantine

By ANIA KEENAN
Contributing Writer

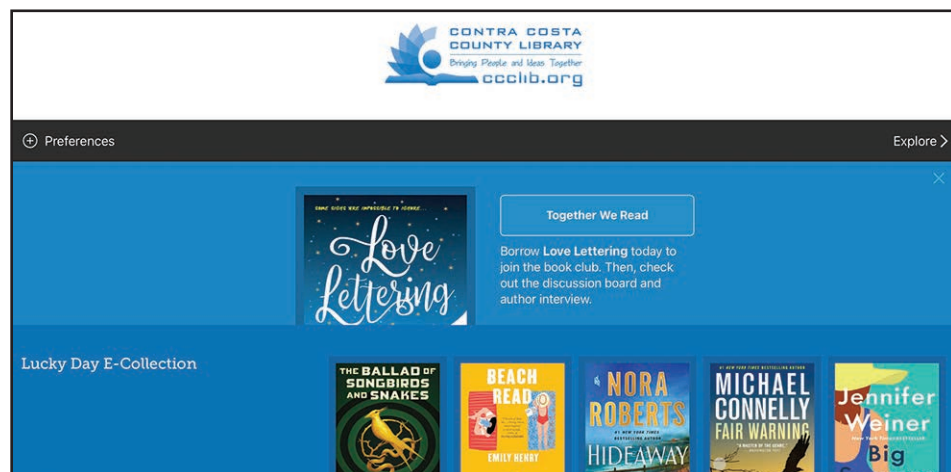
As the COVID-19 pandemic approaches its one-year anniversary, readers across Lamorinda and greater Contra Costa County have had to get creative in their

pursuit of a literary fix.

Enter, eBooks and audiobooks.

Throughout the pandemic, the Contra Costa Library system has registered more online checkouts than ever before, catapulting it to international achievement, joining

[SEE eBooks page 9]



ANIA KEENAN

Contra Costa Library system partners with the Libby App to provide readers access to hundreds of titles online. Once readers enter their library card information, they gain access to a homepage, like the one pictured above, with reading recommendations and featured collections.

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LIFELONG LEARNERS | NEW LOCAL LLF BOARD MEMBER

Emily Wu Joins Lawrence Livermore Foundation

By CHARLEEN EARLEY
Editor-in-Chief

When Emily Wu was a kid, she wanted to become a flight attendant so she could travel the world, but instead she dove into finance and became Managing Director for First Republic Bank's East Bay Business Group in Walnut Creek.

In the meantime, Wu, an Orinda resident for the last 22 years, recently got elected as one of nine Board of Directors for the Livermore Lab Foundation (LLF).

Accepting the position Sept. 11, 2020, her role includes governing responsibilities as well as serving as an ambassador to increase awareness of LLF work in the community. She's also on the Foundation's

Finance and Investment Committee.

Wu, born and raised in Hong Kong, brings her expertise and knowledge to the foundation to help kids begin realizing their childhood dreams.

"I like the ability of the Foundation to collaborate with Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) to focus STEM efforts on bringing young scientists to experience the unique capabilities of the Lab and mentorship," she said. "It makes perfect sense to bridge the gap between the Lab and donors who want to support scientific and educational work at the Lab."

STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Wu said she's also impressed with the diverse programs the Foundation supports

such as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) research and climate initiatives.

Dona Crawford, then an Associate Director of Computation at LLNL, founded the Livermore Lab Foundation in 2016.

LLF is a non-profit dedicated to advancing fundamental science and research initiatives, STEM programs and fellowships at LLNL.

"Emily Wu is a wonderful addition to Livermore Lab Foundation's Board of Directors," said Crawford, the current board's chair, in a press release. "Her financial expertise, insight and broad knowledge of the greater East Bay area and her passion for

[SEE WU page 13]



COURTESY EMILY WU
Orinda resident **Emily Wu**, Managing Director for First Republic Bank's East Bay Business Group, was recently elected to the Board of Directors for the Livermore Lab Foundation (LLF).

Lifelong Learners at Berkeley

By CHARLEEN EARLEY
Editor-in-Chief

Richard Hornberger of Orinda said he's semi-retired as a licensed architect specializing in private practice in large scale commercial and retail design, but he's not retired from learning new things.

The 69-year-old is currently taking five classes at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at the University of California, Berkeley – online these days – and he's showing no signs of slowing down.

"From an early age, I have had a need to understand how things work. It is just an insatiable curiosity about the world around me," he said. "The UC Berkeley OLLI programs offer exposure to high quality classes and professors that are structured towards

the postgraduate level, but without the mandatory homework, tests and grades."

He's currently taking "Art as Agency," "Extreme Politics: Radicals, Revolutionaries and Terrorists," "Realism in World Politics: The U.S. and Germany," "The Great Documentaries" and "Diving Into the Movies."

Michael Fox and Harry Chotiner teach the two film classes.

"I've followed both teachers for years and find they expose me to beautiful movies I've not seen before and ways of looking at movies I've not thought of before," said Hornberger, who was born and raised in Modesto, and has lived with his family in Orinda for almost 32 years.

OLLI has close to 3,000 members, ages 50 and older, who hail from Orinda, Moraga, Lafayette and beyond.

Course fees depend on the type of membership and the type of course, but for most members, 8-week, one-day-a-week, 1.5-hour classes are typically \$155, with smaller, hands-on workshops (usually writing) at \$235.

"One common thread among our members is that they are insatiably curious and have been their whole lives. They crave intellectual challenge. They question and wonder. They are enthusiastic hand-raisers," said Susan Hoffman, director of OLLI.

Student Kathy Boyle of Orinda is currently taking three classes: "Country Music Road Trip," taught by Pete Elman, "Sustenance and Creative Explorations in Chaotic Times," by professor Lauren Vanett and, mirroring Hornberger, "Extreme Politics," taught by Darren Zook.

