



# THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis  
Volume 38, Number 8

[www.theorindanews.com](http://www.theorindanews.com)  
Delivered to 9,000 Households and Businesses in Orinda

12 Issues Annually  
August 2023

## Fun for all at the 39th 4th of July Parade!



JEFF HEYMAN

Orinda's vibrant community spirit was on full display at the 39th 4th of July parade. The day's celebration began with a fun run and pancake breakfast, then proceeded with the beloved hometown parade, food trucks and music in the park. Go to pages 2 and 9 for more photos and to find out why people love the parade.

## Land Yachts are Sailing into the 19th Orinda Classic Car Show

By CELESTE ALTUS  
Staff Writer

It may have been your parents' car, your grandparents' or maybe your own, but there was nothing else like it. A full-size, elegant touring vehicle with a powerful engine and innumerable amenities, down to the stereo sound system and the velvety armrests. It was a sight to behold.

It was a Land Yacht.

Gigantic, American-made sedans from the late 1950s to the 1970s were known for their power and smooth ride. Some may be familiar: Cadillac Eldorado, Buick Riviera, Oldsmobile Toronado, Pontiac Bonneville and more recently, the Chrysler New Yorker.

These marvels of style and engineering, Land Yachts, are the theme of the 19th annual Orinda Classic Car Show, Sept. 9, which benefits Seniors Around Town, a free

[SEE CAR SHOW page 15]



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEA HAASE

Heavy-duty sedans, like **Bea Haase's** Lincoln Continental Mark IV Cartier Edition, sail into town Sept. 9, when The Orinda Association's Annual Classic Car Show features "Land Yachts."

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4TH OF JULY

# Faces of the 4th of July Parade

Compiled by KATHY CORDOVA, Executive Editor,  
and LISA BURLINI, Contributing Writer



ANDY RADLOW

(L-R) **Grayson Keenan, David Keenan, Jiya Rao, Mifay Liu, Julie Oliver, Duncan Oliver and Andy Radlow.** David Keenan: "My favorite thing is the passion and dedication that the Orinda community pulls together each year to make our parade a success." Julie Oliver: "My son Duncan and I are part of Boys Team Charity - Orinda. Our League has many volunteers at the parade each year and for many other Orinda community events/organizations. This was our second year helping with the parade set up and take down. All the BTC members we volunteered with said they had a great time and would be back next year! My favorite thing about the Orinda 4th of July parade is the opportunity to see all the people! I cannot think of another event where the whole town comes out, people of all ages, all neighborhoods. What fun!"



LISA BURLINI

**Claire Roth (L) and Pat Winther (R).** Winther: "I love watching the children enjoying the parade. The children just loved it. It's nice to see there's such a variety in the parade."



LISA BURLINI

**Jay Ward:** "My favorite thing about the Orinda 4th of July Parade is that it's somehow managed to keep its small town feeling and charm after all these years. In the Bay Area, there aren't many parade events quite like ours, so I really appreciate the support our city gives it."



LISA BURLINI

**Christine Soerensen (mom) and Aiden James Soerensen (baby):** "What I love most about Orinda's 4th of July parade is the festive atmosphere and strong sense of community spirit it brings. The parade is a joyful reminder of the bonds we share as a community, fostering a feeling of togetherness and celebration."

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LISA BURLINI

Top Row (L-R) **Geoffrey Morrison, Jody Morrison.** Bottom Row (L-R) **Lucy Morrison and Alice Gutman.** During high school, Geoff Morrison worked with **Steve Harwood** on the sound equipment for the parade and concert in the park. He hasn't been to the parade since 2004, but this year he wanted to bring his wife and daughter to the parade to share in his 4th of July memories.

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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA Board

HELP TURN HORSEPOWER INTO SENIOR POWER



KATE WILEY and BILL WATERMAN

August in Orinda holds the excitement of a new school year, lingering hot summer days and anticipation of the annual Orinda Classic Car Show, Sept. 9.

This is the primary annual fundraising event for Seniors Around Town (SAT). Fifty percent of our budget comes from the net proceeds, the remainder from generous donations and grants.

This year, SAT's request for donations coincides with the car show. Our matching gift program runs Aug. 1 through Sept. 10, which means the donation you make now will be doubled dollar-for-dollar, and we won't disturb you again during the busy holidays.

For the past 18 years, we've provided free door-to-door transportation for Orinda seniors to medical appointments, errands

and social events, helping senior residents to age in place, regain independence and connect with the community. As we say at the car show, help us turn "horsepower into senior power."

Use this QR code to donate to SAT online, make your donation at the car show or mail a check to The Orinda Association, P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA, 94563.



Classic Car Show

Among the more than 150 outstanding classic, vintage, modern, exotic and supercars, there is a special grouping of "Land Yachts" – beautiful luxury cars from the

[SEE OA BOARD page 5]

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.

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THE Orinda ASSOCIATION

The Orinda Association  
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 www.OrindaAssociation.org

All officers and board members volunteer their time.

★ Thank You to Our 4th of July Volunteers ★

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| Mark Estis                    | National Charity League  |                             |
| Meghan Frey                   | Duncan and Julie Oliver  |                             |
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And to Starbucks for donating the coffee that kept the team working hard.

*All our gratitude*  
 Sally Hogarty and Carson Cordova, Co-Chairs



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www.orindaassociation.org/seniors-around-town

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MIRAMONTE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



SOPHIE WAMPLER

ONE Executive Director, **Emily Allen's** extended family includes lots of multi-generational Matadors. Front row (L-R) **Jeff Allen**, **Matea Araya** and **Tiago Araya** (mom is **Corinne Allen**, not pictured, class of 2002). Second Row (L-R) **Hayden Dorstel**, **Lindsay Allen Dorstel** (class of 2008), **Gemma Leach** (class of 2023), **Vivi Leach** (class of 2026), Emily Allen, **Brad Allen** (class of 2000). Back row (L-R) **Jane Allen** (class of 1973) and **Marcus Dorstel**.

# ONE Launches Alumni Association

BY NATASHA KAYE  
Staff Writer

Orinda is known for its excellent schools and close-knit community. Both are soon to become stronger.

Members of the Orinda Network for Education (ONE) are launching the Miramonte Alumni High School Association or MatsNation ([www.matsnation.org](http://www.matsnation.org)) this month, the first such group for graduates and affiliates.

“We have an unbelievable tradition of alumni and community support at Miramonte and in Orinda, but until now there was no organization or coordination around it. This is an attempt to really bring it all

together,” said Ben Campopiano, principal at Miramonte and a co-founder of MatsNation.

Campopiano, alongside Emily Allen, executive director of ONE, joined forces to form MatsNation to provide a digital and in-person network to engage current and former Miramonte students, as well as local supporters.

The two envision the association as being a resource which highlights alumni achievements and connects students with recent graduates as well as more established alumni who may offer college and career advice and assist with networking in their field.

“How cool would it be to search on our website, say if you want to become a lawyer, to be able to search ‘lawyer’ and have alumni pop up? You can see where they went to college, reach out and ask questions and the alum gets to mentor students,” said Allen. “I think it’s just an amazing opportunity for both students and alumni. It’s a way to give back.”

The site features a blog, volunteer opportunities, events and monthly email updates with news and information on subjects of interest to alumni.

MatsNation was introduced in Miramonte’s class of 2023’s graduation program via a QR code which linked to the website. Allen said, “We’re really excited about the response even though we haven’t officially launched.”

The group has more than 5,000 alumni in the database and they are sending out invitations to join.

Dana Wentworth, from the class of ‘93 said, “This platform will be really helpful, especially for those who are not on social media like me – having kind of this tracking, connectivity system, this nexus would really benefit the community.”

Like many Miramonte alumni, Wentworth has her own informal network, including her mother, class of ‘60, and her daughter, who is a rising junior.

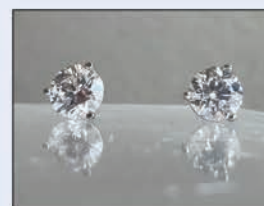
Allen’s family also includes Matadors from past and present classes. “My husband, his mother and her 12 siblings all graduated from Miramonte. Our daughter graduated this year and our other daughter will graduate in three years,” she said. “It’s cool seeing how many multi-generational alumni there are.”

Campopiano is eager to host former grads on campus through presentations, visits, guest speakers, panels, and of course, reunions.

