



# THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis  
Volume 38, Number 9

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Delivered to 9,000 Households and Businesses in Orinda

12 Issues Annually  
September 2023

## Measure R Funds: Are They Being Spent as Voters Intended?

By CAMERON SULLIVAN  
Staff Writer

Nearly three years since Orindans voted to approve a supplemental sales tax, some residents are raising concerns about how Measure R funds are being allocated.

The Nov. 3, 2020 ballot measure proposed a 20-year, one-half cent sales tax increase to

fund essential services, including wildfire risk reduction, preparation for emergencies and disasters, repair of public storm drains and public street maintenance.

Campaign efforts for the measure prominently featured wildfire-related messaging. The measure's requirements to create a supplemental sales tax oversight commission (SSTOC), which formed in early 2021,

reassured voters' funds would be spent wisely.

"In 2020, we were led to believe the funds would primarily be used for wildfire prevention," said longtime Orinda resident, Steve Cohn.

Then-Mayor Amy Worth underscored that belief.

"As you know, when you pass a sales

tax, it goes into the general fund and can be spent on anything," she said at the first SSTOC meeting in March, 2021. She noted the Orinda community had identified their priorities for allocating Measure R funds.

"We anticipate that the grand bulk of the first part of the life of this sales tax measure will be devoted to fire, fire prevention and fire preparedness," Worth said, adding implementation is as important as planning and programming.

Although clearly stated in the measure, some voters may not have realized the estimated \$2.4 million dollars in revenue generated from the Measure R tax increase is a general tax. As such, it is deposited into the general fund and can be used for any municipal governmental purpose.

### How are funds being spent?

Measure R expenditures are complex and have included a mix of staffing, legal, finance, community outreach and infrastructure to date. Spending details for the 2023 fiscal year, including expanded wildfire risk reduction projects, will be made available this fall, at which time *The Orinda News* will report them.

[SEE MEASURE R page 19]

### Lamorinda Idol Finalists



DAN KLEIN

Created by the Lamorinda Arts Council, the Lamorinda Idol 2023 finals was a singing success. Held on Aug. 20 at the Orinda Theatre, audience members enjoyed 34 soloists and 10 group performances by kids in grades K-12, along with nine judges, three emcees and countless volunteers. "What a day it was. All of our finalists rose to new heights and gave marvelous performances. The saying goes, 'It takes a village...'" and what a village we had to make this such a success," said Chairman of Lamorinda Idol, **Steve Harwood**. Final results/winners can be found at [www.lamorindaarts.org](http://www.lamorindaarts.org). See p. 5 for winners and photos.

## Tales of Mustang Fastbacks - Two Classics at the Orinda Car Show

By CELESTE ALTUS  
Staff Writer

The Orinda Classic Car Show is in its 19th year and will include about 175 American and European cars from the 1920s to the 70s, and modern exotics. Food, music and car-related vendors will accompany the cars on display. Enjoy this family-friendly outing Saturday, Sept. 9 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. near Orinda Motors, along Orinda Way. Admission is free.

"Land Yachts," enormous American-

made touring sedans, is this year's theme and many will be there buffed and shined, gleaming in the sun.

Orinda resident Buzz Weldy is more of a fan of fast cars rather than Land Yachts.

Weldy is bringing his classic 1965 Ford Mustang Fastback, one of many show-worthy vehicles in his collection. The white and blue-striped Fastback is a 5-speed, with a 400-horsepower engine.

Weldy came across it while shopping for high-end golf carts. The owner had traded

[SEE CAR SHOW page 8]



COURTESY OF KIRK HALEY

It's been a long way home for **Kirk Haley's** 1969 Ford Mustang Fastback, which is one of the many classics on display at the Orinda Classic Car Show, Saturday, Sept. 9, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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CARTOON / CHEVRON MINI MART UPDATE



# Chevron Mini Mart Project Moves Forward with Conversion Plans

By ANDREA MADISON  
Staff Writer

The fueling station at 11 Orinda Way is one step closer to getting a facelift.

The Planning Commission approved an application submitted by the Chevron Corporation, which allows the conversion of an existing vehicle service bay into a convenience market.

Plans for the station include remodeling the building, new signage, a modification of the onsite fuel canopy and the addition of an observation deck to view San Pablo Creek.

A new fueling station and an electric vehicle charging station are also slated for installation.

Property owner Chevron initially proposed dedicating the creek portion of the land to the city for future restoration and public access. The commission preferred the land become an easement due to liability, according to Director Drummond Buckley. The easement would allow public access behind the new market, from Orinda Way to the creek.

"So, it's not just liability from the trail," Buckley explained at a July 12 planning commission meeting. The liability of the creek itself, including concern about contaminants from the station leaking onto the property, are some motivations behind the easement preference.

"We want to get access to that land," said Friends of Orinda Creeks (FOC) member Tom MacKinnon, in a public comment at the meeting, emphasizing FOC wants to see the creek trail expanded. "So, to further our goal, we need to obtain ownership, or an easement, or whatever, on all the land along the creek."

In the final vote, the commission agreed to the dedication of the creek portion of the land to the city.

The Chevron project was first presented Feb. 9, 2021. The development proposal includes a zoning amendment modifying the city code to allow convenience markets at service stations larger than 40-square feet in the downtown commercial district.

[SEE CHEVRON page 6]

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

**Register now for Fall classes and camps.**  
**Registration for OYS Winter Basketball, K-5th grade, begins September 25 at 9 a.m.**

**Senior Trip, September 13, Marine Mammal Center and Lunch/Shopping in Sausalito, \$35.**

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

**Thursday night concerts this month are September 7 and 21, 6 to 8 p.m.**

**The Orinda Teen Advisory Council (OTAC) is back for the 2023-24 school year. Contact us for information.**

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

Orinda Parks and Recreation Department  
925-254-2445  
[www.OrindaParksandRec.org](http://www.OrindaParksandRec.org)  
OrindaParksandRec@CityofOrinda.org  
28 Orinda Way – Orinda Community Center



COURTESY OF ORINDA PLANNING DEPARTMENT

The Chevron gas station and work bays at 11 Orinda Way are slated to receive major renovations, including an observation deck overlooking San Pablo Creek, a new fueling station, electric vehicle charging station and pedestrian pathways. The availability of fresh food and other items at the mini-mart round out the vision for the project.

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- 308 Rheem Boulevard, Moraga | [308RheemBlvd.com](http://308RheemBlvd.com) | \$1,745,000
- 1907 Lakeshore Dr., Rossmoor | [1907LakeshoreDr.com](http://1907LakeshoreDr.com) | \$2,550,000
- 48 Camino Don Miguel, Orinda | [48CaminoDonMiguel.com](http://48CaminoDonMiguel.com) | \$1,900,000
- 1300 Canyonwood Ct., Rossmoor | \$447,610 - Represented Buyer
- 3279 Sweet Drive Lafayette | \$1,480,000 Represented Buyer

The demand for homes in Orinda is still high despite the challenge of interest rates and obtaining reasonable insurance rates. Our inventory is still quite low. Please reach out to begin the conversation if you are thinking of moving.

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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA Board  
IT'S THAT TIME

KATE WILEY



It's that time ... the 19th Annual Orinda Classic Car Show is Saturday, Sept. 9. We've registered approximately 175 classic and exotic vehicles, including this year's special exhibit of land yacht vehicles for your viewing pleasure.

From 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., you can also enjoy music, food and exceptional raffle prizes for all ages. Come out and meet the cars and their owners as both have stories to tell.

In addition to providing a fun-filled day of entertainment for the entire family, the

car show has a priority goal to fund The Orinda Association's award-winning Seniors Around Town (SAT) program.

Since 2005, SAT member-drivers have provided safe, easy-to-use, door-to-door transportation, which is free to seniors. All SAT participants, volunteer drivers and riders, live in our community. This single requirement fosters mutual connections, history and experiences. As we like to say, "It's more than a ride."

Last year seniors received over 1200 rides. Your donation assists our elders in a way which helps them live independently via one-on-one transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping and social events. Your support helps Orinda seniors stay on the move, empowering them to remain independent.

This year, our anonymous donor angel agreed to move SAT's annual end-of-year matching gift drive to coincide with the car show. Your financial donation, made by Sept. 10, will be doubled, dollar-for-dollar. This is a once-a-year opportunity to turn your donation into twice as much.

SAT is a program of The Orinda Association, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. For information, visit [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org). For updated car show information, visit [www.orindacarshow.com](http://www.orindacarshow.com).

Drop by the entrance at Orinda Motors for a quick look or plan to spend the day – it's free admission for all.

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



CATHY GOSHORN

Emilia and Tomas Schnitzler are ready for the car show in this classic beauty Benz. This battery-powered electric car is one of our incredible raffle prizes available at the Orinda Classic Car Show on Saturday, Sept. 9. Purchase raffle tickets at the blue tent at the show.

The Orinda Association

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

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

OFFICERS

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Vice President - Kelly Sopak  
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Treasurer - Cindy Powell  
City Council Liaison - Latika Malkani

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[www.OrindaAssociation.org](http://www.OrindaAssociation.org)

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COMMUNITY

Preparing for the Car Show



LISA BURLINI

Mark Leach, Orinda's Parks and Rec employee for the past four years, trims tree branches along Orinda Way for banner installation in preparation for the Orinda Classic Car Show.



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Guatemala and Lamorinda Unite to Build Dreams with Fotokids

By AMY MOELLERING  
Staff Writer

Recently, local high school students spent a week with children from Guatemala's poorest communities, sharing laughs, practicing photography, serving others and learning what differentiates and what unites them.

A partnership since 2006, the non-profit organization FotoKids and the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC) believe in building community, improving the lives of families and making children's dreams a reality.

Nancy McGirr, founder of FotoKids, is an award-winning, seasoned photographer who relocated to Guatemala in 1991 after years of documenting Central American wars. She was introduced to life in Guatemala City's dump and to a group of six children, ages 5-12.

With three cameras she taught them photography and how to document their lives. One project featured each child photographed in their dream career.

"I realized then that the kids didn't know how to dream," she said. She recalled sisters, Rosa, whose dream was to sell tomatoes and Marta, who wanted to mop floors.

All the kids wished they could attend school, but didn't have funds for uniforms or books. McGirr circulated the kids' photography to her contacts and soon camera

companies donated equipment and friends became sponsors.

Originally called "Out of the Dump," Fotokids commits to helping kids with their education while teaching photography, graphic design and media technology skills. Whether they go to a university or enter a vocation, they have skills to use immediately.

"[Fotokids] sets these kids apart. It gives them confidence and an identity," said McGirr.

Thirty-two years since its inception, the success is evident in the thousands of dreams which have become reality. Rosa and Marta were class valedictorians and won university scholarships. Rosa works in educational outreach and Marta is pursuing a theology degree.

Others have gone on to careers in politics, law, business administration, architecture, design, journalism and aviation.

When Orinda residents Mark and Ena Crastenburg took their daughters Sara and Rachel on an LOPC mission to Guatemala in 2008, they had no idea how the experience would impact their lives. The Crastenburs remain active supporters of Fotokids, including fundraising and Board membership.

As for their daughters, "It opened their eyes to children who own nothing, but are happy and productive. It made them take

[SEE FOTOKIDS page 7]



ALEX ARULIAH

Dylan Browning and Fernando, his Fotokids buddy, fly a kite they made to honor their ancestors in Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala.



Combine and get in on the surprise.