Born and raised in Lincoln, NH, Boyle [SEE LEARNERS page 14]



KATHY ENZERINK

Orinda resident, **Kathy Boyle**, is a lifelong learner and retired from teaching special education for 40 years. She's taking three online classes at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UC Berkeley and has plans for taking many more.

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COVID-19 VACCINE | SEASONED SHOPPER

Have You Gotten Your Vaccination Yet?

By KATHRYN IZISHU
Contributor

If you are 65 and above, it is time to get your COVID-19 shot. Luckily, Contra Costa County has opened four large sites. The closest to Lamorinda is Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill. There are also sites in Martinez, Richmond and Antioch. To register through the Contra Costa County, visit this link: bit.ly/3dcOQoR.

For more information about Contra Costa County Health's Vaccination Program visit: www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/vaccine.

If you don't have access to the Internet or don't use computers, you can call 833.829.2626 to speak with an agent.

OptumServ has set up at the Tice Valley Gymnasium. To register for a vaccination there, visit: <https://myoptumserve.com/covid19>.

You can also call OptumServ: 877.218.0381 and press 7 to register for a vaccination.

Sutter Health has opened up their Vaccination Operations. To register visit:

www.sutterhealth.org/for-patients/health-alerts/covid-19-vaccine, or call 844.987.6115.

Safeway, CVS and Rite Aid have opened [SEE VACCINE page 15]



(L-R) **Gino Obnial, MD**, **Marisol Obnial, MD** and **Regina Gordon RN** are a few of over 100 volunteer, frontline heroes, who spent Jan. 16 helping to vaccinate seniors for free at the Stanley Mobile Clinic held at the Stanley Middle School in Lafayette.

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BARBARA KOBSAR

Look no further. The Orinda Farmers' Market now offers your morning cup of coffee. A cup of drip coffee or bags of fresh roasted whole beans from Zolo Coffee are available at the information booth.

This month brings the beginning of a new season. Citrus and apples linger for a while longer, but it's time to look for spring onions and green garlic to sauté with fresh local asparagus and fava beans.

March is also Artichoke Month. In America, virtually all the artichokes we buy are grown in California. In fact, it's the official state vegetable!

Peak season for the beautiful California artichoke is March through May. Since all harvesting gets done by hand, they are an extremely labor-intensive crop. Further, because artichokes on the same plant mature at different times, the same field needs harvesting several times.

Size does not indicate artichoke quality. At maturity, this silver-green, fountain-shaped plant is three to four feet high, up to four feet across and bears large to dwarf flower "buds" or artichokes. Large terminal buds are produced at the end of the long central stem and dwarf buds are found lower on the stem.

Just as the artichoke is labor intensive in picking, it is time consuming in preparing. Baby artichokes do not develop the fuzzy choke found at the center of larger artichokes and may be cooked and eaten whole after trimming off the tough outer green leaves.

To prepare larger artichokes, rinse well and peel off coarse outer leaves. Cut off the stem and top third of the artichoke using a stainless-steel knife. Immediately place the artichoke stem side down in about two inches of salted boiling water. Cover and simmer 25 to 35 minutes, or until tender when pierced with a knife. Drain and place the cooked treasure upside down on paper towels. When cool enough to handle, pull out purple tipped leaves in the center and scoop out the hairy choke with a spoon. The most delicious dip to serve with cooked artichokes is a simple mix of mayonnaise or yogurt with a little (or a lot) of curry powder.

It's also time to reacquaint ourselves with tomatoes. The folks at J & J Ramos Farms

from Stanislaus County are now picking their greenhouse tomatoes to bring to market. Greenhouse tomatoes are harvested vine-ripened to ensure a flavor that reminds us of an in-season tomato. They provide our best alternative until field tomatoes arrive much later.

The convenience of pre-ordering and curbside pickup from the Orinda Farmers' Market is available by downloading Tap4Markets from your mobile app store.

The Orinda market is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Orinda Way in Orinda Village. More information is available at www.cccfm.org, facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket and [Instagram at OrindaFarmersMarket](https://instagram.com/OrindaFarmersMarket), or call the market hotline at 925.431-8361.

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

Barbara Kobsar can be reached at Barbara@cotkitchen.com



BARBARA KOBSAR
Miguel Madriz and Sayra Ramos are happy to offer sweet navel oranges and Pink Lady apples at the J & J Ramos Farms stand. Hot house tomatoes are coming soon!

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FIREWISE

Let's Make Orinda Beautiful and Resilient by Removing Flammables



COURTESY MORAGA ORINDA FIRE DEPARTMENT

Above is an example of a home with non-combustible ground cover and trimmed bushes.

By MELANIE LIGHT
Contributing Writer

As spring pops up, many of us turn to our gardens, eagerly pulling weeds, planting and enjoying our yards. This is a perfect time to start thinking about how to implement the new fire code (www.mofd.org) into your landscaping.

It can be daunting, but just starting with a few steps will go a long way to make your property better able to withstand a wildfire.

In the next few months, I will share ideas, and the Orinda Firewise Council will put together learning opportunities – working with the garden clubs and nurseries – to get the information to everyone. Be sure to get on their mailing list at www.orindafirewisecouncil.org.

First, set yourself up to get rid of excess fuel. Republic Services can help you here. Upgrade your green waste bin to the largest size for free. You can schedule four free pickups each year for up to 14 big brown bags of yard waste. Just call 925.685-4711.

Next, make the front of your property safe for evacuation. The new fire code wants everyone to clear vegetation back three feet from the edge of the road; limb trees that are within 10 feet of the edge of the road up to six feet, so they don't hang out into the road; and make sure your trees that hang out over the road over six feet high, have a 15-foot clearance from the branch to the road. To visualize this better, imagine a fire engine that needs to pass in front to get through with no impediments.