[SEE ALUMNI page 7]



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CLAY DEANHARDT

“Service Above Self,” the title and theme of this new column, is the official motto of Rotary International. It was chosen in 1950 because it conveys the philosophy of unselfish volunteer service, which is one cornerstone of what it means to be a Rotarian.

Service above self is also the cornerstone of what it means to be an Orindan. A community built on service and volunteerism, Orindans serve in many ways: clubs, schools, churches, government boards and coaching, to name a few. Others choose public service careers in education, fire-fighting, public safety, healing, the military and city administration. Many of us participate in more than one (or two, or three) ways.

I am a member of the Rotary Club of Orinda which is celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> year of service during this 2023-2024 club year, which began July 1. In part, we want to honor many local organizations and people who embrace service above self.

So that’s what this column is about. Each month will include something about our club’s history and I will also focus on others who make service a cornerstone of their lives.

I am starting with some public servants who are the glue which binds our community together, our Parks and Recreation Department.

You may not know these people or their leaders, Todd Trimble, Director, Steve Erhardt, Facilities and Sheena Wellman, Recreation. But if you have done anything

at all in Orinda, you’ve benefited from their service.

Big fan of local youth sports? Does your child play at Orinda fields or courts? Is pickleball your jam? Playing in adult leagues or pick-up games? Do you enjoy the public art in Orinda? Food trucks? Summer concerts? Outdoor movies? How about your kid’s Lego, drama, art or coding summer camp?

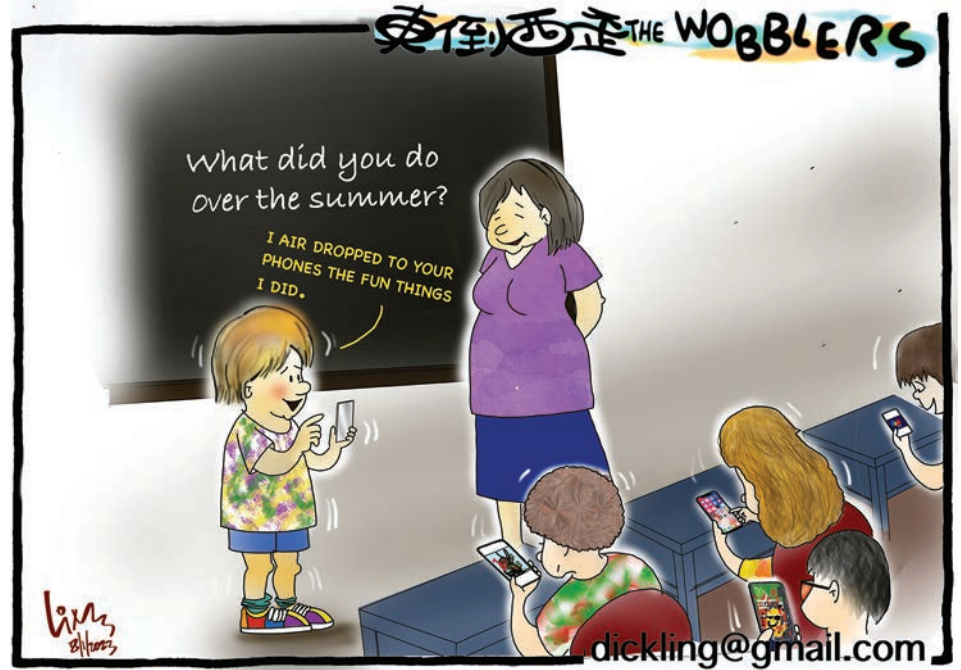
These are all brought to you and managed by the Parks and Rec crew. Because of their hard work, we get to enjoy many opportunities you can’t always find in cities our size.

Behind the scenes, Trimble and his team keep Orinda beautiful, clean and safe. They oversee our public art installations, collaborate with our many garden clubs, manage the Bigbelly Smart Waste and Recycle System, take care of all the city buildings and manage fire fuel mitigation at Orinda parks, properties and open spaces.

I’ve worked side-by-side with Parks & Rec teams for more than 15 years in various capacities, including as a Rotarian. They partner with us for the Spring Egg Hunt, Opera in the Park and many other projects.

I’ve seen the tireless, professional work they do firsthand (Trimble was hauling tables before 7 a.m. on July 4) and am fortunate to consider them friends. Because they do their jobs so well, you may never notice they are around. But I encourage you, the next time you are at the Community Center or see them on a field or taking care of our buildings – stop. Introduce yourself.

Thank them for all the service we never



have to think about, but which makes every day brighter for us all.

Clay Deanhardt can be reached at claydeanhardtrotary@gmail.com.

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◆ **OA BOARD** from page 3

mid-1950s through 1970s.

For some, these are the cars we grew up with – that our parents drove us around in if we were lucky, or more likely, we eyed longingly from afar. Cadillacs, Lincoln Continentals, Buicks, Oldsmobiles and Chryslers epitomized the height of American design and style.

See super-stylish Cadillac convertibles with the big fins and Continental convertibles with amazing lines. Plus, beautiful Buick Rivieras, which combined luxury with performance. Learn the story behind each car from their owners.

Come to the Orinda Village on Saturday, Sept. 9, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and check out these amazing cars.

This is a super-fun family-friendly event. Enjoy food, drinks and music. Enter our raffle to win a kids-sized luxury car and visit all the local non-profit and vendor booths too.

Admission is free and all proceeds support our OA Seniors Around Town ride program. For more information or to enter your car in the show, go to [www.orindacarshow.com](http://www.orindacarshow.com). See you there.

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

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR / POLICE

# Letters to the Editor

## Takeaways with Running for a Seat on the Orinda City Council

Last fall I ran for city council. I want to share some insights every Orindan should know.

The council is a volunteer position requiring dedication, but the position is very powerful.

Running for council involves acquiring signatures, paying an administrative fee and active campaigning. Not a huge barrier to entry.

Council meetings occur twice a month. They are open to all, though typically attended by a recurring group of residents.

Running a *winning* campaign requires significant funds. My expenditure was minimal at \$300, but winners typically raise substantially more, resulting in a cost of about \$2.20 - \$4.00 per vote. This is important to note because outside money influences elections.

More residents need to get involved.

One of the most oft discussed issues at family gatherings is whether downtown will ever get new retailers, businesses or fill the numerous vacancies in Theatre Square. None of this will happen unless more residents attend meetings.

Schools are the lifeblood of this community. There was a lot of controversy around Measure Z, but ultimately we cannot afford our schools running a deficit (no pun intended). Education is a public good that benefits all of us.

Wildfire evacuation routes are the latest major issue. Attend meetings to find out what's going on.

For my part, I continue to stay involved

(see <https://bit.ly/438gGsz>), but we need more people to be active and participate or the future is going to slip away. Join me Aug. 15 to witness our council in person.

– Sunil Rajaraman

## Unbalanced MOFD Funding

The Contra Costa Assessor released his assessed values for 2023-24. Orinda's tax base increased 5.67%, which means our funding to MOFD increased \$1.1 million to \$21.2 million; \$21.8 million including the parcel tax. This equates to about \$1,120 per person or \$3,000 per household annually.

The rub is, our "partners" in Moraga, who receive the same service as we do and have the same number of firefighters per capita stationed in Moraga as we have in Orinda, are paying 2/3 as much, \$2,000 per household.

Why so much less? Does it cost MOFD less to service them?

No, it is because \$4.3 million Orinda tax dollars are subsidizing service in Moraga; \$270,000 more than last year; \$1.3 million more than five years ago.

This is not the deal we thought we were making when we formed MOFD. Our City Council "promised" Orinda tax dollars would be used in Orinda.

At their last meeting, the MOFD board chose not to charge Moraga an additional \$2 million, which they had the power to do, so Orinda's tax revenue could be used for wildfire prevention services in Orinda.

Orinda's Board Representative, Mike Roemer, made a five-minute speech saying it is unfair to tax Moragans, with a median household income of \$170,000, an addi-

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tional \$340 a year, \$1 a day. But he does not think it unfair that Orinda households are paying \$1,000 a year per household more than Moragans for identical service.

More information can be found at [www.saferorinda.info/latest-news](http://www.saferorinda.info/latest-news).

