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Orinda's Volunteer Band Keeps on Marching

By Andrea A. Firth



Photo Rick Konlon, LightPath Photography

say never" Landers was forced to look elsewhere. She just

said 'we're gonna start one,' explains Levich, and so the Orinda Volunteer Marching Band was born.

Musicians as young as eight to as young as 88 join the march each Independence Day playing patriotic favorites on a range of instruments including trumpets, saxophones, trombones, tubas, and drums. The band's repertoire includes the John Phillips Sousa classic Stars and Stripes Forever and the anthems from each of the armed forces. Blowing the whistle and setting the step as bandleader this year will be Lamorinda musician Tom Carter.

Colleen McCormick, a clarinetist, first marched with the band 15 years ago. 'I was eight months pregnant with my son,' recalls Colleen, who was joined by her alto saxophone playing husband John. "We met playing in Cal's marching band, so we were excited to have the chance to play in a community band," recalls Colleen, who lives in Lafayette and will soon open Lamorinda Music, a music store and lesson center on Lafayette Circle. "It's become a family tradition," she adds. The McCormick's two teenagers, Emily and Scott, have also played in the Volunteer Marching Band for several years.

"The marching band members come from across Lamorinda and all over," states Levich who, as one of the band's major recruiters, invites anyone who wants to play to participate. "The whole community is invited," he adds. "We have a ball."

If You Want to Play on 7/4-the Essentials

On Parade Day: Meet at 9 a.m. just east of Casa Orinda to get organized and practice marching. The parade starts at 10 a.m.

The Uniform: Wear dark blue shorts or pants, a white shirt, and sunglasses (to conceal the identity of bad notes). Hats will be provided.

The Music: If you want to practice in advance (not required but often helpful), pick up the song book at Lamorinda Music, 81 Lafayette Circle, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, or call 385-0963.

Drummers: If you play drums, contact Mo Levich at 284-0961 to reserve drums. Supply is limited.

While there may not be 76 trombones at the lead with 110 coronets close at hand (remember Professor Harold Hill's fictitious band in The Music Man), Orinda resident and jazz trumpeter Mo Levich expects over 100 musicians to participate in the Orinda Volunteer Marching Band in the upcoming July 4th parade, and he is hoping to have even more.

"Anyone with an instrument is welcome to play at any level of musicianship," says an enthusiastic Levich, who has played in the July 4th marching band since its inception 26 years ago. "If you can play one note, that is a note we did not have before," he adds.

The volunteer band is the brainchild of former Orinda Mayor Bobbi Landers who was determined to have a marching band as part of the city's original July 4th parade back in 1983. Faced with the dilemma that schools no longer had marching bands due to the funding cuts associated with the passage of Proposition 13, the "never-



Colleen Mc Cormick (brunette clarinetist) Photo provided

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