If you want to go to the next level, remove all those very flammable plants like juniper, broom (all varieties), bamboo and rosemary from your property and put in fire safe plantings. There are lots of [SEE FIREWISE page 10]

◆ eBOOKS from page 5

a small group of 102 libraries around the world that surpassed one million checkouts in 2020.

A majority of the circulation Contra Costa received came through the online services Libby App and Overdrive, that allow readers with a library card to access free eBooks and Audiobooks online via a multitude of compatible devices, including Apple, Chrome and Kindle.

The use of these systems brought the Contra Costa Library system to its current rank as the 55th leading library systems internationally for digital circulation.

"We are thrilled that the pandemic introduced more people to our digital collections and that we were able to provide so many families the opportunity to choose from thousands of eBook and eAudiobook titles for free," said Public Information Officer for Contra Costa Library, Brooke Converse.

"It's really easy access to all the books I want to read and especially with COVID-19, eBooks have made things easier," said Mia Scraith, a junior at Miramonte High School and avid reader.

According to Converse, although the library faced a series of challenges in 2020, a highlight was the expansion of its digital section.

Prior to the pandemic, Contra Costa had a substantial digital section available, but limited circulation. COVID-19 safety guidelines with stay-at-home orders have served as a catalyst to expand online readership.

"We began offering eBooks about 10 years ago. and the collection has grown every year since. We saw a big jump in numbers in 2020 due to the pandemic, but we plan to continue growing our digital collections to meet the needs of our communities," said Converse.

Long-time library science enthusiast and

director of the Orinda branch of the Contra Costa Library system, Micheal Beller expressed his excitement over the diverse reading experiences possible through on-line reading interfaces.

"It's not for everyone. Some people will always prefer print, but it does allow for a greater variety of reading experiences. Whether you have vision problems or want to listen to audiobooks during your commute, lots of different people can use them," said Beller.

Beller is incredibly passionate about his work and says what he misses most about his work pre-COVID is the face-to-face connection with community members. During COVID, he has maintained connection with the community via front door and reference services.

"More and more people are calling us up to find out how they can access eBooks, and how they can get the audiobooks. I love those as well," Beller said.

Beller expressed excitement about the expansion of the online services, hoping that an increase in digital checkouts may lead to more community awareness of the other online services provided through the Library.

He put special emphasis on the resources Learning Express and BrainFuse, which respectively provide tutorials, and practice for standardized testing while making free online tutoring accessible to every student with a library card.

Converse said the Contra Costa Library System is still in the developmental phase of its re-opening plan. So, for the time being, enthusiastic staff members like Beller will have to content themselves giving out passionate reading recommendations over the phone or six-feet apart.

Ania Keenan, a junior at Miramonte High School, can be reached at ania@7keenans.org.

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WILDER GALLERY

Wilder Gallery: In Memoriam of Heather Metcalf, A Life Lived in Color

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

The Lamorinda Arts Council invites you to view a virtual exhibit of the late Heather Metcalf's (1944 – 2016) artwork during the month of March. Brian Metcalf, Heather's husband, mounted this exhibit because "I really felt that her large work was her best work and had rarely been exhibited in any gallery. She had this beautiful work done in the last 10 years sitting in our house; this is an opportunity to display it." Access images of Heather's artistic legacy at www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries.

Because Metcalf was an active member of the Moraga Art Gallery, the Arts Council is pleased to announce their companion exhibit of her actual paintings, March 1 - April 25. President Lucy Beck reminds us that the Moraga Art Gallery, located at 432 Center St., is open Saturdays and Sundays from 12 - 3 p.m. and by appointment. Details are available at www.moragaartgallery.com, by calling 925.276.5407 or emailing moragaartgallery@gmail.com.

Donna Arganbright, Moraga Art Gallery Vice President and Gallery Manager, who remembers Heather well, said, "Heather Metcalf was a beloved member of the

Moraga Art Gallery. Her graceful presence and insightful thoughts were always welcomed by our members. Her paintings are bold, big beautiful canvases of color. We felt fortunate to have them hang in our Gallery. Her presence is still missed and we are delighted to have her paintings hang once again in our Gallery."

Both Heather and Brian hail from Perth, Western Australia. Heather initially trained in Australia as a graphic artist and worked professionally in that field not only in Australia but in New Zealand and London. After, she took up residence in France to study fine art. She completed the four year Diplome en Peinture at L'Ecole des Art Decoratifs in Strasbourg, France. Metcalf relocated to the U.S. in Cincinnati, exhibiting in both private exhibitions and corporate sponsorships. A later move to Philadelphia allowed a return to fine arts, and she graduated from the Pennsylvania Academy for Fine Arts (PAFA) in 2000.

After a move to California in the same year, more exhibits ensued, including at In-Art, Santa Fe and Gallery Sam in Berkeley. She also showed work in her private studio in Moraga.

She continued exhibiting at locations

such as the Claremont Resort, Hall Winery in St. Helena, and the Orinda Library Gallery, among others. Peruse her work at www.heathermetcalf.com.

Heather's most recent work - her koi pond series - was kindled by the fluid images in the aqueous world of her koi pond. Floating shadows and florals twirling in watery currents inspired paintings built with layers of transparent, luminous colors. No matter your taste in art, exploring Metcalf's oeuvre will prove her artistic legacy worth experiencing.


The Art Gallery at Wilder is virtual because the Gallery is closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. Contact Curators Denise Nomura and Aniston Breslin at wildergallery@lamorindaarts.org.

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



CONTRIBUTED
An Anxious Gathering, the late Heather Metcalf's 48" x 48" oil painting on wood, brings to mind a lively spirit dancer, cavorting in the face of life's challenges.

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◆ FINANCIAL from page 2

risk of fire.

Orindans have also generally seen their premium costs increase due to higher coverage needs resulting from significant regional construction cost increases. For example, if construction costs increase by \$100 per square foot, then a 2,000-square foot home should have \$200,000 of additional homeowner's insurance coverage.

