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Local Runners Put On Eclectic Art Show at Orinda Library

By Clare Varellas



Artwork by Denny Weigand Photo Denny Weigand

The show, which will debut at a gala open to the public on Aug. 2, is sponsored by the Orinda Arts Council and features the work of talented local artists including Orinda residents Lucia Bennhoff, Therese Gladstone Gordon, Dale Herrero, Jean Weigand, and Denny Weigand, Lafayette's Dyan Bender, Moraga's George Ehrenhaft, and Walnut Creek's Linda Wendt. In addition, the work of former Lamorindan and nationally-acclaimed watercolor artist Sally Bailey and of the late Gail Overaa will be present. Some pieces will be for sale while others will be exhibited only for viewing.

The Orinda RoadRunners, started by several Lamorinda runners in 1976, has grown over the past several decades to include about 80 members, who not only run together but socialize over coffee and in other circumstances.

"We always meet at a coffee shop and run and then have coffee afterward," said RoadRunner, dentist, and woodworker Dale Herrero. "As the group has aged there are runners and walkers and just coffee drinkers. It gives us people to run with because running can be kind of lonely when you're just out by yourself, and the group has become, outside of running, very social. Many of us have taken vacations together and do things outside of just the runs."

Watercolor painter and Orinda RoadRunner Linda Wendt said that her practice of running with the group through the picturesque Lamorinda hills gives her artistic inspiration.

"Some of the beautiful things that you see when you're running and being able to collect things like nuts and pods and leaves give you inspiration to want to paint certain things," said Wendt, the wife of RoadRunners founder Jerry Wendt and a painter whose intricate botanical watercolor pieces will be on display at the show.

Ehrenhaft agrees that the scenery he admires while running with the RoadRunners on hilly local trails provides him vision for his watercolor paintings, many of which are of landscapes.

"You go to places where other people usually don't go, so you see things that if you just stick to the sidewalks you're not going to see," said Ehrenhaft.

The public is welcome at an opening gala for the show at the gallery of the Orinda Library from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, Aug. 2 to enjoy the art, refreshments, and to meet the artists. The show will be on display at the Orinda Library gallery through the end of August.

It's not every day you get a group of creative joggers producing an exhibit of unique art, so when painter and retired high school English teacher George Ehrenhaft had the idea for such an event, he literally took it and ran with it.

The result, a sundry and beautiful mix of photography, watercolor, wooden pieces, and decorated animal skulls, will be on view at the gallery of the Orinda Library throughout the month of August. Despite the variety of mediums and styles present in the show, one common interest ties all of the exhibit's artists together; they are all members of the Orinda RoadRunners organization, a group of Lamorinda runners who have been taking to the streets and trails of the area together during early-morning runs for about 40 years.

"I got to talking with a number of the runners, and it's odd that several of them are artists themselves, so I thought it would be a nice idea to have an art show of these Orinda RoadRunners," said Ehrenhaft, a six-year member of the RoadRunners. "It would be unique because I rather doubt there have been places that have had shows put on by runners before."



This Maloof style rocking chair took Dale Herrero 350 hours of mostly hand tooling. Photo Dale Herrero

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