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# LAMORINDA IDOL

## LAMORINDA IDOL 2023

**Audience Award: Mia Polichio**

**6-8 Solo: Bella Verrico**

**9-12 Groups: VI – Mina Lim, Alec Home, Katie Welch, Burl Hall, Gavin Juni and Kate Bertenthal**

**9-12 Solo: Clea Lee**

**6-8 Groups: Loud and Proud – Palig Horoupian and Alexis Lee**

**3-5 Solo: Keenan Moran**

**K-2 Solo: Kayla Resnick**

**K-5 Groups: Colara – Cara Impallomeni and Colette Goodman**

PHOTOS BY DAN KLEIN

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR / POLICE

# Letters to the Editor

## Orindawoods 50th Anniversary

Orindawoods is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Thanks to our Firewise volunteers, Orindawoods is a Firewise USA community. We spend hundreds of thousands of dollars maintaining our 187 acres, about 4% of Orinda, and complying with MOFD regulations.

Last year, we removed 40 large dead and dying trees. We clear our large open spaces every spring to minimize fuel for a fire. Orindawoods Drive is a major evacuation route in case of a natural disaster. Orindawoods clears the route for our first responders and neighbors.

We have no gates or barriers. Orinda residents can jog or stroll along on our sidewalks and enjoy our lovely gardens and parks. We do ask dogwalkers to please clean-up after your dog and remove all waste. We love the steady procession of dogwalkers and pets, but note we don't have anyone to clean up after your pet.

Our lovely pond is home to waterfowl and fish. We welcome visitors to enjoy the pastoral scene, but we cannot permit fishing due to insurance restrictions. Please pass the word, as some anglers can't read the "No Fishing" signs.

Orindawoods takes seriously its charge as the steward of this beautiful community. As President of the Orindawoods Association, my team and I extend a warm welcome to our fellow Orindans to enjoy a lovely walk through Orindawoods in its golden anniversary year.

– Dick Rogan

## Orinda's First 4th of July Parade

As a longtime reader of The Orinda News, thank you for putting out a great, local newspaper every month. Your August issue was no different.

I vividly recall our first Orinda 4th of July parade in 1983. Our theme was the Boston Tea Party with a boat-float which read, "Taxation Without Representation," with former Mayor and City Councilwoman Joyce Hawkins on the boat-float's bow.

Don Dierkes and others were still putting the finishing touches on his creation as the parade was starting. That day, the Orinda Roadrunners initiated Orinda's first fun run that went up around Lake Cascade, led by Bobbie Lander's late husband Carl, on his motor scooter.

The following year we celebrated the official Chartering of Orinda becoming a city after two previously failed attempts, with a bigger and better 4th of July celebration. We also recognized our first Orinda City Council, Mayor Dick Heggie, Joe Harb, Bill Dabel, Bobbie Landers and Aldo Guidotti.

In 1985, we introduced the first pancake breakfast, organized by the Orinda Roadrunners volunteers. The Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Club took over flipping flapjacks about eight years ago

Our first parade and other 4th activities started small and grew to become one of the East Bay's biggest events, thanks to The Orinda Association and many community volunteers.

We look forward to next year when we

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can celebrate Orinda's 40th 4th of July activities. Thank you – The Orinda Association and volunteers – for another great event.

– John Fazel

## Disagreement With Resident's MOFD Subsidization Claims

In his letter to the editor, in the August issue of *The Orinda News*, Steve Cohn claims Orinda tax dollars are "subsidizing" MOFD service in Moraga because

the per capita household tax payment by Orinda residents is higher than by Moraga residents. I disagree.

Cohn's argument is inconsistent with the purpose and structure of MOFD, which was formed as an independent special district through the consolidation of the Moraga and Orinda Fire Districts.

As a single district, covering two cities, city boundaries are irrelevant. Any [SEE LETTERS page 7]

## ◆ CHEVRON from page 2

Upon approval of the zoning amendment, a commercial use permit is required for the conversion of the auto service building, as well as for a 24-hour operation.

A design review and a permit for the detached and elevated observation deck are also included, with an exception permit necessary, due to the deck's projected location within the minimum creek setback. A tree removal permit rounds out the application list.

The city's statement of official action notes the renovation's deck, creek access, new pedestrian pathways and landscaping will promote pedestrian traffic.

Another hot topic is the type of food the new market will sell. The availability of nutritious and healthy food is a condition of the proposed use.

Concerns were raised about the lack of support for the project at the planning commission meeting, citing photos of the poor food options at another local Chevron mini mart and the possibility of traffic flow issues because of the renovated station.

A Chevron representative confirmed the next step in the process is for the city council to review the project's required municipal code changes at a Sept. 19 meeting.

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



## POLICE BLOTTER

July 16 through Aug 15

### Calls for Service

- Battery: 1
- Burglary, Auto: 2: undisclosed, Orinda Way
- Burglary, Commercial: 1: undisclosed
- Burglary, Residential: 2: Muth Dr., Hillcrest Dr.
- Civil Disturbance: 1
- CVC Unlicensed Driver: 1: Ardith Dr.
- Death, Non-Criminal: 1
- Failure to Obey Officer: 1
- Fraud: 1
- Hit & Run Misdemeanor: 3: Orindawoods Dr., Orinda Way, Glorietta Dr.
- Identity Theft: 3
- Outside Assist: 2

- Petty Theft: 2
- Property Found: 4
- Recovered Stolen Vehicle: 1: Brookwood Rd.
- Robbery, Armed: 1: Orinda Way
- Terrorist Threats: 1
- Tow: 1
- Trespassing: 1
- Vandalism: 1
- Vandalism: Felony: 2
- Vehicle Theft: 1: Brookwood Rd.

### Arrests

- DUI, Misdemeanor: 1
- Property, Receiving Stolen: 1
- Warrant Arrest: 3
- Weapon, Violation of Probation: 1

– Compiled by David Dierks  
Assistant Editor

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



OBITUARY / NEWS BRIEF

# Obituary: Jan Ruzicka 1943 – 2023

Contributed by  
Bohuslava (Slavka) Ruzicka

It is with a heavy and sad heart that I write the following: My husband of 51 years passed on July 17, in the John Muir Walnut Creek Hospital, after a long and difficult illness. Born Nov. 20, 1943 in Czechoslovakia, he immigrated to Canada in 1968 and to the United States in 1974. He finally settled in the Bay Area, first in Oakland and then in El Sobrante.

Jan was a mechanical engineer by profession in the oil business. He received a mechanical BA Degree in Czechoslovakia and business BA and Master's degrees from Golden Gate University in San Francisco.

His profession took him to many countries, too numerous to mention. He was a guitar player for 60 years, joining WhatsUp big band in Hayward, Senior Serenaders in El Sobrante and the East Bay Banjo Club presently in Concord, playing for various retirement homes and festivals. He represented the Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation, during the annual historical festival, called Tabor Meetings in the Czech Republic.



Jan Ruzicka  
COURTESY BOHUSLAVA (SLAVKA) RUZICKA

He is survived by his wife, sisters Eva Kaplan in Lexington, KY, Miroslava Pickova in the Czech Republic and nephew Jaroslav Picka.

## Orinda News Brief: Around Town

### Pickleball Drop-in Update

As the Orinda Parks and Recreation Department continues the pursuit to find solutions for additional pickleball opportunities, it has implemented additional drop-in hours to Court 1 on Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. All times are subject to change and/or cancellation, on a

temporary basis, based on City programming, maintenance, etc. The department will provide as much notice as possible. Visit [www.cityoforinda.org/514/Tennis-and-Pickleball-Courts](http://www.cityoforinda.org/514/Tennis-and-Pickleball-Courts).

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

### LETTERS from page 6

promises allegedly made were not included in the ballot measure or in the governing documents. The tax rate paid in each city, exclusive of special taxes, does not vary between Orinda and Moraga.

Notably, Orinda has about 57% of the total households in the district and the total assessed value of properties in Orinda is about 150% of the total assessed value of the properties in Moraga. And the wildfire risk may be

higher in Orinda.

Cohn's complaint can only be that there should be a change in the level of service in each city. But Cohn hasn't shown any unfairness in the level of service. His measure of service – "firefighters per capita stationed" in Moraga and Orinda – falsely assumes the location of a station determines the amount of service and that a firefighter stationed in Orinda does not respond to Moraga, and vice versa. Lastly, Orinda has three of the five fire stations.

– Nick Waranoff

### FOTOKIDS from page 4

stock of the world and honestly, put them on a trajectory to pursue service-oriented careers," said Crastenburg. Sara is a Captain in the Army and Rachel is a marriage and family therapist.

LOPC's Mission and Outreach Pastor, Lauren Gully, led this summer's trip of 20 high school students to Santiago Atitlán in Guatemala. She's impressed by how Fotokids "has built a sustainable methodology for lasting change. They use resources through art to not only teach valuable skills, but also to help kids process trauma and build community. For our students, it's impactful to see different ways kids live and to understand their responsibility as part of a global community."

Michelle Browning traveled as a mentor with her kids Ashlyn (17) and Dylan (18). She said friendships formed as Fotokids were paired with each student. In spite of language barriers, the kids connected with each other by assembling and delivering

food baskets and competing in a photo scavenger hunt. Dylan continues to keep in touch with his buddy Fernando via Zoom.

"There's magic happening there," said Browning. "It's a place where kids can dream big."

Currently, 129 students are enrolled with a need for 40 scholarships. To view the photography and learn more, visit <https://fotokidsoriginal.org>.

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

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

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EVERYDAY ORINDA

Everyday  rinda

ANOTHER THING WE DID BEFORE THE PANDEMIC

MIMI BOMMARITO



Casual Carpool has nothing to do with yoga pants. But since casual clothing is infinitely more comfortable, it follows that Casual Carpool was indeed a more comfortable and less expensive way to endure a daily commute.

This organic transportation agreement – some might call it “glorified hitchhiking” – was casual in its implementation as well, for such commuter symbiosis required no roster-crafting, no waiting for someone psychologically incapable of being on time, no last-minute scrambling for an alternate driver if one awoke with the stomach bug. A commitment-phobe’s dream.

Casual Carpool, a “you might show up, I might show up” serendipity-in-action thing has existed in the Bay Area since, presumably, the creation of HOV (High Occupancy Vehicle) lanes and reduced bridge tolls for carpoolers in the late 1970s. This timeline appears vague because nobody can pinpoint when and where Casual Carpool started. A 1985 story in the Oakland Tribune confirms, “No one seems to know precisely how the Casual Carpool started.”

Orindan CJ Taylor recalled the urban legend regarding its beginnings here: the unknown originators circled through the

bustling BART parking lot during morning rush hour, encouraging harried commuters on their way to the platform to jump in and carpool into the city.

This required a great deal of trust at the outset, but enough commuters replied “Sure, why not?”

*“When I first moved to Orinda, I started using Casual Carpool as a rider,” said Taylor, a scientist at Amazon Music. “I found it a great way to meet my neighbors.”*

As drivers and riders saw the benefits, a more systematic approach was crafted. Early weekday mornings, riders formed a queue in the back of Theatre Square shopping plaza. Vehicles formed a queue to pick up 2-3 passengers before hopping on Highway 24. It was convenient to BART in case no drivers appeared. Ever true to Field of Dreams – once built, people came.

[SEE EVERYDAY page 9]

◆ CAR SHOW from page 1

it for a few of the pricey carts and it sat in the back of the showroom. Agreeing on a price, the classic sports car soon took its place in Weldy’s collection.

He also owns a Shelby Cobra, a classic Porsche and a 1964 Ford Galaxie he races in Mexico.

Choosing which car to show is easier since his brother moved out of town and can’t help with the set-up. “I don’t have enough drivers,” he said, with a laugh.

Kirk Haley, also from Orinda, is showing his prized 1969 Ford Mustang GT Fastback. This car has history.