These higher construction costs have compounded on the historical tendency of some national call-center based insurance carriers to underinsure Bay Area properties.

"Companies will sometimes undercut coverage just to get the business - they'll quote you for \$500,000 when you really need a million," said Silveira of his com-

petitors. "State Farm would rather insure the property accurately. I live here; these are my neighbors. I'm very conservative and always recommend an accurate replacement cost."

Several companies, including AAA, were sued by wine country wildfire victims, claiming the company systematically underinsured them. Correcting underinsurance means more coverage for California homeowners.

For policyholders, this coverage increase is a third driver for higher premium costs along with higher risk and higher construction costs. The only thing worse than that triple whammy, would be an uninsured or underinsured loss of your home.

David Born can be reached at david.born@brightonjones.com.

◆ FIREWISE from page 9

resources to advise you about this. For the NO list of plants MOFD has for Orinda and Moraga, go to <https://bit.ly/3k8VgH1>. For YES plants recommended by the Diablo Firesafe Council, go to www.diablofiresafe.org/tolerance.html.

To find out more about firescaping for our area, try these resources:

A great, seven-minute, high level description with examples of fire smart landscaping do's and don'ts by Marin Master Gardeners: "Fire Smart Landscaping," youtu.be/kUI6hUY9Nq8.

A longer, but excellent webinar by Contra Costa Master Gardeners Steve Danziger and Hedwig Van Den Broeck is "Firewise Landscaping: Preparing Your Home and Property for Wildfire," available at <https://bit.ly/3du8DQK>.

The Orinda Firewise Council has a good selection of additional resources posted at www.orindafirewisecouncil.org/landscaping.

Finally, if you are pulling weeds and want to put down mulch, please do not use shredded redwood or cedar bark (gorilla hair). Here's what FireSafe Marin (www.firesafemarin.org/mulches) recommends: Within five feet of buildings or roads, use inorganic ground cover like pebbles, decomposed granite or gravel. Within five to 30 feet away from buildings, use composted wood chips.

These tips and resources should get you out of the starting gate for your spring and summer gardening.

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

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CURE CALENDAR CONTEST WINNER | LIBRARY GALLERY

Local Photographer Receives National Recognition



COURTESY YONI MAYERI

Orinda resident, photographer and cancer survivor, **Yoni Mayeri**, received national recognition for her photo, *Pandemic Dream*, placed on one of the pages in the annual 2021 CURE calendar. She took the winning shot on her iPhone, using only iPhone app editing tools.

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

Orinda resident Yoni Mayeri, professional photographer and camera buff since childhood, used her iPhonography skills to secure a place in the 2021 CURE calendar. *Pandemic Dream* is a blending composite of Columbia River Gorge area photos taken at different times with an iPhone and edited using only iPhone apps, which in itself gives you a good idea about what characterizes iPhonography.

Mayeri's work was selected from 121 nationwide entries. A teacher of iPhonography for the past 10 years, Mayeri said, "It's not about the camera; it's about your vision and learning how to see it." First comes visioning, then the processing and editing, all accomplished with an iPhone. "Now, our dark room is in our pocket," she said.

Mayeri found an issue of CURE magazine at the Cancer Support Community in Walnut Creek, following breast cancer surgery in 2017.

"Both organizations made a significant impact to my experience," said Mayeri. "After losing both my parents to different types of cancers, it was important for me, when I was going through treatment, to seek knowledge and support."

Every radiation treatment day, Mayeri created a photographic image. "Each piece was based on the radiation warning symbol, which was blended and manipulated using apps on the iPhone," she said. "Creating this series helped me express my fear and

2021 CURE Calendar

Launched in 2002, CURE Media Group provides a resource for cancer updates, research and education. Its magazine, focused entirely on cancer, may be ordered online. Its online site can be reached at www.curetoday.com. Free copies of the 2021 calendar may be ordered online.

embrace the healing power of the 'scary' linear particle accelerator."

Most of Mayeri's images find beauty in earth's landscapes, flora and fauna in the natural world where she finds peace, solitude and spiritual healing. She sees this

[SEE MAYERI page 16]

High School Visual Arts Showcase

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

The Lamorinda Arts Council announces the 18th Annual High School Visual Arts Showcase is now available online for public viewing starting March 1 and continuing until updated in 2022. An Awards Recognition Show takes place online March 11 at 7 p.m.

The High School Visual Arts Competition (HSVAC) showcases and acknowledges student art in four categories: 2D, painting, drawing, printmaking, mixed media, collage; 3D, ceramics, sculpture, jewelry, construction; photography, traditional film and digital photography and the Lamorinda Arts Alliance sponsored Digital Art category.

This category consists of two-dimen-

sional artwork produced or manipulated on a computer platform and then printed on paper, canvas or other material. The artwork may be an original digital painting, a digital graphic or illustration, or a photo image that has been manipulated beyond enhancement or applying effects to a photograph.

All work is by high school students who live in or attend school in Orinda, Lafayette or Moraga, including all schools in the Acalanes Union High School District such as Las Lomas High School.

During the registration process, students were asked to list their teacher's name for artwork that was created in class during school so the Arts Council could acknowledge the contribution of art educators. Artwork created outside of school is also allowed as long as it was done while the student attended high school.

A professional panel judged the artwork using such criteria as creativity, originality, content and degree of expertise in the chosen medium.

A total of up to \$3,200 in cash prizes will be awarded: First Place - \$300; Second Place - \$200; Third Place - \$100; Honorable Mentions - \$25 each and Best in Show - \$300. HSVAC Chair Aniston Breslin invites the public to celebrate artwork expressing the imagination, skills and talent of Lamorinda high school students along with their families, friends and art educators at this exciting annual competition.

