



'Tis the Season for Festivities!



Lafayette's 2011 Hospice Tree Photo Doug Kohen

Lafayette

An Evening of Fellowship & Spiritual Music. Alex Cook and Ben Vaughan, Christian musicians from Boston and Canada, with original songs celebrating and defending spiritual identity at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 23 at the Lafayette Library, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. For more info, call (925) 258-9442 or visit www.csorinda.org.

Santa's Bag Boutique. Once again, the energetic Judy Gregersen is putting together the shopping event of the season – the Santa's Bag Boutique. With over 60 vendors, some of the usual suspects as well as new folks, this is the place to shop for gifts for and from the kitchen, Christmas-themed items like personalized holiday stockings, garden and yard art, and lots of cookies and candy. Come early for best selection at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road, Lafayette. Open all weekend from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 30 and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 1-2.

It's a Wonderful Life opens Dec. 1 at the Town Hall Theatre, 3535 School St., Lafayette (preview performances Nov. 29 and 30). George Bailey, his life and finances in ruin, decides the world would be better off without him – until he is paid an unexpected visit. For tickets or more info, call (925) 284-5050 or visit www.townhalltheatre.com/main-stage-performances/its-a-wonderful-life.

Annual Holiday Concert and Sing-Along with the Rossmoor and Moraga Community Chorus, presented by Lafayette Senior Services from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Friday, Dec. 7 at the Live Oak Room of the Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road. All ages are welcome at this rousing sing-along with delicious appetizers, holiday treats and a raffle. Cost: \$3 for members; \$5 for non-members.

Orinda



Wooden birdhouses by Kay Rubin will be among the many items available at the Tarabrook Holiday Boutique in Orinda. Photo Kay Rubin

Holiday Boutique Offers Unique Crafts from Local Artists. The 11th annual Tarabrook Holiday Boutique has moved its location, but is still offering one-of-a-kind hand-crafted gifts and food from over 30 local artisans Friday, Nov. 30 from noon to 8 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 1-2 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 1 Tarabrook Drive in Orinda. Formerly the Overhill Holiday Boutique, this unique crafts faire features local Lamorinda artisans, including many Matador Marketplace alumni. A percentage of the proceeds benefit the National Breast Cancer Foundation. For more information, call Jackie at (925) 254-3944 or email her at bead-smith@sbglobal.net.

Santa Holiday Photos start Friday, Nov. 30 from 1 to 7 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 1 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday, Dec. 2 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Orinda Theatre Square. Bring an ornament for Santa's tree.

Santa Comes to Orinda! The Hospice of the East Bay and Orinda Chamber of Commerce are joining forces once again to sponsor Orinda's annual Hospice Tree Lighting and holiday season kick-off from 4 to 6 pm on Saturday, Dec. 1 in front of the Bank of America at the Orinda Village Shopping Center, 31 Orinda Way. The parking area will be transformed into a pout-free zone as local school choirs warm the hearts of children and adults waiting breathlessly for Santa's arrival.

Sisters-in-Crime Holiday. If you love a good mystery, then sleuth with the scribes who'll be telling their latest tales at 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 1 at Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, Orinda.

Young Artists to Light Up Annual Arts Council Luncheon. The Orinda Arts Council will hold its Annual Holiday Luncheon at the Orinda Country Club from noon to 2 p.m.

Two Trees, One Ceremony

Two for one Tree of Life celebration at new location in Moraga

By Cathy Tyson

While the stately oak near the Round Up Saloon in Lafayette will still be sparkling with lights, the former site of the Hospice of the East Bay Tree of Lights in the Moraga Commons is being relocated to a tree at the Moraga Country Club. There will be one celebration for both trees at 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 9 at 1600 St. Andrews Drive. For 26 years the Tree of Lights has been a fundraiser for this non-profit organization. Purchasing a symbolic light for \$25 honors a loved one and directly supports end-of-life patient care.