As he remembers, Haley bought the car when he was in college and it was his primary car to get him to school and around town. Once he graduated, “I decided it was time to grow-up and get a regular car,” Haley said.

He parked it on a major street with a for sale sign, and within two hours a buyer showed up with cash in hand. The buyer didn’t try to negotiate the price.

“At that point I had a not-good feeling about it,” he said, wondering if he had underpriced it. For years, Haley would see Mustangs similar to his old one. He kept thinking he wished he never sold the car.

“My wife said, ‘You need to get over this car.’”

Fast-forward 26 years. Haley was in the neighborhood of the man who bought his Fastback and went looking for it. In an apartment complex, he spotted a car under a cover that was shaped like his ’69 Mustang, and took a peek.

He came face-to-face with his old license plate. It was his car.

“I figured it was gone,” he recalled. By letter, he asked the current owner if he had any interest in selling it. He had been working on it and it wasn’t running. The offer was, “if you can take it tonight,

it’s yours.” He did.

Fortunately, his memory of working on the electrical system came right back, and with one wire put in its proper place, the Mustang started right up. Car and owner have not been apart since.

Haley has been part of the Classic Car Show since its second year.

“It’s fun,” he said. “Every car has a story.”

Proceeds from the car show help fund The Orinda Association’s Seniors Around Town (SAT) program, which provides free transportation for eligible senior citizens.

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

**What You’ll Find at the Orinda Classic Car Show**

The Sept. 9 Classic Car Show is a free event for the whole family. With its *Land Yachts* theme, expect to see:

- 15+ Land Yacht luxury cars, from the late 1950s through 1970s
- Lamorinda Idol contestants singing 12 to 12:30 p.m
- Raffle with fabulous prizes, including a kid-sized electric Mercedes Benz
- Two food trucks and Loard’s Ice Cream
- Vendor booths
- Orinda Historical Society
- Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary promoting The Orinda Association’s *Cars2ndChance* donation program
- Car product vendors, including Artdeshine
- Mercedes of Walnut Creek with two new models
- Cobra Experience Museum in Martinez showcasing the Shelby Cobra car from *Ford vs. Ferrari*.

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COURTESY OF BUZZ WELDY

Car collector and racing expert **Buzz Weldy** will be showing his 1965 Ford Mustang Fastback in the Orinda Classic Car Show on Sept. 9.

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## TEEN CORNER



Starting my senior year, I wonder if the frustrating conflicts and sometimes comical miscommunication with my parents, which have plagued me over the past three years, will get better. My parents are great. Really, really great. Still, they are just not in touch with what I'm going through.

For all the parents who want to better understand their high schoolers, here are some tips to ponder.

#### Though we don't respond, we hear you.

The quickest way to get us annoyed is to repeat something. The moment my mom reminds me to "clean my room" or

*Being a high-schooler is hard. With social and academic pressures bombarding us, we're in a constant state of uncertainty and self-doubt.*

"make wise decisions," I retreat and tune-out anything else she says. It's a knee-jerk trigger mostly because acknowledging I heard, opens the door to further discussion. Not something I want to encourage. On the positive side, all those times she delivered the stay safe, don't do drugs, good grades are important speeches, I listened, even though I seemed disinterested.

To recap: We heard you the first time, follow most suggestions and repetition is

annoying. Repeat. Repetition is annoying.

#### We are grumpy for a reason.

Being a high-schooler is hard. With social and academic pressures bombarding us, we're in a constant state of uncertainty and self-doubt. If I share my insecurities, there's a risk you will go into overdrive to fix the problem or try to make me feel better. If I do poorly on a test or hit a slice into the next fairway, I don't want to talk about it. So yes, I'm grumpy because it's not unusual for something bad to happen. Like when you have a bad day at work, I'm not in the mood to be happy or talk about my day. At least not today. Maybe tomorrow.

#### What might have been okay in your generation is not okay in ours today.

Our world is vastly different from yours. Whether it's equity versus equality, LG-BTQIA+ issues, the use of emojis or our contrasting political views, we don't share the same opinions due to our divergent personal experiences.

When you attempt to impose your values on us, we become dismissive and even contemptuous. The best thing is to listen, without interjecting, and not assume we are simply naive and lack wisdom. We are all the sum of our personal experiences. We may get emotional about our beliefs. We need you to be unemotional when explaining your viewpoints. We crave learning and want to understand the world, but given the current state of affairs, your generation doesn't have a lot of credibility, especially

in the areas we care about. In a patient and unbiased way, please help us understand your side of things.

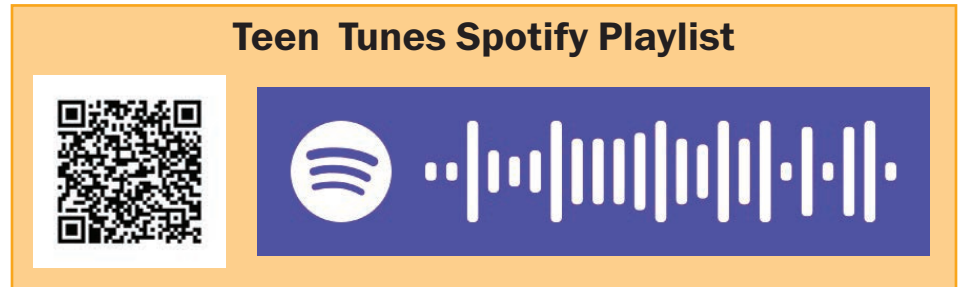
As this new school term commences, I'm rooting for an end to the war in Ukraine, a Warriors' return to the finals, and well, more time to just chill. Deep down, I know I owe everything to my parents, but getting me to say it to them is like moving a mountain.

Good luck to all the parent-teenager

relationships. As technology and societal pressures increase the divide between us, focus on building trust, mutual respect and laughing lots together.

Tip: When my parents crack a joke, even if it's not that funny, it makes me want to spend MORE time with them.

Matthew Lin can be reached at [matthew.w.lin@gmail.com](mailto:matthew.w.lin@gmail.com).



#### ◆ EVERYDAY from page 8

All riders were dropped off at Howard Street and were responsible for making their way to work. Return service was available as well. All locations throughout the East Bay could eventually be found on [www.511.org](http://www.511.org).

Decades of delivery, then the familiar refrain: along came the pandemic. Casual Carpool vanished as unceremoniously as it emerged.

Taylor would like the return of Casual Carpool, but no one has a clue how to reignite this phantom. Taylor points out commuting has changed and it could be a challenge to inspire folks to bring it back. Parking is plentiful at the BART station and BART needs passengers.

"When I first moved to Orinda, I started using Casual Carpool as a rider," said Taylor, a scientist at Amazon Music. "I found it a great way to meet my neighbors."

While an unofficial guideline decrees

the driver determines whether conversation will take place, Taylor noticed after years of commuting together, one still makes connections regardless of how much chatter takes place.

"I carried a small scooter to get to the office once I was dropped off in the city. That was always a crazy ice-breaker," he said.

Now that companies are requiring a modified return to in-person office hours, will we ever see a return of Casual Carpool?

One last thought: Encourage your high-schooler to drive a carpool to Miramonte. It requires a bit more organization and effort than Casual Carpool, but there is no better method to prod your sleepy headed senior to school each morning than the horrifying image of you, the parent, stepping in and driving in their place.

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

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## Delving into UC Berkeley's Institutional Priorities and Why They Matter in College Admissions

In the college application process, understanding the institutional priorities of your desired universities is key. These priorities not only illuminate a school's future focus but also highlight what they value. As a student, if your focus areas align with these institutional priorities, it's a win-win situation - you not only demonstrate to the university that you are aligned with their mission, but you also find an institution that supports and enhances your interests.

#### Consider the University of California, Berkeley's institutional Priorities, which reflect its strategic vision for the future:

**Transforming the Student Experience:** This priority shows Berkeley's commitment to improving the overall student experience on campus. If you have a history of fostering positive change in your community or school, highlight these experiences in your application to align with this priority.

**Culture of Equity, Inclusion & Belonging:** Berkeley's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion underlines the importance they place on creating an environment where everyone belongs. Have you worked on diversity and inclusion initiatives? If so, this could significantly enhance your application.



**Financial Stability:** This internal priority underlines Berkeley's fiscal responsibility. For students interested in finance or economics, this might provide opportunities to participate in initiatives to create a sustainable fiscal culture on campus.

**Health Justice & Holistic Well-Being:** Health and wellness are high on Berkeley's priority list. If you've contributed to health initiatives or wish to pursue a health-related career, this focus aligns well with your goals.

**Organizational Behavior & Development:** Berkeley seeks to create a culture of trust, transparency, and innovation. Highlighting experiences in leadership roles or projects that demonstrate these qualities can resonate strongly with this priority.

By comprehending these institutional priorities, you can emphasize elements in your application that align with the university's core values and future initiatives. Doing so not only showcases your understanding of the institution but also helps you stand out as a candidate who can actively contribute to these priorities.

#### This understanding is beneficial in two ways:

**For the student:** When your focus areas align with the university's institutional priorities, it means you're more likely to find programs, resources and a culture that supports and nurtures your interests.

**For the university:** Colleges seek students who will actively contribute to their community and mission. When a student's interests align with a university's priorities, it shows the potential for meaningful contribution.



However, it's essential to remember that institutional priorities differ across universities. For every university you're considering, research their priorities and see how your interests and experiences can align. This understanding will lead to a more effective application and ultimately, a university experience that genuinely resonates with your personal and academic aspirations. Research may be challenging but it's an integral part of the exciting journey of finding the right college fit. Happy researching!



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ORINDA RESIDENTS

# Full Circle for Orinda Native Marilyn Elsts at the Orinda Theatre

By NATASHA KAYE  
Staff Writer

To many, the idea of volunteering every Saturday and Sunday is hardly something to look forward to. Marilyn Elsts, a 78-year-old Orinda native, said she wouldn't have it any other way.

For the past several years, Elsts has volunteered at the Orinda Theatre, primarily in the box office, though she lends a hand with whatever is needed.

Few have ties as deep as Elsts has to the theater. Her first job, at the age of 16, was working the candy counter alongside other local teens in the early '60s.

Elsts said coming back to work at the theater is "kind of like circling back to home."

After graduating from Miramonte in 1963, Elsts bounced around the Bay Area and tried her hand at various jobs in different fields. For a while, she worked for her father in the restaurant business, then switched gears to clinical research for pharmaceutical companies before spending 15 years in animal medicine in El Cerrito. She retired in 2008.

Elsts lost her husband Dennis over three years ago. Still heartbroken, she discovered a new community who have adopted her as one of their own.

"After my husband died, I kind of kicked around to get more involved locally and all of a sudden, this group of wonderful people from the Orinda Theatre started including me in their group. I ended up volunteering for whatever I could, just to keep active."

Elsts first encountered her new pals while partaking in one of her favorite pastimes, karaoke.

She, alongside her friends Omar Khan, Wyndon Villafuerte, Christopher Holden, Joseph Cabrera and Derek Zemrak, owner of the Orinda Theatre, bonded while belting out their favorite tunes on summer nights right outside the box office, while patrons passed by, some sitting down to watch.

"We take karaoke pretty seriously," she said. "I mean we go to all the karaoke rooms around, not just clubs and we'll be there for hours just singing."

Nowadays, Elsts "guarantees" she and her friends can be found every Wednesday at Club 1220 in Walnut Creek for their karaoke nights, as well as their drag shows on Sunday nights. Her friends hosted a birthday party for her there in May.

Speaking about her friends, Elsts joyfully noted, "They're like my family. They don't judge by your age, but they take care of you like you're their long-lost grandmother."