– Steve Cohn

## Orinda Can and Should Propose a Revised Housing Distribution

The Environmental Impact Report for planned development in Orinda found that such development would have a "significant" adverse impact on emergency response and evacuation in the event of a wildfire due to the addition of 1,618 new housing units at downtown chokepoints. The Orinda City Council, nevertheless, approved the development plan.

*The Orinda News* incorrectly stated in its July issue that redistributing most of the proposed new housing from downtown to the vacant, 10-acre parcel near Cal Shakes, owned by CalTrans, "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."

In fact, HCD's rejection was likely due to the City's proposal being for a strictly lower income outpost, to which housing advocates objected.

HCD directed that "the City must continue ... implementation of ... rezon[ing]

the CalTrans Gateway site and decertify the cite to allow for affordable housing development by January 2026."

Orinda is allowed to ask HCD for permission to amend the Housing Element and propose a different distribution of new housing. Orinda should propose a high density, mixed income, mixed use project with amenities at the CalTrans site, which would obviate the objections and mitigate the adverse evacuation impact caused by the current plan to concentrate new housing at downtown chokepoints. There are no risks to asking.

– Nick Waranoff

**Editor's Note:** A letter to City Manager, David Biggs, from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), dated March 30, 2023 states, "For your information, HCD did not consider the CalTrans site as part of demonstrating adequate sites to accommodate the Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) and as a result, *the site should not be utilized for the purposes of maintaining adequate sites pursuant to Government Code section 65863*. However, *HCD supports the City's efforts to further increase housing choices and affordability beyond the RHNA*, including the CalTrans site and BART site and encourages the City to address the many comments and perspectives as part of the planning process."

Bolding and italics per *The Orinda News*.



## POLICE BLOTTER

June 16 through July 15

### Calls for Service

- Accident with Fire/Ambulance: 1
- Accident - Property: 1
- Adult Missing: 1
- Battery: 1
- Battery, Misdemeanor: 1
- Burglary, Auto: 1: Brookwood Rd.
- Burglary, Residential: 2: undisclosed, Whitehall Dr.
- CVC Unlicensed Driver: 1
- Death, Non-Criminal: 1
- Failure to Obey Officer: 1
- Fraud: 2
- Grand Theft: 1
- Identity Theft: 3
- Motorist Assist: 1
- Petty Theft: 2
- Petty Theft from Vehicle: 4
- Property Found: 2
- Recovered Stolen Vehicle: 1: Shakespeare Theater Way

- Shoplifting: 1: Moraga Way
- Tow: 1
- Trespassing: 1
- Vandalism: 1
- Vehicle Theft: 3: El Toyonal, Fish Ranch Off Ramp, El Camino Moraga

### Arrests

- Driving with Suspended/Revoked License: 2
- DUI, Misdemeanor: 1
- Own/Possess/Control Firearm by Felon/Addict: 1
- Probation Violation: 1
- Property, Receiving Stolen: 1
- Warrant Arrest: 5

– Compiled by David Dierks  
Assistant Editor

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COMMUNITY RECREATION

# City to Explore Options for Dedicated Pickleball Courts

By CAMERON SULLIVAN  
Staff Writer

Ask any tennis or pickleball player about their sport and you're likely to receive an impassioned response. Because Orinda has only three public courts and a practice wall for both sports, players often volley for time, space and the ear of city officials.

In response, the Orinda Parks & Recreation Commission approved an ad hoc committee at their July 12 meeting. Commissioners Steven Danziger and Alex Drexel will explore possibilities for new, dedicated pickleball courts in the city. It's a step toward compromise between Orinda's tennis players and people who embrace the popularity of pickleball.

The committee of two is also tasked with researching locations for a possible off-leash dog park.

Ana Maria Schnier, who took up pickleball about a year ago, contacted *The Orinda News* about the efforts of pickleball players to secure better public facilities and playing times. She added the city has painted pickleball lines to existing tennis courts and portable nets are available to users.

"One problem is it can be difficult to discern the pickleball lines," she said. "We're sensitive that people want to keep the tennis courts they're accustomed to. It would be much easier if either the courts were better lined or if there were more pickleball drop-in hours and dedicated pickleball courts."

While tennis in the United States dates to 1847, pickleball was founded 58 years ago on Bainbridge Island, WA. Longtime tennis players may argue pickleball is a passing fancy, but many Orindans think otherwise.

"The sport is here to stay and has obvious social and health benefits," said Orinda resident and ardent pickleball player, Colette Kersten, during the July meeting.

She strongly encouraged building dedicated pickleball courts, saying players frequently travel to Concord, Montclair, Berkeley and other cities to play at desirable times.

Prior to the commission meeting, Todd Trimble, Director of Orinda Parks and Recreation, said he believes people agree that sharing is fine, but there is enough interest in both sports to consider dedicated spaces.

Commissioner Arran Schultz said building dedicated pickleball courts could take many years and at great expense.

In response, resident and pickleball player Roxy Jones recommended short and medium-term alternatives, asking, "Could the ad hoc committee look at alternatives that might cost less and not be fully dedicated?"

Miramonte High School tennis coach, Andrew Lee, told *The Orinda News* he and other tennis players believe the city should not convert one of the existing courts to a dedicated pickleball court.

"Taking away 33% of the tennis courts would be too much," he said.

Last spring, Orindans Perry Shustack and Leslie Rose wrote public comments to the city with similar concerns. They stated although high school courts are available for public use, availability is limited to when school is not in session.

Many factors will determine the next steps. Danziger and Drexel will address the need for short and mid-term alternatives and for locations not exceptionally



JEFF HEYMAN

Pickleball players (L-R) **Tetiana Petty, Marty Johnson, Deb Maurer** (in background) and **Karl Petty** (hitting the ball), play the popular game on tennis court #1 at the Orinda Community Center Park. The Orinda Parks and Recreation Commission is exploring the possibility of dedicated pickleball courts.

close to residences, given the sound of pickleball play.

Trimble's staff is researching electronic sign-up platforms to streamline reservations for pickleball, tennis, picnic areas and

other activity spaces.

Contact the ad hoc committee by emailing [orindaparksandrec@cityoforinda.org](mailto:orindaparksandrec@cityoforinda.org).

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

### ◆ ALUMNI from page 4

"Everyone will benefit from the coordination of our alumni base and bringing them back to Miramonte so they can share their experiences," he said.

As an extension of ONE, MatsNation will continue its fundraising efforts for Orinda public schools in any areas deemed necessary, according to Allen.

"When I look at this I think, our Orinda students have had such an amazing opportunity because of organizations like ONE," said Allen. "[MatsNation] allows you to feel like you could give back to the community that launched ... you."

Natasha Kaye can be reached at [natashakaye@berkeley.edu](mailto:natashakaye@berkeley.edu).

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ORINDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY / SPORTS

**Proclamation Recognizing Orinda Historical Society**



SHERI SMITH

Mayor **Inga Miller** presents a proclamation to Orinda Historical Society President, **Alison Burns** thanking the society for their endeavors in sharing Orinda's history with the community. Established in 1970 as a membership-based, non-profit organization, its mission is to preserve, protect and share the history of Orinda.

During the pandemic, members of the Orinda Historical Society continued to work behind shuttered doors to sort through decades of documents and artifacts and rearrange the Museum's layout to make it even better than before. It's volunteer members also worked tirelessly to recruit new board members to include **Cheryl Cechvala, Reg Barrett, Kathy Barrett, Laurie Smith, Alison Burns, Nancy Royster, Vivian Ricci, Teresa Long** and **Wendy Harnett**.

Museum members reopened its doors last December in the Orinda Library building, 26 Orinda Way, making it accessible to all residents by extending hours to Saturdays, one day a month and during the Thursday night food truck community gathering.

Volunteers have also restarted the Schools Program, participation in the Orinda Classic Car Show, participation in Orindawoods 50th Anniversary Celebration and mailing newsletters.



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**GAME ON**

**PRE-SEASON BUTTERFLIES**



MARK BELL

It's the start of August. If I stand on the ledge of my pool deck, facing ever so slightly southwest toward Miramonte High School, and if the breeze is just right, I can smell September. The fresh, pig-skin leather footballs released from storage bags. The overly chlorinated pool water splashed on hot cement from water polo practice. The slow-floating dust clouds as the cross-country team darts through the dry, turned soil in the orchard behind Paul Yriberri Field. The newly opened cans of tennis balls. The freshly cut wet grass of the Moraga golf course. Yes, even the abandoned 'lucky sock,' still standing alone in the corner of the locker room, unwashed after last year's playoffs.