To learn more about the Arts Council or attend the live March 11 awards ceremony, go to www.lamorindaarts.org, email info@lamorindaarts.org or call 925.359.6400.

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



ELANA O'LOSKEY

Bird Show Case by **Kate Lee**, won the Best in Show award at the High School Visual Arts Competition in 2020.

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STEM CONFERENCE | CLASSIFIED

◆ FORUM from page 2

issues and provide information so you can know how to best keep you and your friends and family healthy.”

Liu is a world-renowned expert in the field of vaccines, immunotherapy, gene therapy and global health. She pioneered two important new technologies for vaccines for treating cancer, of which she has received numerous awards internationally and two honorary doctorates. One is from Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, where she was invited to lecture by the Nobel committee.

Known as “The Mother of DNA Vaccines,” Liu is the scientific lead for the

World Health Organization, drafting group writing guidelines for mRNA vaccines.

CEO of PAX Therapeutic, which is developing gene-based therapy of tendon and ligament repair, Liu also worked with Dr. Anthony Fauci numerous times. She obtained her M.D. degree from Harvard Medical School and completed her clinical and research training at Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

To register, go to <http://bit.ly/3ud2I8v> and click on the registration link.

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

◆ COMMISSION from page 5

Paula Reinman lives in the Orinda Oaks area and has been a resident for 30-plus years. Her vision is to ensure “revenue generated from Measure R is used efficiently and effectively in ways that the voters intended.” She said, “Being part of the committee lets me give back in a way that is critical to our safety and quality of life.”

Alex Weinstein moved to Sleepy Hollow two years ago. Using a “critical eye to the expenditures and recommendations,” he

plans to deploy, “a careful, analytical and pragmatic approach to evaluating the cost and benefit to expenditures.” He said, “One of my guiding principles is a belief that citizens of a community have the ability (and responsibility) to improve and enhance their community.”

“The members of this Commission bring a broad range of areas of interest and expertise,” said Hammon. “We all look forward to working together for all Orindans.”

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

STEM Conference Goes Virtual

By SALLY HOGARTY
Executive Editor

Have you ever wanted to explore data-driven experimental design using s’mores or touch plant DNA? Middle school girls have an opportunity to do just that and more at the American Association of University Women’s (AAUW) annual STEM conference.

The local Orinda, Moraga, Lafayette (OML) branch of AAUW sponsors the annual conference, which takes place this year as a virtual event on March 20.

At the conference, young women interested in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) choose from 10 hands-on workshops via Zoom and attend a keynote address by pioneering genetic counselor and Miramonte graduate Francesca Hinkamp.

“The workshop leaders are successful, engaging professional women in their respective STEM careers who put on a terrific series of hands-on workshops,” said Chris Laszcz-Davis, AAUW member

and environmental engineering and public health professional. “In previous years, we held a one-day conference at Saint Mary’s College to rave reviews. Hopefully, next year we’ll be back to some semblance of an in-person event.”

Open to girls in grades 6, 7 and 8, the STEM conference began registration in early February and continues until full. Each participant attends the keynote speaker’s presentation and two of the 10 workshops.

Workshops include such topics as the Balloon Car Challenge where girls learn about vehicle design and build a 4-wheel balloon car or Designing Robots for Fun and for Good, which involves building a prototype robotic hand.

For information about registering for the March 20 conference, go to <https://oml-ca.aauw.net> and scroll down to OML’s virtual STEM conference registration.

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

◆ OA MESSAGE from page 3

time project. Our Board truly is fortunate to have five new members, each bringing unique life experiences to help us fulfill our mission and carry forward our longstanding programs and add new ones.

In addition to Latika and Kyle, we have welcomed Jacqueline (Jackie) Buettner,

Barb Brawner and Marianne Moser. Whether new to Orinda, as in Kyle and Marianne’s case, a long-time resident as in Barb’s case, or somewhere in between in Latika and Jackie’s cases, we enthusiastically thank and welcome their volunteer spirit to enrich Orinda.

Finally, our Fourth of July and Classic Car Show chairs Diane Lautz, Jill Gelster and yours truly will be ramping up our two committees this month, aiming to have actual events this coming summer and fall.

No doubt we will have challenges and likely safety modifications, but we are excited to begin planning again for a return to some “new normal” life again.

Special thanks to each of our committee members who have stepped up again this year.

Everyone please take care and stay safe out there!

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ESSAY WINNERS

Young Local Voices of Democracy Heard Loud and Clear at Ceremony

By SALLY HOGARTY
Executive Editor

Since 1947, Veterans of Foreign War (VFW) posts around the country have held essay contests for young students, allowing them to express their views on a patriotic theme. Divided into two essay

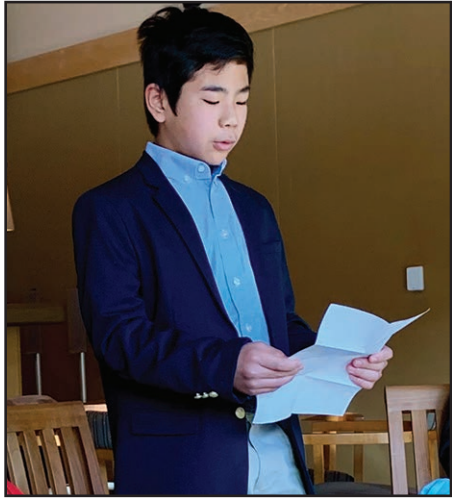


PHOTO COURTESY OF VFW POST 8063
Christian Woo reads his winning essay at a virtual ceremony. Woo won the state contest for his entry in the Patriot Pen competition. The Orinda resident competes at the national level next.

competitions, the national contest attracts more than 200,000 students each year with Patriot's Pen (grades 6 - 8) attracting 165,000 and Voice of Democracy (grades 9 - 12) attracting over 65,000.

On Jan. 30, the State of California's 17 districts held a virtual awards ceremony where they announced both state winners were from the East Bay's District 10.