Recently, Khan expanded their circle a little by gifting Elsts a pet she had longed for, a baby tortoise, which she named, OJ. Given the extensive lifespan



JEFF HEYMAN

Marilyn Elsts, a Miramonte High School graduate, class of '63, was 16 years old when she held her first job at the Orinda Theatre. Now retired, the Orinda widow has circled back to the theater, volunteering her time on the weekends in the box office.

of the reptile, Elsts had Khan written into her will to be OJ's caretaker after she's gone.

Elsts' siblings and other relatives moved away, some to Oregon and others to Chico and Sacramento, so it's not often she gets to see them.

But Elsts says she never has to worry,

because her new family, her Orinda Theatre family, always has her back.

"I have never worked in a place or been included in a place like this," she said. "They are absolutely incredible."

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

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MAUI NEEDS YOUR HELP



CLAY DEANHARDT

My original column was about how organizations work together in Orinda to do great things. Then Maui happened. Lahaina happened.

So I asked *The Orinda News* to scrap what I wrote and replace it with this appeal for funds to help with what is going to be a long, painful process for many, many displaced families.

The Rotary Club of Orinda offers everyone who wants to donate to Maui the opportunity to do so through a trusted organization, knowing that your funds will go directly to their greatest need.

Our Rotary Club has a 501(c)(3) endowment which funds public service projects in Orinda and around the world. We have connected with the Rotary Clubs on Maui, who established a Maui Fire Relief Fund through their own non-profit foundation, so we can get your donation where it is needed most.

How do you know your funds will be used wisely? Because Rotarians are volunteers. The Maui Rotarians live in the communities that are being directly affected by the fires and their aftermath. They are already helping and housing friends and neighbors who lost their homes. They know what is needed most, and where it is most needed. Your donation will not be used to purchase what some people, 3,000 miles from the disaster, think is necessary. It will go directly to fund what the people on the ground know is necessary.

There is no overhead. No executives to

pay. No office rent. All money donated through Rotary goes directly to do the work that needs to be done, and help the people who need help.

You can donate through our endowment by writing a check for any amount to "Orinda Rotary Endowment." In a cover letter or on the memo line, please write "Maui Fire" and mail it to Rotary Club of Orinda, P.O. Box 44, Orinda, CA 94563. Or bring it to one of our meetings, which are Wednesdays from 12:15 to 1:30 p.m. at the Orinda Community Center. To donate with a credit card, visit [www.orindarotary.org](http://www.orindarotary.org) where there's a link to the Maui Fire Relief Fund.

We ensure your donation reaches the fund, and you will receive a tax receipt and thank you letter.

To donate directly to fund via the Rotary District 5000 (Hawaii), visit [www.rotaryd5000.org](http://www.rotaryd5000.org).

When a disaster like this happens, Service Above Self means stopping, changing course and doing whatever you can to help. Thank you.

\* \* \*

My original column included plugs for Dancing with the Cars and the Orinda Classic Car Show, Sept. 8 and 9, respectively. Please see the articles and ads for both in this paper. Both are fantastic, free events and we hope to see you there.

Clay Deanhardt can be reached at [claydeanhardtrotary@gmail.com](mailto:claydeanhardtrotary@gmail.com).

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Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Donates Van to WPE



LEANDER HAURI

Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary members stand outside the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Center in front of the new van they donated to White Pony Express (WPE), with the help of contributions from the Rotary Club of Orinda and others. WPE picks up 12,000 pounds of perishable food daily from supermarkets, which is delivered free the same day to recipient partners throughout Contra Costa County.

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PERFORMING ARTS

# Carlo Collodi's Pinocchio Extravaganza Returns to Orinda

By DAVID DIERKS  
Assistant Editor

The Orinda Starlight Village Players (OrSVP) open their final 2023 production Sept. 8 with Director Malcolm Cowler's adaptation of *Carlo Collodi's Pinocchio*. The musical follows the adventures of Pinocchio, a wooden puppet, which longs to become a real boy.

"I believe this is closer to the book than other versions," said Cowler. "This is mainly due to how I create my adaptations. I import the entire text of the book into my word processor, then gradually reduce it into a workable script. This ensures around 80% exact dialog from the book."

Cowler, who produced *Carlo Collodi's Pinocchio* in 2015 said, "The cast includes some from the original, but many are new to the show and to OrSVP, including Pinocchio. He is played by a 20+ boy rather than the nine-year-old girl last time," said Cowler. "This adds exciting new challenges for us. The songs are all new arrangements from our musical director, Ray Christensen, who is playing Geppetto, Pinocchio's father."

"Malcolm wrote the lyrics to the songs, and gave me some basic melodic ideas," said Christensen. "I decided which instruments to use for each song and wrote the music to accompany the song. Then I recorded the instrumental arrangements to be played as background for the singers in the show."

Jill Gelster, production manager at OrSVP, recommended Christensen to Cowler when he needed a musical composer for *Pinocchio* eight years ago.

"I've done several shows with Orinda Starlight, as an actor and as a music arranger," said Christensen.

His acting credits with OrSVP include, *The Tempest* and *Triple Tryst of Terror*. He's created music for *Wind in the Wil-*



Some of the cast of *Carlo Collodi's Pinocchio* at the Orinda Starlight Village Players stage in the Orinda Community Center Park. Back row (L-R): Jennifer Su, Ariella Folks, Monica Bonnington, Dan Phillips, Anthony Polakoff, Laura Martin-Chapin and John Chapin. Front row: Kenny Silberberg, Emma Park and Zoey Long.

*lows, Comedy of Errors* and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

*"Working with young performers is always very fulfilling and I cherish the opportunity to encourage and mentor them so they continue to grow and flourish in the performing arts."* Ray Christensen

"The 17-member cast is diverse with the youngest turning three this month," said

Cowler. "It's always challenging to find costumes for everyone."

"I'm excited about the talent in the show," said Christensen. "Working with young performers is always very fulfilling and I cherish the opportunity to encourage and mentor them so they continue to grow and flourish in the performing arts."

To create the various scenery, Cowler said, "We project continuous video onto a screen covering the entire back of the stage. It carries the audience throughout the land Pinocchio inhabits and inside the homes of the characters."

This video projection differs from the original. "Last time I used front projection, which limited the amount of stage use to avoid blocking the screen," said Cowler. "With advances in technology, I can leave the entire stage open for action."

Meet cast members at Geppetto's Cafe, 87 Orinda Way, Sept. 23 at 1 p.m. and hear a few songs.

"Geppetto's Cafe has provided coffee for OrSVP patrons for many years," said Gelster. "Come meet Geppetto at Geppetto's."

Performances are Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:30 p.m., Sept. 8 through 30 at the Orinda Community Center Park Amphitheater. The two matinees are Sunday, Sept. 17 and 24 at 4 p.m. and one Thursday performance, Sept. 28 at 8 p.m.

OrSVP is completely run by volunteers. Anyone who is interested in any aspect of theater and would like to help is encouraged to contact the group at info@orsvp.org or 925-528-9225.

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

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PERFORMING ARTS

# Get Your Laugh On at the Orinda Theatre with 30 Stand-up Comedians

By CHARLEEN EARLEY  
Editor-in-Chief

No plans for the Labor Day Weekend? Good. Consider building up some healthy endorphins at the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual San Francisco Stand-Up Comedy Competition, where 30 comics take the stage at the Orinda Theatre and give their best five.

“Best five” is a tight, five-minute set.

Produced by Jon Fox, the first show, featuring 15 comedians, is Sunday, Sept. 3 at 2 p.m., hosted Dauood Naimyar. Come back Friday, Sept. 8 at 8 p.m., for a different line-up of 15 comics, hosted by Orion Levine. Tickets cost \$25 for general admission and \$40 for VIP seating and can be purchased at <https://tinyurl.com/2ddn4cze>.

*“The audience can expect total commitment from the contestants to entertain, not just for the love of their craft, but because big prize money is the dangling carrot.”*

Naimyar, with an impressive 150,000+ TikTok followers, showcases his circumstances as an Afghan living in America, with multiple viral hits poking fun at politicians and world leaders. According to Naimyar, when his debut comedy album, *Pier 69: Junior Varsity*, released in 2019, it topped all charts.

Equally talented is Bay Area comic Orion Levine, currently living in L.A. He was a guest on *The Late Late Show with James Corden*, a finalist at the San Francisco International Comedy Competition



COURTESY OF ORION LEVINE

Comic **Orion Levine** hosts the 47th Annual San Francisco Stand-up Comedy Competition on Friday, Sept. 8 at 8 p.m. at the Orinda Theatre, where 15 comics will perform their best five-minute set, all vying for the \$20,000 prize.

in 2021, named a New Face at the Just for Laughs Comedy Festival in 2022 and appeared at the New York Comedy Festival. He now performs all over the country.

Fox said the audience can expect total commitment from the contestants to entertain, not just for the love of their craft, but because big prize money is the dangling carrot.

“Normally in clubs, one might hear a comedian saying something like, ‘I do that for myself,’ when a routine falls flat. And it’s true; they do bits just for themselves. I think it’s kind of a preservation act of sorts, to show they’re calling the shots onstage. Which of course they do, but when there’s \$20,000 on the table, time is limited and they’re being compared to contemporaries, you better believe our contestants are

totally focused on making the audience laugh.”

Fox, a resident of San Rafael, considers himself a Bay Area resident who grew up in San Jose, studied journalism at California State University, Hayward, and worked at *The Tribune* and *The Argus* in Fremont.

“I was eventually drawn to San Francisco in the hopes of someday being mentioned in a Herb Caen column,” said Fox, who, surprisingly, does not do stand-up comedy, but knows talent when he sees it.

There’s a reason he loves producing these shows – for the last 47 years.

“For me, it’s like drinking from the Fountain of Youth. It’s so invigorating to be around young, talented, optimistic performers,” he said. “Reality will once again rear its ugly head, but during the Comedy Competition, the sky’s the limit.”

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

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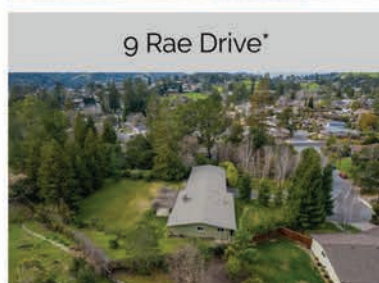
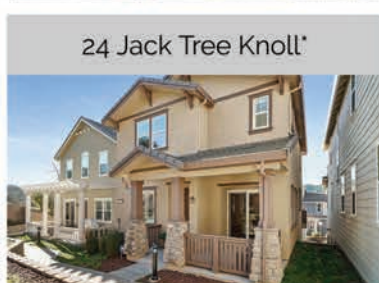
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EDITORIAL / PET OF THE MONTH

# Still Having Difficulties with the Word “Stereotype” on an Ethos Level

By CHARLEEN EARLEY  
Editor-in-Chief

It started in the fifth grade when I was introduced to a word which was somewhat difficult to spell, but more difficult to understand.

The word was “stereotype.”

I broke it into two words, but my teacher explained it had nothing to do with an actual stereo that spun albums and bellowed music through speakers.

Mr. Lee gave me the *Britannica* dictionary definition, “an often unfair and untrue belief that many people have about all people or things with a particular characteristic.”

What?

I couldn’t wrap my head around this



CHARLEEN EARLEY

Charleen Earley learned early on the word “stereotype” had nothing to do with an actual stereo that spun albums and bellowed music through speakers.

definition. I’m sure he gave examples, but I teared up, upset with myself for failing to understand the meaning.

I was born in Eloise, Michigan and raised in East Oakland where I visually understood what diversity looked like. I attended public schools with students who were Mexican, Black, Chinese, Native American, Asian Indian and white.