Located near a pond that will reflect the twinkling lights, the Moraga tree will be quite visible from Moraga Way, the gateway to town. The new Moraga tree is dedicated to well-known Lamorinda resident

Michael Vukelich, founder, chairman and CEO of Color Sport Nurseries, who recently passed away at age 61 after being diagnosed with brain cancer. The family used the services of Hospice of the East Bay. In addition to hospice and palliative care services, they offer support and comfort for the patient and family along with social workers, volunteers to assist as needed, massage therapists and more. Low income families never receive a bill for service, that's why fundraisers like the Tree of Lights events are so important.

The Orinda Tree ceremony will be held as usual in Orinda Village by the Bank of America – part of Orinda's community holiday celebration at 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 1 (see additional listing). C. Tyson

Contra Costa Children's Chorus Winter Concerts.

Gaudete! Rejoice in the season of light as the advanced choirs perform Benjamin Britten's masterpiece, "A Ceremony of Carols" with harp accompaniment, telling the story of the nativity drawn from ancient carol texts, and imparting the hope and innocence surrounding it. Other selections include works by Vivaldi, Ives, lively spirituals, and Hannukah and Christmas carol favorites, at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 7 at Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church – Family Concert featuring all choirs; and at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 14 at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church – featuring upper level ensembles. Tickets: Adults \$15; students \$5. For tickets, email programs@childrenschorus.org or www.brownpapertickets.com/. For more info, visit www.childrenschorus.org/.

Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer Christmas Show.

The show will feature Christmas music and entertainment that adults and kids will love and is sure to put everyone in a "reindeer" frame of mind Saturday, Dec. 8 at Mighty Fine Guitars, 85 Lafayette Cir., Lafayette. The doors will open at 7:30 p.m.; the show begins at 8 p.m. Suggested donation: \$25; \$12 for kids under 12. For more info, call (415) 893-9818 or visit www.drelmo.com.

Annual Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church Christmas Concert

at 4:00 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8 and 9 in the Sanctuary at LOPC, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Tickets are free but required for *God's Promise – In the Night*; visit www.lopc.org and click on "Music." A variety of choral texts will be presented, including the Renaissance motet *Resonant in Laudibus* and Vivaldi's *Magnificat*; also highlighted will be new pieces by the Youth Choir and the Festival Choir along with traditional Christmas carols.

Tuesday, Dec. 4. After enjoying a menu of grilled chicken salad or pumpkin polenta, attendees will be treated to a tasty dessert while the Orinda Idol Singers offer a program of heartwarming holiday music. Highlights from "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" will be performed by the Orinda Intermediate School Bulldog Theater Company Actors. Cost: \$22 per person. RSVP to Myrna Witt by Nov. 26 at keyofm@aol.com.

Orinda Traditions – Cal Shakes Featured at This Year's Annual Historical Society Dinner.

Celebrate Orinda's own beloved Cal Shakes (California Shakespeare Theater) at this year's Orinda Historical Society Holiday Party Wednesday, Dec. 5. Whether you're a history buff or lover of the bard, you'll enjoy hearing those behind-the-scenes reminiscences told only at this popular annual OHS event. Social Hour will begin at 6 p.m. with a presentation of cheeses, seasonal fruits and baguettes, punch, and wine. Dinner offerings include salmon with green goddess dressing, beef tenderloin with balsamic reduction sauce, and butternut squash lasagna, followed by apple pie topped with whipped cream. Cost: \$40 per person. RSVP with payment to the Orinda Historical Society by Dec. 1. Location: Fellowship Hall, Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way. For information, call (925) 254-1353.

The Twelve Clues of Christmas. Mystery goddess Rhys Bowen dishes up the latest in her Royal Spyness series, "The Twelve Clues of Christmas," at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 5 at Orinda Books, 276 Village Square.