"I was shocked and excited at the same time," said Mark Steinberg, Commander, VFM District 10. "It's very unusual to have state winners from both contests come from the same district. The quality of submissions was extremely high this year, and these were the best of the best."

Orinda's Christian Woo won Patriot's Pen. VFW Post 8063 in Lafayette sponsored the seventh grade student at Head-Royce School in Oakland. Woo received three scholarships totaling \$1,600 for his essay on the theme "What is Patriotism to Me?"

Named the winner of the Voice of Democracy essay, Discovery Bay's Claire Kane wrote on the theme "Is This the Country the Founders Envisioned?" Sponsored by the Brentwood VFM Post, Kane



PHOTO COURTESY OF VFW DISTRICT 10
District 10 Commander **Mark Steinberg** presents **Claire Kane** with her award for winning the Voice of Democracy essay contest. The resident of Discovery Bay will go on to the national contest.

attends Liberty High School in Brentwood and received \$2,500 in scholarship funds.

Both Woo and Kane will now compete at the National level, which includes a grand prize of \$5,000 for the winner of the Patriot's Pen and a \$30,000 T.C. Selman Memorial Scholarship Award for the Voice of Democracy winner.

"As they each read their essays, I was

very proud of the way they represented themselves. The future of our country is in great hands," said Steinberg.

Look for information on next year's competition at www.vfw.org. Due date to submit essays is Oct. 31.

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

◆ WU from page 6

STEM education will help our organization execute our 2021 vision. We're honored to have her on the board."

Wu graduated from Hong Kong Polytechnic University in 1989 with a BA in finance. An avid supporter of science, technology, education and math, she can attest to the fact that in her case the apple doesn't fall far from the tree since her two adult children, Bradley (20) and Stephanie (18), are following in her footsteps.

"Both my kids are pursuing STEM in college," she said. "My husband Dan is in the medical field. I am also involved with another non-profit group focused on after-school education and skill development for disadvantaged youths in Oakland (East Bay Asian Youth Center). Innovation is critical to our future. All children should have equal opportunity to access STEM education."

Focusing on equity and diversity is equally important to Wu. The programs that stand out to her the most are "Girls Who Code - Big" (via Supercomputers), student

field trips to the LLNL, summer internships (annual Student Poster Symposium) and scholarships to support student research augmented by dedicated Lab mentors and early career women scientists.

Wu also serves on the Board and the Development and Audit committees at "A Better Way," based in Berkeley, and recently served as Treasurer of Walnut Creek's "Tuesday Forum." Before joining First Republic Bank 13 years ago, she served in leadership positions at Greater Bay Bank and Union Bank.

Before the pandemic hit, Wu enjoyed her downtime at S.F. Giants games, but during lockdown, she's had to pivot.

"I started working out with my friends on Zoom and crocheting cute animals, Amigurumi (crocheted stuff toy). I would love to join a crochet club when we can socialize in person again!" said Wu. "On a serious note, I truly look forward to traveling around the world -to fulfill MY childhood dream."

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



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WORDS TO THE RESCUE

MIMI BOMMARITO



Americans rock slang. I'm too old to use most of it without legit #looking-foolish but appreciate it from afar. When it comes to popping highly complex thought bubbles, foreign languages excel.

Take these popular foreign words that easily migrated into our lexicon -- *ennui*, French for a very sophisticated type of boredom, and *hygge*. Although I initially thought it was Scandinavian for "expensive pajamas," *hygge* actually means the importance and necessity of coziness and comfort.

I planned to add *KonMari* to this list, until I discovered the words are not Japanese for "spark joy," but rather a minimalist lifestyle

term trademarked by Marie Kondo, using reversed syllables of her name. Unfortunately for "maximalists" such as myself, everything sparks joy, especially musty old Dr. Seuss books, baby teeth and holiday decorations.

I prefer the harsher Swedish term "*dostadning*," translated "death cleansing" — keeping only what you believe others will treasure after you die. Boom. There's your clutter laxative.

I find comfort in such precise nomenclature. Once I learned the Japanese term "*kuchisabishii*," meaning "I'm not hungry, but I eat because my mouth feels lonely," I feel much better about plowing through an

entire bag of yogurt-covered pretzels when I sit down to write.

Furthermore, it turns out we're not hopelessly wretched after all. If we popped champagne when Rudy Giuliani got COVID, we were merely experiencing a common case of "*schadenfreude*," the German term for "feeling joy or pleasure when one sees another fail or suffer misfortune." And, it could be argued "*verschlimmbessern*," the German term for "making something worse when trying to improve it," has plagued Gavin Newsom's governing of late.

Along those same lines, "*age-otori*," a Japanese term for "looking worse after a haircut," is not a lockdown-inspired descriptor, but may quickly become part of our vocabulary if we must continue to self-style from TikTok tutorials. *Age-otori* is real. Our Cava-poo suffered from it for a solid two weeks after every grooming, longer when I attempted to cut corners and groom him myself.

Restricted pandemic life provides fresh insight into "*hiraeth*," the Welsh term describing the longing to return to a place that has been so altered in our memory that it cannot really be said to exist outside of our imaginations. An elevated fondness for mediocrity — think: old flames, Hostess Ding Dongs and the *Pirates of the Caribbean* ride — I worry *hiraeth* could also apply to the rigors of pre-pandemic daily life I mistakenly think I miss.

The pandemic definitely amped up our


"*resfeber*," a common, yet very specific anxiety, even before lockdown. A Swedish term for travel apprehension, *resfeber* translates "the restless race of a traveler's heart before the journey begins, when anxiety and anticipation are tangled," a source of endless "Dad Memes" about arriving at airports three hours early. Thanks to COVID, now I'm all *resfebered* just crossing the Bay Bridge.