I am half Mexican and half white, which my dad’s “white ethnic side” includes Irish, German and Cherokee Indian.

Later in life, I learned Oakland was one of the most diverse cities in the world. I finally understood the meaning of “stereotype,” based on a more detailed explanation with, “an assumption about what someone will do or how they will behave based on what social groups they belong to, such as race,” and “widely held, but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.”

Now at age 59, I still struggle with the word, but it’s a different struggle.

I wish the word didn’t exist. Or rather, I wish its verb didn’t exist; meaning people wouldn’t stereotype people, places or things.

I had an amazing English professor who gave an assignment to attend an event or visit a place never experienced before. First: write what it might be like. Afterward, write about what actually happened.

While, at its core, this was a writing assignment, I believe it was about stereotyping.

I chose a shelter in Antioch to serve dinner to homeless people. My preconceived write-up included fears of unsafe conditions, horrible smells from people who didn’t shower and who used vulgar

**Pet of the Month**

NIKKI SOMMER

“Indy, short for *Indiana Jones*, is our golden retriever, full of love and fluff,” said **Nikki Sommer**. “We are new to Orinda and he enjoys long walks and a good ball chase at the park.” Follow Indy on his own Instagram page @Indydog\_20.

language or had violent tendencies.

My post write-up portrayed a different story and while I’m sure some shelters might look like my initial “stereotype,” I did not experience it. I saw clean, calm, hungry and gracious people. It moved me so much, I volunteered at that shelter after the assignment was completed.

On a Thanksgiving Day, I served food

to homeless people, as a volunteer at Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco. The line covered several blocks. Again, I encountered thankful, kind humans who needed food.

As a professor, I assign this same project to my students, who ultimately turn in their reports with a newfound appreciation for the experience, and often a

[SEE STEREOTYPES page 15]

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## Local Mom, Artist and Author with a Message of Unity, Joy and Surviving

Local artist and book author, Shiva Jafarzadeh, has a deeply personal message for all those who meet her, view her paintings and read her book and poems. It’s a multi-faceted message of freedom, sorrow, survivorship, unity, kindness, beauty, love and joy.

You can see it and feel it in each of her paintings, each one accompanied by an intimate and dynamic poem.

Born in Tehran, the capital of Iran, she began drawing at the age of six while shielded in bomb shelters with her sisters and mother, during the Iran-Iraq war. Her father was in the Air Force in Iran.

Drawing was her way of surviving and coping with the terrors of war that eventually found its way in her life in the form of PTSD and depression.

She escaped Iran in 1997 for “my survivorship; a dream to live somewhere where drawing a figure was not a crime; I wouldn’t be killed because of my hair or make-up; I would no longer endure 30 slashes and penalties because I didn’t fast during Ramadan; I wouldn’t have to marry someone I didn’t love; I could work and be financially independent; I could live in a country that I can study art and talk about taboo subjects, like sex or religion, without fearing for my life,” she said. “I escaped because I was becoming a dangerous rebel to my family by spreading flyers about the anti-Islamic republic government of Iran and I was willing to go to any



Shiva J.

country where I could ask for a visa.”

Shiva ultimately found freedom in the U.S., liberty to grow, learn, teach, love, paint, write and inspire others through her watercolors, powerful collages and prose. She’s a single mom, co-raising her son Lex, of 15 years, who says he wants to become a filmmaker for human rights.

Her “Art by Shiva” studio is located at 2085 N. Broadway, Ste. 300, Walnut Creek. By day, she’s a real estate broker, property

manager, art teacher, illustrator and space designer.

Her first book, titled *The Orange Blossom*, which launched in August, is an illustrated memoir for kids ages nine and older. It’s a poetic and metaphoric story about a girl named Silky and her grandpa in Iran. Every Nowruz holiday, Silky’s family gathered at her grandparent’s orange farm. The book follows Silky’s travels, memories and her conversations with her grandparents. The Islamic Republic eventually took ownership of the orange farm, but the book highlights how the love she received from her grandparents, followed her to the other side of the world as an adult.

“I wrote this book to show the kids, that although we speak different languages, eat different foods and have different holidays, we are all similar,” said Shiva. “We all understand the joy of being with our family during the holidays, eating good food and feeling the same sadness when we lose family members.”

Shiva is a hopeless romantic and said, “**Art is love:** I dream about a day when our kids and grandkids can live with equality, integrity and human rights for all. **Art is an escape:** It’s a fantasy land where men-in-power treat women and kids with compassion and kindness. **Art heals:** It heals my wounds from when I was in jail and my trauma in war and loss of friends and family. **Art Connects:** Art is the only

tool of communication for me to connect to another human being and say what’s in my heart that’s unspeakable. **Art is loud and brave:** Words are powerful, they can build or destroy a soul, a society, a child, but an image could scream at you louder than any street protester. An image can make you remember a split second of a joyful moment in the arms of someone you loved and feel secure and rested in a middle of chaos.”

Visit [www.artbyshiva.com](http://www.artbyshiva.com) to view, purchase Shiva’s art pieces or her book *The Orange Blossom*. Tel: 925.876.2290.



“The Migrant”  
By Shiva J.

We fled the country.  
We left.  
But the anger never left us.  
The process of leaving is the free fall.  
Arriving is when the body hits the ground.  
One spends a lifetime gathering the scattered pieces.





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## Who Wants a Snack?

BARBARA KOBSAR



Whether it's after school or play, at work, watching TV or mid-morning, snack choices are plentiful at the Orinda Farmers' Market. Look for quick, nutritious fruits and vegetables to make your favorite.

It's no surprise to find an apple in many school lunches as they travel well, are crisp and juicy and a good source of Vitamins A and C. Galas, which have a pale-yellow background with varying degrees of red blush, are generally smaller in size and perfect for kids and snacks. Red is predominant on apples which receive more sun.

Grapes are a must on the snack list. Seedless Flame and Thompson varieties are great for freezing. Rinse, pat dry on paper towels and place on a baking sheet. Pop it in the freezer for a couple of hours, then transfer to a freezer bag. Frozen grapes add sweetness and an icy texture to smoothies too.



BARBARA KOBSAR

Fruits and veggies rule at the Orinda Farmers' Market with radishes, cabbage, spinach and more.

◆ STEREOTYPES from page 14

change of heart and a negative stereotype replaced with a positive and accurate conclusion.

This might be too utopian to think it would be great to live in a world where rather than everyone automatically stereotyping people, places and things (even creatures great and small), they would go out and experience firsthand, embrace and ultimately celebrate all people, places and things.

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

The berry season continues. Fresh strawberries and blackberries, by the basket or flat, are full of goodness and flavor. Smoothies are a favorite go-to and easy to make by blending vanilla Greek yogurt, milk and berries.

Vendors Melo Bread and Hummus Heaven offer an easy snack solution. Toast a slice of your favorite bread, spread with your preferred hummus and top with radish and cucumber slices.

Vegetables are great for slicing and storing in the refrigerator for quick snacks. Choose from bell peppers, onions, carrots, cabbage, lettuce, spinach, cucumbers and avocados. Veggie Rice Paper Rolls are bright, colorful and nutritious. Kids love them as a finger food served with a dip.

Be as creative as you like. Here's a sample recipe for the rolls:

**Veggie Rolls**

- 3 - 4 radishes, thinly sliced
- 1 carrot, cut into thin julienne strips
- ¼ English cucumber, julienne strips
- ½ red or green bell pepper, thinly sliced
- ½ cup thinly sliced Napa cabbage or spinach
- 6 - 8 rice papers

Soak a sheet of rice paper in a shallow dish of warm water for 3 to 5 seconds. Lay on a cutting board and arrange some of each vegetable on the bottom third. Leave about 1 ½ inches open on each side. Lift the rice paper from the bottom edge and cover the filling, fold the sides over the vegetables and roll. Do not overfill or the paper will rip.

Serve with a dipping sauce made by whisking together ¼ cup creamy peanut butter, 1 tablespoon wine vinegar, 1 tablespoon low sodium soy sauce, 1 teaspoon sugar, 2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil, 1 teaspoon minced garlic and 1 tablespoon water.

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

Barbara Kobsar can be reached at barbara@cotkitchen.com.



BARBARA KOBSAR

Ahmed Mahfoudi, of Hummus Heaven, has a San Leandro-based company that offers artichoke hummus, Mediterranean food and pita chips at Farmers' Markets throughout the Bay Area, including the Orinda Farmers' Market.

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**For tickets visit [www.orindamovies.com](http://www.orindamovies.com)**



SPORTS



MARK BELL

Miramonte teammates **Sasha Bevacqua** (left) and **Nikki Yeo** (center) return from their morning cross country team workout with coach **Julia Hall** (right) along the King Canyon Trail.

GAME ON

IF CROSS COUNTRY WAS EASY, THEY'D CALL IT FOOTBALL



MARK BELL

As the meadow fog lifts from above the reservoir and the warmth of the day hits the back of my neck, I sit amongst the field rabbits and watch the large, breakfast-seeking Sandhill Cranes scout the water's edge. I wait in anticipation of the Miramonte Cross Country team (MCX) coming around the bend, returning from their one-hour morning King Canyon Loop training run.

I sit just past some very large mountain lion warning signs, bulletins for snake awareness and why not to approach "aggressive livestock." So, one: I'm pondering the clauses in coverage of my life insurance and two: I'm wondering what sort of people do this kind of sport. What young person wants to get up really early and run for an hour. Seriously.

First is Head Coach Andrew Lewis, who leads by example. He is on the trail, running the hills with the team. His perspective on why he trains with them, "When I was the athlete, it was a morale booster to have a coach who could do the things they're instructing you to do themselves." Gauging by how the team follows him, I see the benefits.

Then, he surrounds himself with other inspiring coaches with great track records, or should I say, off-track records? Assistant Coach Cassey Haskell still holds Miramonte team records for some of the cross-country courses we'll run this season.

This team is good-sized, and we're holding out hope to outrun the dreaded Campolindo Cougars, the regional powerhouse in cross country almost every year.

One of a few advantages we might have over them, according to Coach Lewis is, "They just graduated their top three boys, whereas we'll be running most of an already experienced varsity team." Another is, "Both our top boy and girl runners, Asher Patel and Grace Bell, are returning as rising seniors. They both finished top 10 in NCS and qualified to the state meet as individuals last year." Fingers crossed. No doubt they will repeat those performances with these kinds of morning, mountain hill training regiments.

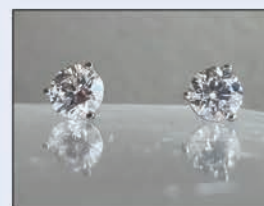
In my day, the tough-guy sport was football. But this does not compare. At least not equally. These XC runners go full-tilt for miles at a time. Football? Just a few yards at a time. The pigskin pastime has take-a-knee water breaks and timeouts. No moment to rest while the defense comes in for a spell. Nope. XC runners literally push their bodies to their limits, no breaks, as the game plan. Whatever it takes to run the fastest time on the course and receive the fewest points.

It's not everyone who will take agony as a dance partner. So, if you're one of those folks who think high school kids today are a little light in the fortitude department, I'd say you haven't met the Miramonte cross country team.

Mark Bell can be reached at [griffindoor.bell@gmail.com](mailto:griffindoor.bell@gmail.com).



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AUTHOR / OH, THE PLACES YOU'LL GO

# Author Writes About the Cold War: Czechoslovakia's Fight in the Rink

By ANDREA MADISON  
Staff Writer

When UC Davis professor, Dr. Ethan Scheiner began teaching a class about politics and sports in 2016, he found several cases of countries and their citizens who felt the only way they could assert themselves politically was on the sports field. His book, *Freedom to Win: A Cold War Story of the Courageous Hockey Team That Fought the Soviets for the Soul of Its People—and Olympic Gold* is a prime example of that type of quest.