I love it all.

I can't wait for fall sports to officially begin. It brings back countless memories of when my kids played high school sports. And even when I played, almost two thousand years ago.

In the back of my closet, just past the out-of-vogue suit I no longer wear and the slacks which no longer fit, way, way in the back, is my high school football jersey. Every time I catch a glance of it, a Pandora's box of memories and nostalgia are unleashed.

Across the back of this Jurassic-era jersey reads 'RE-MARK-A-BELL' – the badge of a cocky linebacker who was half certain, when Jack "Hack-saw" Reynolds announced his retirement from the 49ers, he'd be getting a phone

call from Eddie DeBartolo Jr.

A thousand great memories and life lessons live on that hanger.

In a nutshell, that's my hope with this new column. To help make hangers. I want to create something which brings it all back. To highlight the amazing time in our young Orindan's lives as they play local sports and to provide parents a positive trip down memory lane. Let's make a tangible remembrance to glue in the scrapbook. Not a self-dissolving phone message or long scrolled past tweet. But an old school, printed in the paper, news clipping. Fit to be cut out with scissors and framed. Heck, scan it onto www.ancestry.com for all of the family tree to see long after you're gone.



MARK BELL

Shiny and new, the freshly released 2023 Miramonte Matadors' football helmet is ready to start collecting storied battle scars. Streaks of Campo Cougar blue on the left, gold Los Lomas Knights jersey string still caught under the snap on the right. Facemask dings from celebratory touchdown headbutts. It's all coming. The Mats helmet redesign season officially begins August 25, home game, 7 p.m. Come watch.

That said, I'd like to hear about games I need to catch and which local sports aren't getting the love they deserve? Who are the amazing athletes I need to know? Where is local sports history about to be made? Who is a great subject for my camera lens? Let's hear it – I'm game.

Let's make this a two-way street. What big sports news is coming? I'd love it if you, the sports community, will be my ear to the ground. I'll cover what I can. Find me taking in the warmth of the Friday night lights at Miramonte or simply email me.

Mark Bell can be reached at [mark@omegalightingdesign.com](mailto:mark@omegalightingdesign.com).



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4TH OF JULY

2023 4th of July Parade Memories



Rolling in convertible-style, the Orinda City Councilmembers with Mayor **Inga Miller** at the wheel, Vice Mayor **Darlene Gee** (front passenger), **Janet Riley** (behind Miller) and **Latika Malkani**. City Clerk **Sheri Smith** and City Manager **David Biggs**, who followed in the City Chipper, helped decorate Miller's car.



Orinda Country Club members (L-R) **Andrea Brown**, **Kristina Barnes** and **Mike Brown** had some golf cart fun in Orinda's Annual 4th of July Parade.



Families and friends dressed in patriotic attire, waved flags and cheered during the 4th of July parade.



Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8063 raised the flag and scout troop 284 carried The Orinda Association Banner signaling the beginning of the parade.



Longtime friends **Scott Butler** (L) and **Steve Harwood** (R) teamed up to emcee the parade on the Village side of Orinda.



A large contingent of the Meadow Swim and Tennis Club members, along with their dolphin mascots, marched in the parade.

PHOTOS BY JEFF HEYMAN

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STUDENTS

# Holden Students Thrive in Non-Traditional Learning Environment

By CHARLEEN EARLEY  
Editor-in-Chief

Holden High School, Orinda's only private, non-traditional school, specializes in meeting the academic and social-emotional needs of unique teens with learning differences and/or social-emotional challenges. It opened in 1969, with a mission to allow students to co-create their educational journey in a revolutionary learning environment.

With less than 50 students, the model works.

Meet incoming seniors Nicole Johnson and Ari Gold, who started at Holden in the ninth grade.

"I have been enjoying Holden," said Johnson, who lives in Pleasanton with her mom, dad and best friend, Hamilton, her pug. "I like the small size of the school; it makes it not too overwhelming."

Johnson said she can't choose a favorite teacher because, "I tend to enjoy every teacher, as they all have individual teaching styles."

She does have a favorite subject. "My academic favorite is English, because it makes the most sense to me out of all," she said.

Johnson credits Holden for helping her to ask questions and to ask for help.

"I was unable to do that at prior schools. There was really nothing holding me back



MICHAELA JOY

During the pandemic, Ari Gold, an incoming senior at Holden High School, said her anxiety was at its worst. Her mom Gina Gold bought her a horse, which helped Ari tremendously. Ari has developed a bond with her horse named Esme and said caring for him and riding trails calms her.



BRENDA FLORES

Holden High student, Nicole Johnson, with her best friend, Hamilton (pug), mom Susan Pettigrew, dad Steve Johnson with Schuyler, their husky mix. Nicole said outside of school, she enjoys hanging out with her two dogs, watching TV and most importantly, creating digital and traditional art.

besides my own fears. I just had to get over that and the teachers at Holden are so open to questions – it made me feel okay asking," she said.

After graduation, Johnson wants to work for an animation studio as an animator or a concept artist, "stuff along those lines, just anything creative."

Parents Susan and Steve are proud of their daughter.

"Any parent will tell you there are many challenges along the way with kids in school. We are no different from other families," said Steve. "Susan and I think it is important to listen to your kid, trust the answers and try to figure it out from there.

When Nicole finished eighth grade and we were looking for traditional high school options, Holden provided a pathway."

Gold, of Orinda, said she absolutely loves Holden.

"It is the best school I have ever gone to because of the individualized attention and fantastic and caring staff with an ability to be empathetic and supportive," she said.

Diagnosed with dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia, Gold also struggles with anxiety.

"Holden is really attentive to that," she said. "My teachers help me to overcome my challenges, especially in math. I have a lot more confidence than I used to."

She wants to become a therapist, "because I struggle with anxiety and have worked very hard to overcome it. I would like to help others do the same."

Gold said her anxiety heightened during the pandemic.

"I graduated from middle school online and then started Holden remotely. At first my anxiety was so bad I couldn't even turn my camera on during class. With help from the staff, I was able to overcome it, and now that we are in person, I am involved in academic activities, including student council and I have a lot of wonderful friends."

Gold's mother Gina, a single mom, said she's had to wear many different hats. She gives tips for parents with kids who face various challenges.

"Try not to panic when you find out your child has a struggle of any kind, whether it be emotional or academic," she said. "It's important to listen and to validate the experience your child is having and to stay

[SEE HOLDEN page 11]

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PERFORMING ARTS

# Talented Young Performers Sing in 17th Annual Lamorinda Idol

By AMY MOELLERING  
Staff Writer

When the Lamorinda Idol Finals were held in the Orinda Community Park, due to pandemic restrictions in 2021, Miranda Klein was performing *What is this Feeling* from *Wicked* with Anna Tanner.

Klein, now 11, and a four-time champion, said, “We were in the middle of the song when a big wind blew Anna’s witch hat right off her head and off the stage. We almost burst out laughing but we held it together and didn’t miss a note.”

Miranda’s mother, Jennifer, said, “We



CHARLIE JARRETT

Sponsored by the Lamorinda Arts Council, 28 Lamorinda Idol singers, grades 2 through 12, performed at the Orinda Community Center Park on July 13. Among the singers – the last act of the evening – was **Vivian Welch**, incoming sixth grader, who sang *My Shot* from *Hamilton*. The Lamorinda Idols’ next performance is at the Moraga Commons on Aug. 2 at 6 p.m. Finals are at the Orinda Theatre on Aug. 20, a day-long event beginning at 11 a.m., with the awards portion starting between 7 - 7:30 p.m.

have found Lamorinda Idol to be a welcoming community of talented kids and lovely families. Steve Harwood is a fantastic leader and advocate for these youth singers.”

Lamorinda Idol began in 2006, when *American Idol* was in its fourth season and breaking records as one of the most successful shows in broadcasting history. The show captured the imaginations of Art Council members Susan Garell and Petra Michel, whose daughters inspired them to create Orinda Idol, a youth singing competition, which became an instant success. It evolved to include Lafayette and Moraga.

Based on *American Idol*, singers submit audition videos as soloists or groups in grade-based categories. In April, 84 soloists and 18 groups auditioned.

On August 20, in the Orinda Theatre, 34 soloists and 12 groups will compete for cash prizes before a panel of three judges. Their song selections span genres from Broadway tunes to classic, country and contemporary pop favorites, and like the TV show, there is an Audience Award.