Then there's "*tartle*," a useful Scottish word describing the act of hesitating while greeting or introducing someone because you've forgotten their name, acknowledging a common, momentary brain lapse rather than a personal affront. As much as we complain about masks, we *tartlers* have hidden behind them many a time in the frozen foods aisle.

What about the beautiful Finnish word, "*sisu*," meaning extraordinary determination in the face of adversity? Let's employ this word immediately. Healthcare workers and first responders have continuously demonstrated this Scandinavian concept of "a beautiful inner strength -- also a form of courage, especially in situations where success is against the odds."

I'll end with a creative challenge: invent a word to encapsulate a familiar pandemic ache, "the longing for the soothing hum of the dishwasher, alone in your house on a Thursday morning."


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



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◆ LEARNERS from page 6

is 72-years-old and retired from teaching special education for 40 years, working mostly with deaf and blind students.

"I've always enjoyed learning in the wide variety of areas that I've been interested in or fascinated and intrigued by," said Boyle. "I notice that I've been increasingly connecting my lifetime experiences to the layers of content of each OLLI class. This seems to be leading to a greater appreciation of how interconnected all the subjects and life experiences are."

Out of the many benefits, she said the OLLI classes give her the opportunity to meet like-minded people, access many stimulating ideas and perspectives and to unearth opportunities to participate in special interest groups, in her case, a hiking club.

Boyle looks forward to other courses on her list: "Before the Storm in America: 1815-1850" with Mick Chantler, "Faith in Politics: Religion, Power and Governance" with Darren Zook, and "Country Rock: 1965-Present" with Pete Elman.

"I'd like to take 'The Romantic String Quartet' with Alexandra Amati, but there's a time conflict with another class, so I can't," she said.

Hoffman said, "Our members love a variety of subjects, but it's safe to say

that current affairs and history are always among our most popular types of courses. 'The New U.S. Supreme Court: From Bad to Worse,' featuring Berkeley law professors, including Dean Erwin Chemerinsky, is offered this spring."

Hornberger, whose architectural degree came from Berkeley, said most of the classes he takes are the type of classes he would've taken while he was a student, but didn't have the time due to his major requirements.

One of the many courses next on his list is "Masterworks: Uncovering Hidden Meaning within Great Paintings," taught by Bruce Elliott.

"Bruce is a wonderful teacher who likes to dress the part of whatever time or subject he is teaching that day," said Hornberger. "This class provides cultural context for classic paintings, putting us in the mindset of each artist's contemporary audience. This appeals to the artist in me."

Hoffman loves the variety the institute offers lifelong learners.

"We have a phenomenal program for older adults who love learning," she said. "They can take courses taught by Cal faculty and other experts, attend newsmaking lectures, participate in research or join clubs and groups."

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

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COMMUNITY

Lamorinda Idol Contestants Don't Miss a Beat for Winter Edition



COURTESY OF LAMORINDA IDOL

(L-R) **Vivian Welch**, **Cara Impallomeni** and **Miranda Klein** were solo finalists in the K-2 solo category of Lamorinda Idol in 2019. They are shown here performing at one of the many events finalists (pre-pandemic) often attended. "They continue to be involved and are budding superstars," said Steve Harwood, Lamorinda Idol organizer.

By **SALLY HOGARTY**
Executive Editor

The show must go on and then some according to organizers of Lamorinda Idol, who didn't miss a beat when COVID-19 restrictions made in-person performances impossible. The Lamorinda Arts Council, which sponsors the competition, moved the 2020 competition online. Now, the organization has added a first-ever winter version with a March 14 online awards ceremony.

The singing competition for grades kindergarten through high school has taken place since 2006. In pre-COVID times, the finalists competed at The Orinda Theatre to crowds of cheering supporters. When the pandemic hit in winter of 2020, the contest was well underway.

"Steve Harwood's amazing leadership allowed us to pivot from an in-person to a remote competition," said Lamorinda Arts Council's Carol Van De Poel. "He completely re-tooled how we do everything. Now, the singers videotape their auditions. Once the finalists have been chosen and compiled their final tapes, we post them online and people can watch them and vote for the audience award winner."

Before the finalists post final videos, however, they have the opportunity to take online workshop sessions with Rena Wilson, co-owner of Performing Academy and a past lead in "Beach Blanket Babylon." The winter edition final videos will be available at www.lamorindaarts.org

beginning March 3 and continuing through March 10.

"Anyone in the public – worldwide – is permitted to vote once," said Harwood, who noted the winter edition gives young performers an added outlet not available with COVID-19 restrictions. "Normally, we run Idol during the summer months and the singers have lots of opportunities to perform around town. Since that's not the case right now, we thought this event during the school year might offset the school singing programs that have been curtailed. The response has continued at the same high level of enthusiasm as in the past."

Lamorinda Idol Winter Edition was open to anyone who lives or goes to school in Contra Costa County. Divided into categories based on age, a total of 41 soloists and 14 groups made it to the finals. The winners, one per category, are selected by a panel of three music professionals, with winners receiving cash prizes ranging from \$200-\$400.

The winners will be announced at a March 14 Zoom webinar from 7 – 8:30 p.m. The event will include segments of the finalists' videos, general comments from the judges as well as the presentation of the winners. The public is invited to enjoy the show. A link will be posted on the Lamorinda Arts Council website prior to the event.

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

Fitness Tip of the Month

Food & Fitness

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◆ VACCINE from page 8

pharmacies to help with vaccinations as well. Here is a site that tracks vaccine availability: www.vaccinateca.com. You can also try calling your local pharmacy to see if they have availability.

The two available vaccines are Pfizer and Moderna, both requiring a follow-up dose. If possible, schedule your second appointment at the time you schedule your first, so you are guaranteed your follow up dose within the appropriate window (Pfizer: 19-42 days after first dose; Moderna: 28 days after first dose).