Scheiner grew up in Berkeley, spent a lot of time in Japan and earned a Ph.D. in political science. He was hired by UC Davis in the early 2000s with a teaching focus on political science and has resided in Orinda with his wife and children since 2012.

"For the first decade and a half of my career, I wrote academic books and articles on Japanese party politics and elections around the world," said Scheiner.

While researching material for his politics and sports course, he happened upon a book chronicling Cold War-era ice hockey players and their dream of NHL superstar-

dom. It explained how Czechoslovakia saw the 1969 World Ice Hockey Championships as a chance for revenge against the Soviet Union.

And thus, the context for *Freedom to Win* was set.

"I wasn't actually a natural to write this book," Scheiner said. "But I felt such passion about the story. I hope my writing will inspire people to follow their passions as well."

The collision of politics and sports was prompted by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The Soviets invaded the country in response to a shift in the Czechoslovakian leadership that softened communist ideals and ended censorship. "All of a sudden, they could say things without the fear of going to jail," said Scheiner. "And they could travel to different countries, which they hadn't been allowed to do before." The Soviets worried the reforms

[SEE SCHEINER page 22]



COURTESY OF ETHAN SCHEINER

Orinda resident and UC Davis professor, **Ethan Scheiner**, writes about the role of sports in the Czechoslovakian fight for freedom during Soviet communism in the late 1960s.

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



SHERWIN DE LEON

(L-R) Joy, Gabrio, Renzo and Nelson Sabalvaro on a family vacation in July in Paris, France.



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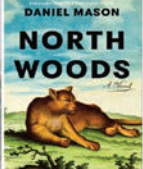
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CLASSIFIEDS / CALENDAR / FILM

# On the Calendar in September

**International Film Showcase** presents *Eight Mountains*. Show times visit [www.orindamovies.com](http://www.orindamovies.com).

2 **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 Sept. 9, 16, 23 and 30. See article p. 15.

3 **47th Annual San Francisco Stand-Up Comedy Competition** 2 p.m., also Sept. 8 at 8 p.m. Tickets \$25 general admission and \$40 for VIP at <https://tinyurl.com/2ddn4cze>. See article p. 13.

5 **Orinda Library ¡Tiempo de cuentos!** Amiga Ana reads and sings in Spanish & English. 10:30 a.m. Also, Sept. 12, 19 and 26.

6 **Orinda Library Toddler Storytime** for one to three-year-olds and their caregivers. 10:30 a.m. Also, Sept. 13, 20 and 27.

7 **Orinda Books Pat's Book Club** discusses *Summer Sisters* by Judy Blume. 11 a.m. Email [info@orindabooks.com](mailto:info@orindabooks.com).

**Taste of the World** food trucks Orinda Community Center parking lot, 5 - 8 p.m. Also Sept. 14, 21 and 28.

**Stories From Our Roots** presented by Miramonte students who will showcase three award-winning films featuring Asian-owned businesses: Joan's Chinese painting studio, Kibi's Cafe and Hodo Foods. 7:30 p.m. at

the Orinda Theatre. For tickets, visit [www.orindamovies.com](http://www.orindamovies.com) or call 925.254.9060.

**Concerts-in-the-Park** with *Hipster Cocktail Party* 6 p.m. Orinda Community Center Park.

8 **Orinda Rotary** presents *Dancing with the Cars*. 6 p.m. Orinda Community Center Upstairs Plaza. See ad p. 11.

**Orinda Starlight Village Players** present *Carlo Collodi's Pinocchio* through Sept. 30. Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 p.m., Sundays, Sept. 17 and 24 at 4 p.m. and Thursday, Sept. 28 at 8 p.m. Orinda Community Center Park Amphitheater. See article p. 12.

9 **Orinda Classic Car Show** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Orinda Village near Orinda Motors. See article p. 1.

**Orinda Library Gallery** reception with Jane Raymond and other featured artists, 3 - 5 p.m. See article p. 22.

14 **Orinda Library Paws to Read**. 3:30 Children in grades 1-5 practice reading aloud to dogs certified for their social natures.

Sign up at [tinyurl.com/OrindaPaws](http://tinyurl.com/OrindaPaws) or 925.254.2184. Also on Sept. 21 and 28.

15 **Montelindo Garden Club** presents Shannon Fitzpatrick on "Mediterranean Climates and Garden Plan Adaptations for our new era." 9 a.m., Lafayette Library Community Hall [www.montelindogarden.com](http://www.montelindogarden.com).

16 **Chiller Diller Theater** presents *It Came From Beneath the Sea*, 8:30 p.m. See article this page.

**Pacific Chamber Orchestra** presents Bach's Brandenburg Concertos 7:30 p.m. at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Tickets 925.373.6800.

19 **The Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch of the American Association of University Women** Showcase 9:30 a.m. Orinda Community Church Fellowship Hall. Speaker Teli Thayer, of *Girls Crushing It*. Visit <https://oml-ca.aauw.net>.

21 **Orinda Library Smitten Kittens**. Find the [SEE CALENDAR page 20]

## The Orinda News classified ads

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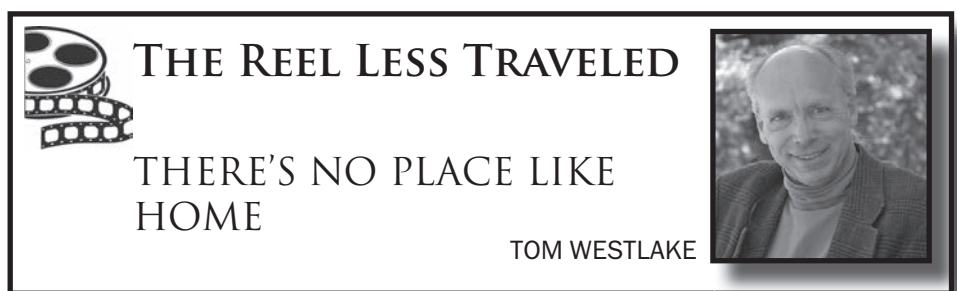
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**THE REEL LESS TRAVELED**

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

TOM WESTLAKE

Legacy, laughter, a little lust, plus much more are on view this month at the Orinda Theatre.

Let's get right to it.

Starting with a non-movie event, the 47th Stand-Up Comedy Competition is Sept. 3 and 8. You will have the rare opportunity to be in on the ground floor as comedians from all over try to out-funny each other. It's a little like witnessing history, for many past contestants have become world-renowned. Unlike most history lessons, this one comes with its own laugh track which, hopefully, you will provide. See the article on page 13, or visit [www.orindamovies.com/events](http://www.orindamovies.com/events).

Back to the silver screen. The Chiller Diller Theatre presents *It Came from Beneath the Sea* Sept. 16 at 8:30 p.m. This is another one of those movies meant to make us aware of the dangers of scientific hubris which, thus far, have given us mutated ants in *Them!*, spiders in *Tarantula!* and rabbits in *Night of the Lepus*. Here it's an octopus terrorizing San Francisco, brought to life by the stop-motion magic of Ray Harryhausen. Will the Golden Gate Bridge survive?

The International Film Showcase features a touching drama about friendship, lost and regained. *Eight Mountains* follows two men who form a strong bond as boys that even the vagaries of life can't completely destroy. It

may be true that one can't go home again, but there is nothing saying you can't build a new home. This is the daunting task which renews a dormant friendship. Visit [www.orindamovies.com](http://www.orindamovies.com) for showtimes and trailers.

*Pal Joey*, the free movie Sept. 21 at 6:30 p.m., is not that well known, but it deserves to be. With Frank Sinatra, Rita Hayworth and Kim Novak, it bursts with charisma and sex appeal. Though the titular character has more than a few flaws, they might be forgiven as soon as Sinatra sings, *The Lady is a Tramp*, which practically stops the show. Hayworth and Novak provide some distraction, especially when Hayworth sings *Bewitched*. Rogers and Hart really delivered here.

Ooz-O-Rama is a special event Sept. 23 at 3 p.m. Not much is known, but it's probably safe to guess it will appeal to those of us who appreciate the more visceral side of cinema. It is a matinee, starting at 3 p.m.

All in all it looks as if there's something for everyone and, as usual, always make sure to go toward those wonderful images made from sound and light, for that's where the reel magic lies.

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



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## MEASURE R

## ◆ MEASURE R from page 1

One use of Measure R funds was the hiring of James Duff as Wildfire Education and Outreach Coordinator late last year. Duff previously worked for the Austin, Texas, Fire Department in a similar capacity. He is one of fewer than 80 national fire prevention association certified wildfire mitigation specialists in the United States.

Before Duff's hiring, multiple fire safety efforts using Measure R funds were initiated, including the free chipper program and an incentive program to clear brush from properties.

"We have put tools in place to make it as easy as we possibly can for people to clear vegetation on their properties,"

said Melanie Light, chair of the SSTOC. "People are busy. The fire department nor the city can go onto people's property and do the work for them." *Editor's note: See accompanying story detailing the success of new and ongoing programs addressing wildfire risk reduction.*

#### Are fire safety and infrastructure inseparable?

Evacuation routes are critical to safety efforts during wildfire or other emergency conditions as was seen watching the people of Lahaina, HI desperately fleeing the August wildfires.

In the July 12 SSTOC meeting, City Manager David Biggs suggested the possibility that some Measure R funding could apply to aspects of the city's safety

element. This work might include adjustments to roads and medians, allowing traffic to move more efficiently in the event of evacuation. Biggs also mentioned suggestions of expanding or adding fire roads to aid firefighting crews and evacuation efforts.

Police Chief Ryan Sullivan addressed the commission about applying some of the tax revenue to help revamp the city's emergency operations center (EOC). Among necessary upgrades is replacing obsolete 3G phones with new radios using an appropriate frequency for use by public works and police during emergency or evacuation situations.

"It has been challenging for the SSTOC to find ways to spend money both efficiently and effectively that will have a meaningful impact on wildfire reduction risk," said Brad Barber, an SSTOC commissioner. Barber, a 35-year resident of Orinda, previously served on the board of the Moraga Orinda Fire Department.

He supports storm drain and sewer repair along with some ongoing road improvement.

"I want to make it abundantly clear that I am not accusing anyone of acting in bad faith," added Barber.

#### The Radke Proposal

Other programs suggested include a proposal from John Radke, an Orinda resident, UC Berkeley professor of Geographic Information Science (GIS) and founding member of the University's Center for Catastrophic Risk Management (CCRM). He is also a licensed pilot and a certified firefighter.

"I have been researching climate change, flooding and wildfires and their impact on infrastructure for more than 30 years," Radke said.

His proposal recommends that his research teams develop fire models analyzing areas of burn risk. The project would cost

approximately \$587,000 over two to three years' time and includes Radke and two professors donating their time at no cost. His teams include global experts in GIS and fire modeling.

"We're not talking pixels per tree, but pixels per pixel," he said.

The imagery and related technology will calculate the biomass of vegetation. Results demonstrate how much heat each type of plant life gives off under various fire scenarios. Public and private landowners will then have tangible knowledge to prioritize vegetation removal.

The SSTOC recommended the city council accept Radke's proposal.

"It seemed logical to me that if the project could show the degree of risk faced on each property, then that would be more of an incentive to the property owner than any other effort we're doing now," said Barber, one of six commission members who voted to recommend Radke's proposal.

City staff recommended against adopting the proposal. The council took no action, in part because of staff concerns about spending for research when other priorities compete for the funds and the potentially unrealistic public buy-in required to see the project to fruition.