Since April, runners-up and finalists are busy with workshops and public performances.

Harwood, chairman since 2009, has witnessed the competition’s evolution.

“At its core, the program is an opportunity for young people to pursue their passion for singing and bringing joy to the community,” he said.

Sally Hogarty, past Master of Ceremonies and a judge for several years, said she is always pleasantly surprised at the level of talent.

“I have been truly blown away by many of the singers, including some as young as seven-years-old,” said Hogarty.

Svea Petersen, a ninth grader and com-

petitor since 2018, has benefited from the sessions Rena Wilson, a professional vocal coach, offers to the finalists.

“Rena is insightful in enhancing your vocal techniques and connecting to the emotional parts of a song,” said Petersen.

Petersen also attributed the different venues to helping her growth as a vocalist.

“I’ve learned to be patient with myself and have gained overall confidence in my music abilities and in situations that require stage presence,” she added.

Lamorinda Idol helped Petersen connect with other singers, leading to the formation of “4 O’Clock,” a group of high school students who have sung together for five years.

Some of the participants hope to pursue professional careers, but regardless, Lamorinda Idol has provided valuable life skills, particularly how to handle high-pressure, nerve-wracking situations.

Palig Houlipan, a rising eighth grader, said at last year’s finals, she kept missing the beat during practice.

“I started to freak out and my parents told me not to overthink it,” she said. “Once on stage, I told myself to go for it. I disguised my worry and it felt like a little miracle because I didn’t mess up.”

Houlipan gives advice to others.

“Do what you love and don’t let others peer pressure you,” she said. “I used to think it was embarrassing to admit I loved singing. Finally, I realized I shouldn’t hide what I’m passionate about.”

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

◆ HOLDEN from page 10

positive and know there are resources available. Sometimes you have to think outside the box to solve a problem. You may have to ask a lot of questions and be open to different solutions.

“I strongly recommend Holden to parents, because of their individualized attention and strong focus on social and emotional growth.”

Gold sometimes wishes she could turn back time.

“I’m sad I only have one more year at Holden,” she said. “It’s such a supportive place.”

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

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**TEEN CORNER**  
 DMV Dilemma: Decrease in Student Driver's Licenses Explained  
 Nicole Lamison



By NICOLE LAMISON  
 Staff Writer

As kids, we plan our time around our parents' schedules. We rely on them to chauffeur us to soccer practices, haircuts, birthday parties and everything else occurring outside a one-mile radius of home. As a pre-16-year-old, I had to endure the scheduling bureaucracy of my parents every time I wanted to leave the house. This is how my search for a ride typically went:

- Ask mom for ride
- Mom is busy and says to ask dad instead
- Ask dad for ride
- Dad says to ask mom
- Repeat cycle until success

I was eager to turn 16 and obtain my license. I assumed this was universal and all kids were itching to get their driver's license, but that is not the case. In 2020, the U.S. saw an extreme decrease. The Washington Post reported a mere 25%

of 16-year-olds had their license in 2020 compared to 43% in 1997.

COVID-19 had an impact on this number as many DMV offices were temporarily closed. Yet, now that we are out of the pandemic, the question must be raised: *why are there still so many teens without their license?* As a senior in high school, many of my peers have not taken the initiative to get their permit, let alone their license.

As someone who has been a teen for what seems like a lifetime, I concocted a few theories to answer this question.

**Theory #1: Inconvenience and Expense**

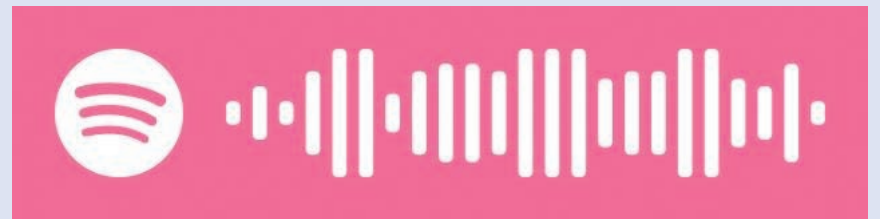
Students used to take driver's ed courses free of charge at high school where the assistant baseball coach doubled as its teacher. That ended in 1990 when California pulled the funding for these courses in public schools. Today, students must hire a professional driving instructor

**Teen Tunes Spotify Playlist**

By NICOLE LAMISON  
 Staff Writer

The Orinda News presents *Teen Tunes*, a Spotify playlist curated by a local teen to show what teens are boppin' to. There are some classics, such as *Dancing in the Moonlight* and some newer hits from artists including The Weeknd, SZA and Tory Lanez. Of

course, there is a healthy amount of Taylor Swift songs, as every playlist needs some Swiftie. We couldn't forget to add a few 2000s and 2010s pop songs. Grab your headphones, relax and enjoy.



for the mandatory six hours of behind-the-wheel training, at a cost of up to \$800.

News Flash: Teens actually value their time and money despite our sometimes nonchalant attitudes. When obtaining a driver's license became an inconvenience, teens took a back seat rather than go through the hassle. This undoubtedly contributed to the drastic decrease of teens getting their licenses.

**Theory #2: Accessible Transportation**

From BART to buses, and more recently, Uber to Lyft, travel has become easier. In large metropolitan areas, like the Bay Area, transit is available on every block. Driver's licenses seem unnecessary to teens in a world of rides at the click of a button.

**Final Theory: Fear**

Teens are afraid of accidents or something negative happening which is out of

their control. In Orinda, we navigate narrow roads with no shoulders, then merge onto freeways, tunnels and bridges, which is nerve-wracking even for experienced drivers. Having been in a car accident myself (on the freeway, no less), I know firsthand they are not enjoyable experiences. Driving is scary. Even if you have control of your vehicle, drivers nearby can initiate an accident.

As teens, we don't have much independence. To me, 16 is the glorious age when we can gain coveted independence. Yes, we still rely on our parents in other ways. However, if you are fortunate enough to have access to a car, then having a license gives far more freedom over how your time is spent.

My advice: Ditch the parental scheduling bureaucracy, climb into the driver's seat and get your license!

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

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EDUCATION

# Fresh and Familiar Faces for School District Principal Offices

By ANDREA MADISON  
Staff Writer

The Orinda Union School District (OUSD) welcomes three new principals, two of whom are familiar faces in the district.

Megan Natal is the incoming principal at Glorietta Elementary, following the retirement of Tracey Lewis. Natal's former position as the associate principal at Orinda Intermediate School (OIS) is being filled by Ashley Appel who has been with the district for 13 years.



COURTESY OF MEGAN NATAL

Megan Natal, Glorietta Elementary's new principal, has been with the Orinda Union School District for many years. She began at Wagner Ranch Elementary in 2005 where she taught fourth grade and kindergarten and has spent the past two years as Orinda Intermediate's associate principal.

Eric Acosta-Verprauskus, from West Contra Costa Unified, takes the helm at Wagner Ranch Elementary.

"So far, it's been a great transition," said OUSD Superintendent Aida Glimme of the staff changes.

"I have the institutional knowledge and I know the community really well," said Natal, emphasizing her longevity with the district.

Natal began at Wagner Ranch in 2005 and taught fourth grade for many years before switching to kindergarten. She transferred to OIS, working the past two years as associate principal.

She highlighted a positive approach to her skills in problem-solving and a goal to work collaboratively with district lead-



COURTESY OF ERIC ACOSTA-VERPRAUSKUS  
Orinda Union School District welcomes principal Eric Acosta-Verprauskus to Wagner Ranch Elementary. Acosta-Verprauskus spent 10 years as a school administrator for the West Contra Costa Unified School District and has also held the role of classroom teacher.

ership, parents and staff to help support students.

"I've always had student-centered learning as just a pinpoint for everything that I've done, whether it was [as] a teacher or now as an administrator," said Natal. "I'm always focusing on the students and what is best for them."

Family is very much an interest for Natal, whose two daughters attended Wagner Ranch and will attend OIS this year. She resides in Martinez.

"I loved my time at OIS and the team I worked with," said Natal, expressing her excitement at the opportunity to return to her elementary school roots.

Acosta-Verprauskus, with 10 years' ex-

perience as a school administrator, taught in the classroom and won Teacher of the Year in his district.

"In those 10 years of administration, I had a strong track record of building safe, positive and inclusive student culture and climate," said Acosta-Verprauskus. "Making sure our students all feel at home and feel safe to be who they are, to express who they are at the school site."