If the process of registering for the vaccine is overwhelming, call Lamorinda Village at 925.283.3500. A volunteer will help you. If you are unable to drive to your vaccination appointment, there are three non-profit organizations to contact, Mobility Matters (925.284.2207), Lamorinda Spirit Van (925.283.3534) and Orinda residents can also contact Seniors Around Town at 925.402.4506 with a ride request. All three offer rides for seniors in our area, and both are gearing up to drive seniors to vaccination clinics.

If you'd like to be a volunteer driver, please email Lamorinda Village at info@lamorindavillage.org.

For those who have been vaccinated, *Science Times* gives reasons why you should

continue to wear masks in public. The current vaccines are not 100% effective (most estimate 94-95%). They don't immediately provide protection (typically, two weeks after the second dose). It's not known if the vaccine will prevent you from spreading COVID-19, even if you're symptom free. Masks protect those with immunocompromised systems, and masks can help protect against new strains of COVID-19.

Kathryn Ishizu can be reached at kishizu@lamorindavillage.org.

Pinewood Derby Winner



JOHN DOYLE

Colin Doyle (Den #4) of Boy Scouts Pack #52, was proud to take 2021 championship with his car "Wolf" on Feb. 6, during the virtual Pinewood Derby race. See article online.



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ELANA O'LOSKEY



Tom Clements Tutoring

Tom Clements has been in the tutoring business for 30 years and is still excited about being around young students and "making them smarter" (his tagline). During COVID-19 restrictions, all his classes are conducted virtually on Zoom.

His approach to distance learning is highly structured and unique. "I provide students with practice tests, academic materials and prepared notes and slides using Zoom screen share capabilities. Then, with

a whiteboard at my side, I toggle back and forth between screen share and the whiteboard, asking questions to ensure that students stay focused and engaged," he said.

He emphasizes helping students get a better grasp of academic material and better scores on SAT and ACT tests. He said that along the way he tries to instill a love of learning and a desire for excellence in all his students. He said creating an environment kids want to return to makes this possible.

As an undergrad, Clements went to St. Mary's College on an athletic scholarship, studied science and literature and returned a decade later to obtain a Master's degree in business with the emphasis on applied mathematics. As a result, his tutoring programs draw on his expertise in a broad range of subject matter: physics, chemistry, mathematics, literature, creative writing and economics. Later he returned to St. Mary's as an English instructor, teaching freshman grammar and composition.

He is the author of several best-selling books on Amazon for SAT/ACT writing and grammar, which he uses in his test-prep programs. He hopes students will use his free, interactive grammar app, "Killer SAT ACT Grammar," available on his website, www.tctutoring.com.

Clements works out of Rheem because as a St. Mary's graduate and teacher, he has a strong attachment to the vibrant local culture and surrounding community. "All four of my daughters went to Campolindo



ELANA O'LOSKEY

Tom Clements, pictured outside the Orinda Library, has authored books on ACT, SAT, writing and grammar. He uses them at Tom Clements Tutoring to teach local high school students how they can obtain higher scores on these tests.

High School and have gone on to successful professional careers. My oldest is now a professor at Rice University," he said.

His wife, Michi, is an artist who is currently displaying paintings at the Moraga Library. He swears, "Back in the day, I was a hip-hop dancer in a performing group in the City. Links to some of my dance videos are still on my website." The couple supports local schools, the Orinda Fourth of July Parade and Orinda Action Day.

Contact Tom at 925.376.4704, tctutoring@comcast.net or visit www.tctutoring.net. His office is 346 Rheem Blvd., Suite 110B, Moraga.

Ashley Lowe Design

Ashley Lowe is an analytical graphic and web designer based in Orinda who opened her business in 2018 to be near family and friends. With four years of experience and training in graphic design focusing on both branding design and traditional print design, she has worked on magazines and catalogues. Her training also focused on web design, user experience design, photo editing, photography and animation.

Designing attractive, informational websites that serve as an extension of a small business' ability to showcase services offered in their communities is her goal. She has provided services for BUNZ, a unique burger joint in Berkeley; Forest Design, a graphic design agency in S.F. and El Castillito Taqueria, a Mexican restaurant in Livermore.

With COVID-19 restrictions in place, having a reliable website where people can find what they want is especially important, Lowe noted. Few would disagree that small businesses need a good, searchable website. Analytics show as many as 74% of people search for a restaurant online before deciding to order from it. "So much potential business is lost when people are unable to find information needed to complete a transaction," said Lowe.

Lowe offers Orinda small businesses a free consultation to assess how she can best assist them to succeed through the



ELANA O'LOSKEY

Ashley Lowe, Orinda resident, is busy with her analytical graphic and web design business called Ashley Lowe Design, but enjoys viewing the local art installations as well.

services she provides. "Oftentimes, it's not as simple as just creating a website. Because I'm local, it will be easy for Orinda residents to get in contact and really plan ahead," she said.

Ashley Lowe Design practices all COVID-19 precautions including remote meetings and mask wearing. Contact her via email at info@ashleylowe.design, visit <https://ashleylowe.design> or call 626.817.3648. Her hours are Mon. - Thurs. 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Fri. 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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



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as strength in forgiveness and "a strong appreciation for the many gifts that I have in my life," and as a reminder to live each day to the fullest. Her images can be viewed on Instagram at [yonimayeri](https://www.instagram.com/yonimayeri).

Yoni and husband David Mayeri moved to Orinda in 1990. Their sons Max and Zachary graduated from Glorietta Elementary, Orinda Intermediate and Miramonte High School.

"Someone in a [Cancer Support Community] workshop told me 'cancer is a gift,'"

Mayeri said. "I didn't understand what it meant, as I was in the midst of treatment. After I got through that time, I began to understand. When you are facing something life-threatening or something difficult, you begin to realize your strength and how much you really have. You become grateful for all the gifts in your life. In other words, you appreciate each day with gratitude. Life is a gift."

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

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