Instead, staff is researching grants to fund the project. If appropriate grants are awarded with matching contingencies, Measure R funds could provide matching amounts.

SSTOC Commissioners are Melanie Light, Chair, Brad Barber, Chris Decareau, Jud Hammon, Rachele Latimer, Yasaman Lee, Paula Reinman and Alex Weinstein.

*The Orinda News* is continuing to follow Measure R revenue and its expenditures.

Coming next is, Facts and Figures: How Measure R Funds Have Been Spent to Date.

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

### Measuring Some Measure R Projects

*The Orinda News* is following the wildfire-safety programs funded by Measure R revenue. The information below covers a small selection of wildfire-prevention projects tied to Measure R funds. It is not a comprehensive description of all projects related to Measure R expenditures.

**Free chipper:** Micki Cronin, senior management analyst with the city, manages the free chipper program and explained a survey of residents who used the service in 2023 revealed more than 87% of respondents were extremely satisfied with the program. For more than 78%, the free program was the incentive to remove vegetation and more than 56% completed their entire task.

Cronin said the chipper and truck have collected over 2,264 cubic yards of vegetation so far this year. The city integrated a new software program for efficient scheduling. Reservations may be made at <https://reserve.chipperday.com/orinda>.

"The Wildland employees, who operate the truck, do an amazing job," said Cronin. "It's expensive to take out the truck and the chipper. We hope to encourage residents to schedule the service when they have large piles and to use their green waste bins for the smaller piles."

**Vegetation removal incentive:** With appropriate documentation, residents and businesses paying \$600 or more for vegetation removal on their properties can receive \$600 from the city.

Because many properties require thousands of dollars of work, the incentive has not yet garnered the degree of interest the city hoped for.

Eligible properties include those on fire apparatus roads, which is any city road or lane on developed property that can be accessed by fire apparatus, which likely includes most if not all developed properties — if they meet *any* of the following criteria: 1) are in a current Firewise community; 2) have had a Fire Adapted Community Assessment completed no more than 90 days prior to doing the work; or 3) received notice from MOFD the property is not in compliance.

**Public Information and Education:** Social media, website content and a trifold brochure are most direct forms of outreach about wildfire risk reduction projects. The most-viewed social media posts in recent months include resources related to emergency preparedness and wildfire prevention.

Fire mitigation expert James Duff, Orinda's wildfire education and outreach coordinator, actively collaborates with city, regional, state and national organizations. Among recent undertakings is active monitoring of Pacific Veg Map. A partnership with CAL FIRE, Pacific Veg Map provides detail about fine-scale vegetation, topographic, wildland fuels and other mapping for seven Bay Area Counties. To ensure appropriate mapping, staff is monitoring their current Alameda/Contra Costa mapping efforts, which are expected to be complete in 2025.

**Grants:** In its July 2023 annual presentation, California Consulting listed several grant applications submitted for various projects, including fire fuel reduction and storm drain upgrades. An application for generators has been accepted and is moving forward. City staff are exploring grants to fund a wildfire-prevention research proposal.

Many other projects are in consideration.



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SCHOOL CALENDAR / CAR TIME

## School Calendar in September

- 1 **Miramonte High School** Home Football Game vs Piedmont High School, 4:30 p.m.  
**Wagner Ranch** Picture Day.
- 7 **Miramonte High School** All Class Parent Meeting, 6 p.m.  
**Orinda Intermediate School** Parents Club meeting, 10 a.m.
- 8 **Wagner Ranch** Scoops for Books event ice cream social where families donate a book to the library. 5 p.m.
- 15 **Miramonte High School** Home Football Game vs Pinole Valley High School, 4:30 p.m.  
**OUSD** First Day of Hispanic Heritage Month School Holiday.  
**OUSD** Professional Development Day.
- 18 **Acalanes Union High School District** Black Student Union Summit.  
**Miramonte High School** Parent Ed: Campus Gun Safety Event, 7 p.m.  
**Miramonte High School** Homecoming Spirit Week through Sept. 22.
- 22 **Wagner Ranch** Parents Club meeting 8 a.m.
- 23 **Miramonte High School** Homecoming Dance, 5 p.m.  
**Miramonte High School** Class of 2024 Parent Social, 6:30 p.m.
- 27 **Miramonte High School** CCC- Looking Towards College Junior Parent Meeting.
- 30 **Miramonte High School** Public Speaking GGSA Debate 1: Congress & Parliament, 8 a.m.  
**Miramonte High School** Class of 2026 Parent Social, 6:30 p.m.

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

## CAR TIME

### The Rise and Fall of Carlos Ghosn



XAVIER ESTRADA

Carlos Ghosn was one of the most successful CEOs in the automotive industry. In 2018 the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi Alliance chairman was arrested in Japan, charged with several financial crimes and faced at least ten years in prison. He made headlines the following year when he smuggled himself from Osaka's Kansai International Airport to Turkey, "reportedly bundled in a Yamaha instrument case," during the holiday season. His backstory, up to this point, is an interesting one.

After an 18-year stint at Michelin, he was hired in 1996 to help pull Renault, the French auto manufacturer, out of financial troubles. Ghosn was infamous for his hard work and cost-cutting measures, including staff, and was nicknamed "Le Cost Killer." Renault underwent a financial turnaround and looked at purchasing a major stake in Nissan, which was in debt by at least \$22 billion and continued to fall behind Toyota and Honda.

In 1999, Renault purchased a large stake in Nissan and Ghosn was in charge of turning the company around. A Brazilian-born, Lebanese-Frenchman with experience at Renault, he understood the challenges of culture clashes between the two companies and kept their entities and identities separate.

The immediate plan was to cut Nissan's staff by 14%, following a rejuvenation of their vehicle lineup, including the revival of the 350Z and Nissan GT-R sports cars.

The GT-R was highly anticipated since its predecessors were nicknamed Godzilla for their technical dominance on the street and track. The U.S. market was finally able to import the GT-R to sell. Nissan and its luxury counterpart, Infiniti, saw a huge increase in profit and pulled themselves out of near bankruptcy. Ghosn, an outsider CEO to the Japanese, was treated like royalty for being the force who saved the homegrown brand.

Ghosn was named the CEO of Renault in 2005, a complication as he was also the CEO of Nissan. Not wanting to end his reign of power with Nissan, he attempted to carry both roles.

Eventually Ghosn named a replacement CEO at Nissan, but kept a level of control over things. This was the start of a downward spiral that would see him face allegations of using company finances for his personal expenses. His appearance and work ethics started to change. All of this motivated the CEO of Nissan and other executives to orchestrate his arrest. Released on bail, Ghosn planned his 2019 escape from Japan in fear of not receiving a fair trial. He currently resides in Lebanon, where he is safe from his international arrest warrants.

The documentary series, *Wanted: The Escape of Carlos Ghosn*, began Aug. 25 on Apple TV.

Xavier Estrada can be reached at [xavier.estrada.freelance@gmail.com](mailto:xavier.estrada.freelance@gmail.com).

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### ◆ CALENDAR from page 18

- kitten of your dreams at the Contra Costa Animal Services Mobile Adoption Van. 5 p.m.
- Concerts-in-the-Park** with *Patron Latin Rhythms* 6 p.m. Orinda Community Center Park.
- Orinda Theatre Free Movie Night** presents *Pal Joey*. 6:30 p.m. See article p. 18.
- 23 **Orinda Theatre** presents *Ooz-O-Rama*. 3 p.m. See article p. 18.
- Orinda Starlight Village Players** - meet cast members from OrSVP's production of *Carlo Collodi's Pinocchio* including Pinocchio and Gepetto at Gepetto's Cafe, 1 p.m.
- 27 **Orinda Books and Orinda Library** pres-

ent Daniel Mason author of *North Woods* 7 p.m. Orinda Library Auditorium. \$32 admission includes copy of the book. Visit <https://bit.ly/3OZyCkr> for tickets. Email [info@orindabooks.com](mailto:info@orindabooks.com) for more information.

28 **Orinda Books Pat's Literary Luncheon** featuring Amy Chua and her debut novel *The Golden Gate*, 11:30 a.m. \$35 ticket includes lunch and copy of book. Visit <https://bit.ly/3KP5nPN> for tickets. Email [info@orindabooks.com](mailto:info@orindabooks.com) for more information.

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

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## BUSINESS BUZZ

# Orinda's Tarabrook Winery: Creating Artisan Wines Since 2011

By KATHY CORDOVA  
Executive Editor

Orinda has many things going for it – small town charm, excellent schools and big-hearted volunteer spirit. There's one more community asset which might be surprising: an award-winning winery, selling handcrafted varietals, from the lightest Sauvignon Blanc to the heartiest Petite Sirah.

Tarabrook Winery, a mere quarter-mile from Theatre Square, has been producing small batches of wine since 2011. What began as a lark and a hobby for best friends Bill Pence and Chris Cook, transformed into an impressive professional operation. Tarabrook became bonded in April 2019, enabling Pence and Cook to publicly sell wines they previously shared with friends and family.

Becoming a winemaker was an unexpected development for Pence, who taught high school biology for 37 years and won California Teacher of the Year in 1999.

## Tarabrook Winery

25 Tarabrook Dr.  
Orinda, California 94563  
925.639.4201  
<https://tarabrook.square.site/>  
[aewpence@comcast.net](mailto:aewpence@comcast.net)

**Join the Friends of Tarabrook Winery Facebook Group** for news about events and other updates.

Tarabrook doesn't charge for deliveries within a 10-mile radius of the winery. For deliveries over 10 and up to a 50-mile radius they charge a \$10 fee and require a minimum \$200 purchase.

His present-day passion had roots in his lineage, however.

"I should have known it was in my blood," Pence said. "I was named after my grandfather who was a corn farmer during Prohibition. So what can you make in a bathtub with corn? Even the sheriff pulled up in his car and my grandfather would come out with a case of his bathtub hooch."

Pence started brewing beer at home in 2010, a year after he retired. In 2011, Cook, a former journalist with the BBC, suggested they try making wine. The idea fit well with Pence's science background and knowledge of fermentation and sanitizing techniques. He transformed his backyard into a vineyard and his home into a winery. He and Cook got cooking, or rather fermenting, on their wine.

The duo is largely self-taught, having taken one, two-hour class in the parking lot of a Concord store which sells homebrew and winemaking supplies.

Pence, who said the idea of continuous learning inspires him, devoured the same enology textbooks used in the renowned winemaking program at UC Davis

Although many wineries source grapes from other vineyards, Pence wanted to grow at least some of his own. Professionals said his north-facing backyard slope with limited amounts of sun, soil with volcanic minimality and specific microclimate, would lend itself well to Tempranillo. Over the next several years, Pence painstakingly terraced his half-acre backyard, and he and Cook planted what is now a vineyard with 185 Tempranillo vines.

"People visit and say, 'I didn't know you were into Tempranillo,' and I tell them I didn't either!" said Pence. The fruit is known as the noble grape of Spain and



JEFF HEYMAN

Tarabrook Winery grew out of a passion for wine and winemaking shared by four friends, pictured (L-R) **Chris Cook, Vivien Cook, Penny Rix** and **Bill Pence**. Head winemaker Pence works closely with assistant winemaker Cook and their wives to produce a variety of artisan, award-winning wines.

is the most widely planted varietal there. Tarabrook's Estate Tempranillo is deep red with rich fruit flavors of cherry, red and black currant.

The official role of head winemaker belongs to Pence, while Cook occupies the equally vital role of assistant winemaker. He helps with procuring grapes from other sources, crushing and destemming the grapes, separating the juice from the skin and seeds and weighing in on periodic tastings.