The ability to recruit and retain high impact staff is a source of pride for Acosta-Verprauskus, who emphasized the importance of working in partnership with parents and making sure they feel comfortable accessing the school and guiding its

vision and mission.

"I have really enjoyed working to improve enrichment opportunities for students," he said, ensuring multiple opportunities for art, music and gardening.

"Improving and increasing the mental health services on [school sites] has always been really important to me," the principal added. He is looking forward to supporting the recently implemented wellness centers at the Orinda schools.


A resident of the May Valley Community in Richmond, Acosta-Verprauskus has three young children, two of whom will join him at Wagner Ranch. He enjoys being [SEE OUSD page 14]



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COURTESY OF ASHLEY APPEL  
Orinda Intermediate School (OIS) has a new associate principal, Ashley Appel, who is taking over the position vacated by Megan Natal. Appel brings 13 years of experience at Orinda schools to OIS, both in the classroom and as a math coach.

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

**Fall classes and camp registrations open Aug. 7.**  
**Summer Camp Sessions run through Aug. 11 - Register Now.**

**Orinda Tennis Fall Kickoff Event, Saturday, August 19, 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. FREE. Registration Required.**

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

**Thursday night concerts this month are August 3 and 24, 6 to 8 p.m.**


**Friday night movies this month are August 18 and 25. 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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**Winter Production December 2023**



SEASONED SHOPPER

◆ OUSD from page 13

outdoors, camping, fishing, archery and is an avid reader.

Appel's tenure in Orinda includes classroom teaching and math coaching.

"A strength I bring is understanding the community and knowing a lot of the families and the students," said Appel. "As a math coach, I worked at all five school sites, which really familiarized myself with getting to know those students, so it's

really fun."

Appel enjoyed seeing students during her math coaching at OIS who she had previously taught in second or third grade.

A resident of Oakland, Appel was a professional dancer prior to becoming a teacher. She teaches dance at a studio in San Jose in her free time and enjoys spending time with her family and friends.

Appel has two children, and, as a Bay Area native, feels fortunate to have a lot of family and friends nearby.

Looking to the future, Appel expressed her excitement and emphasized an "amazing" support system including principals, teachers, parents and community members.

"I'm just really grateful for the opportunity," said Appel. "And I'm really looking forward to the school year and growing more and learning more from amazing people at the district level and at the school sites."

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

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

Send to [editor@theorindanews.com](mailto:editor@theorindanews.com)

Seasoned Shopper  
Fabulos Fungi

BARBARA KOBSAR

Calling mushrooms a fungus, which they are, might cause negative connotations, but wait until you see them at the Orinda Farmers' Market. Not always known for their flair, mushrooms are actually in the vegetable food group.

Mushrooms, not as colorful as carrots, tomatoes or squash, are considered a superfood, rich in vitamins and minerals. How can we pass up something so delicious and easy to include with so many meals like omelets, stir-fries, soups and pasta dishes?

Rochelle Knoester, from Fungi Temple, is a new vendor to the Orinda Farmers' Market. Her display of mushrooms is simple and so intriguing. Each variety keeps well, refrigerated in a paper bag, for 7 to 10 days. All mushrooms are very absorbent, so instead of washing, brush off any bits of dirt with a pastry brush or rub gently with a paper towel before preparing.

One of their most popular mushrooms is Lion's Mane. As the name implies, this large, white shaggy mushroom resembles its namesake. Shoppers rave about its mild shellfish-like flavor and use it as a substitute in lobster rolls and crab cakes.

Shiitake mushrooms have large, 2 to 4-inch caps and vary from light to dark brown with a pale cream underside. They are prized for their rich, earthy flavor and meaty taste. Want to add a peppery note? Try the Maitake, or Hen of the Woods.

Blue Oyster mushrooms grow in large

clusters with a flat, shelf-like shape and long thick stems. When cooked, they soften and develop a tender, velvety texture.

**Sauteed Lion's Mane by Rochelle Knoester**

8 ounces Lion's Mane, cut into 1-inch slices

1 tablespoon each: butter and olive oil

2 tablespoons soy sauce (or coconut aminos)

1 teaspoon chopped garlic

1 teaspoon each: chopped shallots and parsley (optional)

Heat butter and oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and brown on both sides, about 3 to 4 minutes. Let caramelize on one side before flipping over. Press down with the back of the spatula. Add soy sauce, garlic and shallots. Sauté for 1 to 2 minutes, until garlic and shallots become fragrant. Garnish with parsley. Serve as a side dish with scrambled eggs or simply on a piece of toast. Serves 4.

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://www.facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket), Instagram at [OrindaFarmersMarket](https://www.instagram.com/OrindaFarmersMarket) or call 925.322.6228.

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

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CALENDAR / CLASSIFIEDS

# On the Calendar in August

**Orinda Library** presents Contra Costa County Library's Summer Reading Program through Aug. 5. Kendra Stone through Aug. 31. For all ages. Visit <https://ccclib.org>.

**Art Gallery at Wilder:** Portraits, figurative and surreal paintings by Jennifer Granat through Aug. 4 and David Lew's abstract and nature paintings runs Aug. 5 – Sept. 2. To schedule a viewing, contact Curator Ani Breslin at [anibreslin@berkeley.edu](mailto:anibreslin@berkeley.edu). See article p. 19.

1 **Orinda Library Toddler Spanish/English Storytime** for one to three-year-olds and their caregivers. 10:30 a.m. Also, Aug. 8, 15, 22 and 29.

**Orinda Police** National Night Out 5 - 8 p.m. Orinda Police Department BBQ. Bring a backpack or school supplies to donate, and drop Chief of Police in the dunk tank.

2 **Orinda Library Toddler Storytime** for one to three-year-olds and their caregivers. 10:30 a.m. Also, Aug. 9, 16, 23 and 30.

3 **Orinda Books Pat's Book Club** discusses *Forbidden City* by Venessa Hua. 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 Aug. 10, 17, 24 and 31.

**Concerts-in-the-Park** with *Kate Burkart Band* 6 p.m. Orinda Community Center Park.

4 **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 Aug. 11, 18, and 25. See article p. 14.

**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.

5 **Orinda Books** presents James Roethe, author of *Poetry Takes Flight: Birds of California* 2 p.m. Register at <https://bit.ly/46Pe3z7>.

12 **Orinda Theatre** present the 55th Anniversary of Night of the Living Dead Zombie Festival 10 a.m. For tickets and deluxe packages (which include a custom tee-shirt and pin) go to <https://www.creaturescon.com>.

17 **Orinda Books** presents Farah Karim-Cooper, author of *The Great White Bard* in conversation with Philippa Kelly of CalShakes. 5:30 p.m. Register at <https://bit.ly/3O2uEae>.

**Orinda Theatre Free Movie Night** presents *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. 6:30 p.m.

18 **Movie in the Park, Puss-in-Boots: The Last Wish**. Orinda Community Center Park. Begins at dusk.

19 **Orinda Library** presents Isadora Duncan: Life Into Art, 2 p.m. Garden [SEE CALENDAR page 18]

## ...classified ads

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**Volunteer Drivers Needed** for Seniors Around Town program in Orinda. Call 925.402.4506 for more info.

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

### ◆ CAR SHOW from page 1

ride service for Orinda seniors.

Bea Haase's 1972 Lincoln Continental Mark IV Cartier Edition is certainly in this class.

It belonged to her parents, who bought it for \$9,269 and drove it only for long trips. It was state-of-the-art luxury and, as the name suggests, has an electric Cartier clock in the dashboard, although it no longer keeps time.

*The Black Widow and many other Land Yachts, along with a variety of beloved cars, will be on display in all their glory at the Orinda Annual Classic Car Show, which is free to attend.*

The black beauty with burgundy leather interior is a virtual time capsule, having been garaged since it hit 40,000 miles. Haase said her dad figured a grandchild would want it someday.

"He never anticipated gas prices rising as they did," she said, and none of the grandkids have room for Black Widow. "It is an enormous car."

She said it is not a vehicle one easily parallel parks and the massive hood sometimes makes street visibility impossible when driving up hills.

"The steering is a kick. It is very loose, not like cars are now," said Haase.

She has kept Black Widow in great shape

and has shown it before.

"I know Dad would be happy to know I have it and love it," she added.