Fingerstyle Guitar with Ace. The Orinda Library kicks off its inaugural Winter Music Series with the acoustic guitar artistry of Ace Batacan at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 5. Groove to the jazz and popular strains of Ace's holiday favorites while warming your bones in front of the Library's cozy fireplace. For more information, contact Ruth Boyer at the Orinda Library: (925) 254-2184.

Handel with Care – Sing-It-Yourself Messiah. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church will host a sing-it-yourself performance of Handel's "Messiah" at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 7. Directed by Minister of Music Robert Train Adams, participants are welcome to sing along with – or just listen to and be inspired by the Festival Choir, soloists and chamber orchestra. An offer-

The Lafayette Gallery is hosting their Holiday Arts & Crafts "Trunk Show"

from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 8 and 9 at 50 Lafayette Circle. Look for one-of-a-kind gifts and craft items by local artisans and guest artists, which include ceramics and glassware, scarves, hats and much more.

A Festive Mix of holiday music

from singing and ringing choirs at Our Saviors Lutheran Church Christmas Concert from 4 to 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 9, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette. "The Song of the Angels: Gloria in Excelsis Deo," A glittering reception will follow in the fellowship hall.

WomenSing holiday concert,

Sing an Endless 'Ave,' from 8 to 10 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 12 at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Hear the unexpected combination of steel drum and the vibrant and beautifully blended sounds of WomenSing. Cost: \$30 premium seats; \$25 general admission; \$20 seniors; \$10 students/youth 18 and under. For more info, visit www.womensing.org or call (925) 974-9169 or email info@womensing.org.

Walter the Giant Storyteller.

For kids of all ages, the Friends of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center present an evening of massive storytelling. This free event will be held from 7 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 13 at the Community Hall of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. Headliner Walter M. Mayes is also known as Walter the Giant Storyteller, at six-foot-seven inches, he's not exactly petite. Brace yourselves for "Giant book of Giant stories" and find out what happens when he survives being shipwrecked on a Lilliputian-like island.

ing will be taken at this free event in support of the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties. Location: 66 St. Stephens Drive, Orinda. For information, contact the church office at: (925) 254-3370, ext. 10.

Orinda Ballet Academy's "A Sweet Dream Nutcracker."

Get those sugar plums dancing in your children's heads with the Orinda Ballet Academy's two-act holiday performance of "A Sweet Dream Nutcracker" at the Orinda Library Theater, 26 Orinda Way, Friday and Saturday, Dec. 7-9. All tickets \$18. See the Academy's web site for performance dates and times: www.orindaballetacademy.com.

California Independent Film Festival's Classic Film Series – The Bishop's Wife.

Grab someone to snuggle with and head for dinner at Orinda Theatre Square on Saturday, Dec. 15 before catching the 7 p.m. Orinda Theatre showing of *The Bishop's Wife* with Cary Grant, Loretta Young, and David Niven. Buy tickets online at LamorindaTheatres.com, or call: (925) 388-0752.

Books and Crafts – A Holiday Extravaganza at Orinda Books.

Stumped for what to get that person who has everything – or that mom who annually says, "Don't get me anything"? Swing by Orinda Books at 276 Village Square at noon Saturday, Dec. 15, where you'll have the chance to pick the brains of Random House's Ron Shoop, Penguin Books' Wendy Pearl, and Dandy Conway of Random House Children's Books. You're sure to find the right gift for your loved one – and a little something for your own fireside reading. Local craftspeople will also offer one-of-a-kind gifts for sale.

Holiday Tot Hop.

Bring your little ones on over to boogie to holiday tunes before simmering down with seasonal story favorites at the Orinda Library Tuesday or Wednesday, Dec. 18 or 19. Events begin at 10 am, and are open to parents and their children ages 0 to 5.

Gerry Wallace Holiday Ceramics Sale.

Find the perfect gift for the ceramic arts lover in your family at the Gerry Wallace Holiday Ceramics Sale at Orinda Books, 276 Village Square. Browse and buy from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 22.