From early in their winemaking venture, Pence and Cook's hard work paid off. In 2015, the first year they competed, Tarabrook received a double gold for their 2013 Zinfandel and a Best in Class (better than gold) for their 2015 Petite Sirah in an amateur contest at the California State Fair.

In 2022, Tarabrook entered the Orange County Fair Wine Competition, the world's largest contest featuring only California wines. They won silver for all three entries of Petite Sirah, Grenache and Zinfandel.

Once bonded, they embraced the "wine club model," selling to dedicated customers and hosting tastings.

"We had our first pouring event in December 2019," said Pence. "A couple of months later, there's a global pandemic and we had to pause. I started delivering as little as three bottles of wine as far as Mountain House. It's a good thing I drive a Prius."

Tarabrook Winery has a small home business permit which does not allow regular tasting hours. The next pouring event is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 11. Visitors are welcome to drop in between noon to 4 p.m.

"We not only love both the art and science that goes into transforming sugary, ripe grapes to artisan fine wine, but most importantly, seeing our community enthusiastically embracing literally the fruits of our labor at our semi-annual wine pouring events," said Pence.

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

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VISUAL ARTS

# Library Gallery: Orinda Art Scene with Painter Jane Raymond

BY NATASHA KAYE  
Staff Writer

Orinda artist, Jane Raymond, captures the essence of natural beauty of both landscapes and the human form in her paintings, which are on display at the Orinda Library through Sept. 30.

Raymond specializes in *plein air* painting, a French term meaning “open air,” where an outdoor studio is set up directly in front of the subject being depicted. This style requires the artist to embrace the elements, like weather and shifting light that may alter the piece. Raymond finds joy in the process.

“*Plein air* is wonderful and challenging

because the light is always changing,” she said. “There is an infinite universe where you have to decide what to paint and I always look for what I think is beautiful.”

Raymond prefers to work with oil paints when she has the time. Life drawing occurs under completely different circumstances as she works indoors with a group and sometimes only has a few minutes to complete her piece before the models take a break.

In addition to the time constraints, oil paints and turpentine, which she uses as a solvent, can be toxic to inhale, so she occasionally opts for watercolors. Raymond emphasizes each medium has its own challenges and benefits, but she enjoys working through them to create a unique piece each time.

“I do have a system I wind up working through, but I don’t always work it through in the same order,” said Raymond. “I’ve been criticized for not having a way that I



JOHN RAYMOND

Artist, **Jane Raymond**, in her yard next to her painting, *Mt. Diablo*, finds joy in the natural beauty of outdoor *plein air* painting and live figure-drawing portraits.



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do every painting, but I want each painting to be different.”

Originally from the East Coast, Raymond moved to the Bay Area with her husband several decades ago to pursue two master’s degrees at UC Berkeley; one in biology, the other in architecture.

She joined the Berkeley Potters Guild and began remodeling the homes she lived in. Wherever she went and in whatever she

pursued, she found a way to incorporate art.

“I was always interested in structure and making houses better, but mostly it’s about creating a space you want to be in,” she said. “It has a lot to do with lighting and the basic shape and form.”

Raymond has had an affinity for art for as long as she can remember. She recalls [SEE RAYMOND page 23]

◆ SCHEINER from page 17

and freedoms could spark a widespread uprising of other Eastern states.

After the invasion, the Soviets re-established censorship and control in the country. When the Czechoslovakian national ice hockey team faced off against the Soviet team in 1969, “the whole country just looked to the hockey team as, ‘You’re our only way to fight back,’” said Scheiner. “This is the only thing we can do.”

*Freedom to Win* includes the story of the Holík brothers, hockey team members whose family butcher shop had been stolen by the Communists. Scheiner interviewed members of the brothers’ family residing in the U.S.

The author spoke of parallels between the Czechoslovakia invasion and the recent invasion of Ukraine, calling *Freedom to Win* “a sad reminder that this is

not the first time this has happened.” A Ukrainian publisher has reached out to Scheiner about a translated version of the book.

He hopes his book will show readers how much sports mean to those in underdog, small towns and countries throughout the world.

“Such people are often overlooked,” said Scheiner. “But through sports, they can show the world they exist, and they matter.”

Scheiner will speak about the book on Dec. 7 at 6 p.m. at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco.

Signed copies of *Freedom to Win: A Cold War Story of the Courageous Hockey Team That Fought the Soviets for the Soul of Its People—and Olympic Gold* are available at Orinda Books. Requests can also be made for a personalized, signed copy.

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



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ORINDA LIBRARY

# Orinda Library Offers New Programs to Inspire Reading

By CHARLEEN EARLEY  
Editor-in-Chief

Senior Community Library Manager, Michael Beller, refuses to whisper when it comes to sharing his excitement about the many changes coming to the Orinda Library. Some are in place and others just around the corner.

### Study Carrels

Let's start with what arrived, assembled and is in use. Beller said it might sound boring to some, but for others, it's genius. A six-person study carrel.

It's like a cubby, similar to the four study carrels lined alongside the fiction wall, only it's hexagonal, serving six people.

Made possible through generous donations from the Friends of the Library, each station has an electrical outlet to plug-in computers, phones; you name it.

"They're pretty popular because they provide a degree of privacy. During school time, we have everybody from middle school to college, coming to study," said Beller. "These carrels are going to be very welcome and used additions to the library. In fact, they already are."

### Spanish/English Bilingual Storytime

The Spanish/English Bilingual Storytime is new and will be held Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. Toddler Storytime in English is Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.

"Our Storytimes are already very large and I think this is going to be a big hit," said Beller.

"We are also starting a regular ESL (English as a Second Language) conversation group and a book club for new(ish) mothers," Beller added. "Those aren't yet on the schedule, but I think we will start them soon. Exciting times at the library."

### StoryWalk

Another addition is the delivery of 24 story-walk signs, made by Storywalk Solutions. They hold pages from one children's picture book, placed in a frame and installed along an outdoor path. "We're working with the city to select sign placements," said Beller. "Most likely they'll be at the Wilder fields, probably stretching along the fields and maybe going all the way up to the Wilder Art & Garden Center."

Beller said the selected stories will generally come from their most fun and active picture books, everything from *Pete the Cat* to *Where the Wild Things Are*.

"It will also include some of our fabu-

lous, local storybook authors," said Beller. "We'll likely change out the books bi-monthly or quarterly; it'll depend on staffing."

The signs are a collaboration between Orinda Parks and Rec, Friends of the Orinda Library and the Library. Beller hopes more partners will join their installation efforts.

"I'm hoping other groups might be interested in collaborating with us, for example, the Eagle Scouts, who might be making us a little free library to be placed up there, stocked with board books from the Friends of the Library," he said.

"This will be great for the community, because it adds an active element to learning to read and becoming excited about reading," said Beller.

### More to Come

But wait, there's more on the horizon.

*"This will be great for the community, because it adds an active element to learning to read and becoming excited about reading," said Beller.*

"Another big thing in the pipeline, possibly two to three months out, is a laptop kiosk where patrons can check-out laptops for an hour or so," said Beller. "These are in addition to the desktop computers we have, but offer the ability to take a computer to a more comfortable, private seat, like the new study carrels!"

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

### ◆ RAYMOND from page 22

regularly sketching her classmates during grade school and always finding new subjects. The skill also runs in her blood as her great-grandfather was one of the painters of the monumental neoclassical paintings in the Capitol's rotunda.

Reflecting on why art has always taken center stage in her life, Raymond said, "Art is what I go back to and do. It relaxes me. It takes my focus."

Meet Raymond in person, along with other featured artists, at the Orinda Library Gallery reception on Sept. 9 from 3 - 5 p.m.

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



CHARLEEN EARLEY

(L-R) Michael Beller and Orinda resident, Alain Chan, are excited about the newly installed, six-person study carrel at the Orinda Library. Chan uses the library on a regular basis and said this new hexagonal-shaped carrel with electrical plugs is perfect for his needs.

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MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

# Matt Warren Returns to Orinda to Serve as St. Stephen's Rector

By KATHY CORDOVA  
Executive Editor

Life has come full circle for Matt Warren. Son of the late Doug Warren, who served as St. Stephen's Episcopal Church's rector from 1986 to 2003, Warren returned to Orinda last month to take over the position his father once held.

**What's your Orinda origin story?**

I'm basically an Orinda native, moving here when I was seven, when my dad took the job at St. Stephen's.

I had a rocky start. We moved from Phoenix, which is almost completely flat. The driveway to the rectory is about a 40-degree slope and I thought I could take my bike to the top of the hill and go down the middle fork of the parking lot. I had never gone that fast before and I went head over handlebars and broke my jaw in eight places. So my first night in Orinda was spent in Oakland Children's Hospital.

Many of the parishioners who remember me, have warned me not to let Abby and John ride their bikes down the hill.

**What was it like growing up as the son of a church rector?**

I definitely felt at times like I was in the spotlight. I felt pressure to be the prototypical good kid, not a troublemaker.

The good thing is, a lot of my success is due to me feeling incredibly comfortable talking to adults, because that's what coffee hour was. Being a rector's kid erased any social anxiety, so when it came to talking to college admissions officers or job interviewers, it seemed completely natural.

**Did you ever think you would move back to Orinda?**

I had hope. Orinda was a great place to

grow up and I'm excited to be back. It has a very small-town feel. Your neighbors are familiar. You can't get in and out of Safeway without bumping into someone you know.

At the same time, there are vast cultural opportunities that come along with living in the Bay Area. Whether it's going to see *Hamilton* or to the DeYoung or a Warriors' game, those things feed your soul – and allow you to connect emotionally when preaching.

**Tell us about your family.**

I met Kristy the first day of college orientation and we started dating in the spring. We just celebrated our 19th wedding anniversary. She's the assistant superintendent and director of curriculum and instruction for the Plumas County Office of Education, so she'll be working remotely this year.

Abby is a sophomore at Miramonte. She plays golf and basketball, but her passion is pitching softball. I'm looking forward to watching the Lady Mats this year.

John is in the eighth grade at OIS. He loves swimming and he's excited to give water polo a try. He's also a speed Rubik's cuber and goes to competitions. I think he's in the top 5,000 worldwide.

**Did you always know you would make your career in the church?**

No, in the fifth grade I wanted to be a college professor. I love government and I planned to be a politics major.

I went to the seminary, not to become a priest, but to learn how to lecture and to get a background in counseling, which I thought would be helpful on a college campus.

Then I began to question if I had the gifts to be a priest. It took a couple of years to find the answer. I wasn't sure I had the calling, but a wise friend said, "A lot of



JEFF HEYMAN

**Matt Warren**, the new rector at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church makes faith relatable by incorporating humor into his sermons. This fall the church will offer his class, "The Gospel According to Ted Lasso."

people get drafted. That doesn't mean you can't enlist."

**What's your approach to using humor in your services?**

I think 90% of it is admitting it's ok to have a sense of humor and be a spiritual person. So many of us associate spirituality with seriousness, but you can be serious without being somber. You can be seriously funny.

It's also about making faith relatable. I wrote a class called "The Gospel According to Ted Lasso," which we'll be offering this fall.

**St. Stephen's, like many churches, was closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. What lessons do you think we learned during that time?**

One of the most unfortunate things was when we hosted online services, we kept

telling ourselves it doesn't matter if we're together physically, as long as we are united in our faith.

Although intentions were good, it made it really easy to not come to church. I think post-pandemic, the job of clergy is reminding people our presence matters in terms of community. My role is to gather and guide. It's the connections we make that give spiritual life meaning and depth.

As important as the pulpit is, coffee hour is the place where souls are actually saved.

**Do you imagine finishing your career at St. Stephen's?**

My dad was the longest serving rector of St. Stephen's at 17 years. If I can't beat him, I'd at least like to finish in the medal position.

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

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