The Black Widow and many other Land Yachts, along with a variety of beloved cars, will be on display in all their glory at the Orinda Annual Classic Car Show, which is free to attend. The \$60 registration fee for cars and \$35 for motorcycles benefits Seniors Around Town.

This is the 19th show, a tradition started by Orinda Motors and continues with the help of employees Hans Hiller, Ray Kunz and Xavier Estrada.

Bill Waterman, the show's co-chair for four years, said the Land Yachts idea came to the committee when owners of Lincoln Continental convertibles brought their classic machines to an Orinda event.

He liked how well-kept they are and seeing them reminded people of the time when American-made cars were really long and really large – like boats.

"It was all about comfort and luxury," he said.

The theme is only a suggestion as all kinds of cars are welcome, from perfectly restored garage queens to workhorse daily cars.

The show is family-friendly and located on the northern side of Orinda Village, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. For more information visit [www.orindacarshow.com](http://www.orindacarshow.com).

*Celeste Altus can be reached at [celeste.altus@gmail.com](mailto:celeste.altus@gmail.com).*

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DONATIONS / OBITUARY

# Cardiac Monitors Donated to MOFD in Honor of Pete Wilson

By S. K. GUPTA  
Staff Writer

Honoring Pete Wilson's longtime commitment to fire safety, the Wilson family and the Rescue 1 Foundation donated two portable Cardiac Monitors/Automatic Electronic Defibrillators (AED) to the Moraga Orinda Fire District, (MOFD), to

help save lives. "Pete Wilson was a major force behind the creation of the MOFD in 1997," said Sally Whittaker, president of the foundation. "So, when Mimi Wilson reached out to us to do something to honor his memory, we were delighted to partner." "The LIFEPAK® 1000 defibrillators combine an AED with electrocardiogram



S. K. GUPTA

Mimi Wilson (R) and Rescue 1 Foundation President Sally Whittaker with Battalion Chief Jon Bensley holding one of the donated Cardiac Monitors at MOFD Station 45 in Orinda.



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for the more advanced rescuer," said Line Medic Firefighter Tom Schwedhelm. "Major fire-fighting teams have a line medic who is trained to use these to assist the firefighters."

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MOFD was formed as an independent district, consolidating the Moraga and Orinda Fire Protection Districts, to provide more efficient fire protection and emergency medical services including to surrounding unincorporated areas of Canyon and Bollinger Canyon.

"Creation of MOFD was important to both Pete and me, as the two cities are in a recognized fire hazard zone," said Mimi Wilson, a longtime Orinda resident with her husband Pete. "When Pete died last November, the family wanted to honor his years of commitment to MOFD and with the support of the Rescue 1 Foundation, we were able to donate the portable AEDs."

Pete Wilson was on the MOFD Board of Directors from its inception through 2010.

"He was a steady hand in steering MOFD to its current capabilities and service delivery model," said MOFD Fire Chief Dave Winnacker. "We are grateful for his many years of community service and honored to be able to deploy this cutting-

[SEE MOFD page 18]

## Obituary: Violet Mei Chen Ann Yeager

Violet Mei Chen Ann Yeager, born on Feb. 27, 2014 in Jiyuan, China, died peacefully July 14 in Orinda. She is survived by her parents Ryan and Shauna Yeager, brother Emmett Yeager, grand/godmothers Jeanne "Nie Nie" Yeager of Denver, CO and Linda "Lao Lao" Riehl of Brookfield, CT, great grandparents Anna and Armando DeMarco of Rye Brook, NY and numerous loving aunts, uncles and cousins from Colorado and Connecticut.

Violet was adopted May 25, 2015 in Zhengzhou, China, emigrated via NYC and became a U.S. citizen June 6, 2015 simultaneously with her brother. She had significant special needs and was cared for lovingly by a wide range of doctors, nurses, teachers, social workers, aides, au pairs, friends and family.

Violet loved to be tickled by Emmett, listen to Disney songs, go in the pool and most of all to be held, to hold your hand and to feel kisses on her round cheeks.

Her family is grateful for the love and support of the community, which contributed so positively to Violet during her lifetime and beyond.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Violet Mei Chen Ann Yea

Funeral services were July 25 at St. Monica's Catholic Church, 1001 Camino Pablo, Moraga, CA 94556. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Chinese Children Adoption International in Centennial, CO. Visit <https://public.ccaifamily.org/charity/> donate with "In memory of Violet Yeager" in the comments field. Funds will be distributed to her foster home in Jiyuan, to care for other children with special needs.

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Oh the Places You'll Go / Pets of the Month

Oh the Places You'll Go



COURTESY DEBBIE GANT

Debbie and Tom Gant recently celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary with friends on a trip to Northern Italy. Groppodalosio is a small town of 11 full-time residents near Pontremoli. "It was a wonderful trip, filled with beautiful countryside and rolling green hills," said Debbie Gant.

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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Pets of the Month



FRANCES VALDEZ

"Frankie, a five-year-old husky mix, and Valerie, an 11-year-old Chihuahua-mix, are best friends. Well, at least according to Frankie," said Frances Valdez. "They share hobbies of chasing squirrels and laying in strange positions, which they claim are normal and comfortable. They both recently became big sisters to new babies and have commiserated over the many night wake-ups. They couldn't wait to be Pets of the Month!"

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BUSINESS BUZZ

# Black Lagoon Tiki Bar Opens

By NICOLE LAMISON  
Staff Writer

Picture this. It's a warm summer Friday night in Orinda. It's been a long week and you just want to relax and let loose. *Where should you go?* If this is a situation you've encountered before, then I'm thrilled to present to you the Black Lagoon.

Derek Zemrak, current owner of the Orinda Theatre, has brought a solution to the aforementioned scenario. The temporarily closed wine bar next to the theater, Cine Cuvee, is currently undergoing a rebranding operation. Coming soon, a brand new tiki bar in its place, named for the classic movie *Creature from the Black Lagoon*.

Zemrak took over operations of the Orinda Theatre 13 years ago when there was no alcohol served there. Alcohol licenses for theaters are particularly difficult to obtain, so he decided to open

up a bar next door instead. This allowed movie-goers to get the best of both worlds, a lovely glass of Pinot Noir before catching an action-packed showing of *Avengers Endgame*.

When COVID-19 hit in 2020, Cine Cuvee closed temporarily, giving Zemrak time to contemplate the bar's potential. He noticed that the wine bar seemed to be serving a hodgepodge of bites and beverages without a true cohesive theme.

"The wine bar was doing too many things. It felt like it needed to have some sort of identity," said Zemrak.

Reid Pirkle, son of Leonard Pirkle, Zemrak's partner in a television and film production company, came up with the "tiki" theme for the bar's rebranding.

From there, the pair began to develop the interior design, decoration and menu. In typical tiki fashion, one can expect an ample amount of bamboo, mood-setting string lights and tiki face totems to furbish the bar. There are also several decorative



JEFF HEYMAN

Joseph Cabrera readies Theatre Square's new tiki bar, the Black Lagoon, for customers. In addition to Mai Tais and other exotic cocktails, the bar will serve beer, wine and Polynesian style appetizers.

references to the movie.

Surprisingly, surf boards will not adorn the walls as tiki rules do not allow them inside of bars. Overall, Zemrak's goal is to make the Black Lagoon feel like an escape to a place where one can truly take a breath and chill.

"It's a place where you relax, have really great cocktails and Hawaiian Polynesian music," said Zemrak. "Black Lagoon has a movie-esque kind of feel because you're transported to a different place."

Zemrak's favorite tiki drink and one of the theme's well-known beverages is the Mai Tai. The Mai Tai is composed of both light and dark rum, orange liqueur, lime juice and orgeat syrup. It's oftentimes garnished with lime slices, cherries, mint leaves or pineapple wedges.

This is just one of the many exotic cock-

tails soon to be featured on their beachy menu, along with beer and wine and Polynesian style appetizers.

"I think people are going to be really impressed with the quality of the tiki drinks," said Zemrak. "It's unique and it will be a lot of fun for people to experience it. I think it's going to be a hot place to go."

Zemrak looks forward to serving cocktail specials and hosting discount pricing in conjunction with the Orinda Theatre. So when you hear that Zombies are invading Orinda, don't run for the hills. Instead, head to the Black Lagoon to order one.

The Black Lagoon will be open Thursday from 5 p.m. – 9 p.m., Friday 4 p.m. – 11 p.m., Saturday from 3 p.m. – 11 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m. – 6 p.m.

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

◆ MOFD from page 16

edge equipment as part of his enduring legacy."

Rescue 1 Foundation was established in 1977 as a non-profit, philanthropic organization "to receive and administer contributions in support of our district's paramedic programs and to purchase equipment for our emergency ambulance service," according to its website. This effort continues to provide MOFD with state-of-the-art equipment.

Recent donations include an automated CPR device, a residential utility vehicle and a remote, automatic weather station. For more information, visit [www.rescue1foundation.org](http://www.rescue1foundation.org).

S.K. Gupta can be reached at [sk.gupta.us@gmail.com](mailto:sk.gupta.us@gmail.com).

◆ CALENDAR from page 15

Room. Seating is limited to first-come, first-served.

**Chiller Diller Theater** presents *The Thing*, 8:30 p.m.

24 **Concerts-in-the-Park** with *Vintage Jukebox* 6 p.m. Orinda Community Center Park.

25 **Movie in the Park**, *Encanto*. Orinda Community Center Park. Begins at dusk.

25 **Orinda Books** presents Richard Kluger, author of *Hamlet's Children* in conversation with Mary Mackey 3 p.m. Register at <https://bit.ly/3pHIBck>.

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

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VISUAL ARTS

# Orinda Library and Wilder Galleries

By MAGGIE BOSCOE  
Contributing Writer

## Orinda Library Art Gallery: Paintings and Photographs

Kendra Stone is a self-taught artist who enjoys exhibiting at libraries in the Lamorinda area. This is her first showing at the Orinda Library, now through Aug. 31.

Stone ([www.kendrastoneart.com](http://www.kendrastoneart.com)), who recently moved from Moraga to Vallejo, held her first exhibit at the Moraga Library in 2016.

Transitioning as an acupuncturist, herbalist and yoga teacher to a full-time artist, she experienced humble beginnings.

“While at the library, I had a conversation with the librarian about teaching myself to paint,” said Stone. “The librarian asked to see some of my work and after viewing several on my phone, she requested using some of the raptor paintings in a display to promote an upcoming falconry exhibit at the library.”

Of course, the answer was yes.

Since living in Alaska as a child, Stone has loved being in nature, leading her to create pieces which reflect the beauty of wildlife and seascapes.

Within her home art studio, she enjoys capturing expressive eyes and the softness of fur and feathers.

“Once I choose a subject, I study it – the shapes, textures and colors,” she said. “With wildlife, I love to learn as much as I can about the animal I am painting.”

Stone primarily paints from photographs, some she has taken.

“I often use several photographs for a painting,” she said. “I use acrylics, a fast-drying medium, which takes many layers to develop depth.”

A member of the Lamorinda Arts Council and the Lamorinda Arts Alliance,

Stone explains, “Making art for me is a continuous exploration; I am always learning with every single painting, not only about techniques, but about my subjects,” she said. “I love the challenge of capturing their beauty.”

Her methods get to the soul of her subject – in a safe way.

“When painting wildlife, I am able to get closer to the spirit of the animals, even if I never get close to them in the wild,” said Stone. “I take pride in being accurate with details.”

Stone offers advice to those contemplating becoming an artist. “Just do it and practice, practice, practice,” she said. “Don’t be afraid to play, it’s just paint.”

Also showcased at the Orinda Library are paintings by Holly Bazeley, joined by historic photographs and information about building Orindawoods. Orinda photographer Jeff Heyman exhibits 28 contemporary black and white photographs of the San Pablo Valley.

Meet the artists and enjoy light refreshments at their reception Aug. 5 from 3 to 5 p.m.

## Art Gallery at Wilder: Surreal and Abstract Nature Paintings

Jennifer Granat’s virtual exhibits of figurative and surreal paintings ends Aug. 4, and artist David Lew’s abstract and nature paintings runs Aug. 5 – Sept. 2. Visit Lew’s artwork online at [www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries/](http://www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries/).

To schedule a viewing, contact Ani Breslin at [anistonbreslin@berkeley.edu](mailto:anistonbreslin@berkeley.edu). For more information, call the Lamorinda Arts Council at 925.359.9940 or visit [www.lamorindaarts.org](http://www.lamorindaarts.org).

Maggie Boscoe can be reached at [fleetwood7@comcast.net](mailto:fleetwood7@comcast.net).

## Artist Kang Displays at Moraga Art Gallery

Orinda artist Thuy Linh Bennett Kang’s exhibition, “Wonders of Man and Nature,” runs from Aug. 16 to Oct. 22 at the Moraga Art Gallery, 432 Center



COURTESY OF THUY LINH BENNETT KANG



COURTESY OF THUY LINH BENNETT KANG

Street, Moraga. “I paint lotus blossoms awash with colors, gleaming with resin, and subtly obscured by memory. The lotus emerges from murky waters, serving as a reminder of our own ability to emerge from darkness. It shows us that every day brings with it new hope,” said Kang. A reception is Sat., Aug. 19, from 5 – 7 p.m.

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COURTESY OF KENDRA STONE

Artist Kendra Stone beside her acrylic painting, *Puma in Repose*, she is showing this month at the Orinda Library Art Gallery.

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MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

# From Los Angeles Indie Band to Calm Meditation Music in Orinda

By KATHY CORDOVA  
Executive Editor

What brings a professional music producer, singer and songwriter from the bustling Los Angeles scene to the peace and quiet of the Orinda hills?

As a founding member of the indie band Milo Green, Andrew Heringer, age 38, has toured North America, appeared on *The Tonight Show* and had his music featured in popular television shows like *NCIS* and *Grey's Anatomy*.

Read on to learn why he made the move to Orinda and what he's up to now.

**Tell us a little about your life and your work?**

I've always known I wanted to do music. I feel like it was a divine intervention when I was in fifth or sixth grade. I was playing music and it's almost like I heard something say, "This is your path."

After graduating UC Irvine as a theater major, I started driving around playing music anywhere I could – coffee shops, street corners and farmers' markets.

I started the band Milo Green with some friends from Los Angeles. We immediately

got a record deal with Atlantic Records and the group just took off with a momentum of its own.

We toured with The Civil Wars band, which had just come off a tour with Taylor Swift. They had the best fans in the world. It was absolutely a dream.

**How did you get your music in movies and TV shows?**

Milo Green got very lucky that a company under the Atlantic Records label placed music in a lot of TV shows. After leaving the band, I set up my own relationship with them. They had requests for certain types of songs and they would plug my music into shows.

**Why did you start Dawson Records?**

I wanted my own label to produce both my music and also for other artists. Now is a really cool time for distribution. Prior to the last five to 10 years, it was very hard to get your music out into the world. With streaming and the Internet, there are now companies to help you get out there so you can be your own record label. It's been a big part of my business model to own my recordings. I can put them online and I don't have to cut in a record company.

**What brought you to Orinda?**

My fiancée Carmen and I moved here about a year and a half ago. I grew up in Placerville and I love the way Orinda feels – being in the trees and hills. But I like to drive to Oakland and San Francisco and see friends who are touring and playing music and having access to that culture, too. That's an incredible thing about Orinda.



JEFF HEYMAN

Musician, singer-songwriter, composer and producer, **Andrew Heringer** has a studio in his home in the Orinda hills where he records his own music, as well as music by other artists.

Before the pandemic I couldn't see myself living anywhere but L.A., but that time really changed me – and what I was working on. I started doing a lot of ambient, sleep and meditation music. All of a sudden there were a lot of people looking for music to calm them in this stressful time of uncertainty, so I started to release music under the moniker of Sound Bath.

*"I wanted my own label to produce both my music and also for other artists."*

Sound Bath is streaming on YouTube, Spotify, Apple Music. The services pay differently. It's a fraction of a cent per stream, but when you have enough people listening, it starts to work. By the end of the pandemic, I had freedom to live wher-

ever I wanted with the streaming income and working independently producing and creating music on my own and with other artists.

**Any advice for musicians starting out in the business?**

I think you just make things and there's a learning that comes from the repetition. You learn by doing it and doing it and doing it and over time, a path starts to unfold. There's no way I could have predicted my journey. I started off as a guy singing and playing guitar, and it turned into being in a band and making songs for TV shows and then making ambient music.

Persistence and determination are key to making a life within something you love doing.

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

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