

MOVIE REVIEW

# 'Kung Fu Panda' is Back!

By Derek Zemrak



Po (voiced by Jack Black) and his long-lost panda father Li (voiced by Bryan Cranston) pose for a portrait in DreamWorks Animation's "Kung Fu Panda 3." Photo DreamWorks Animation

One of the most successful animated franchises in the world returns to theaters nationwide this week. "Kung Fu Panda 3" is the third movie of everyone's favorite, loveable, kung-fu-fighting panda Po, where he finds his long-lost panda father. The reunion takes Po to a secret panda paradise where hundreds of cute, cuddly, humorous pandas live a simple happy life. If it were not for the supernatural villain, Kai, who is searching for Po, all would be perfect. Po must train the pandas of the village how to defend themselves and become the ultimate band of kung fu pandas!

I love this movie franchise. It has great messages for the kids of all ages as well as adults. One of the first quotes in the movie is "He who takes - loses out." I think we can all learn from that. I had the opportunity to interview producer Melissa Cobb, and directors Jennifer Yuh Nelson and Alessandro Carloni at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in San Francisco. Everyone loves Po, voiced by the ultra-talented Jack Black. Po is simple, naïve, humble and something so very special.

I asked Cobb, who produced all three Kung Fu Panda movies, when she knew she had something special and she responded: "It really was when we finally recorded Jack Black and started seeing him in the character. There is a moment in the beginning of 'Kung Fu Panda' when he's in a Dojo and

he is kind of embarrassed, not ready to spar and playing with the training dummy; the animation of that when it finally happened, we all went 'aw' that is Po. We love him."

Nelson returns to direct along with Carloni. When Nelson directed "Kung Fu Panda 2," she was the first woman to solely direct an animated feature film from a major Hollywood studio. She went on to receive an Academy Award nomination.

"Kung-Fu Panda 2" is the second-highest grossing film ever directed by a woman, with "Frozen" taking the No. 1 spot. When I asked Nelson what she feels is Po's greatest trait, she responded: "He would not be embarrassed if he really screwed up and is a geek joy that compared to his sensitivity is what makes Po so special."

All the original voice actors return, including Jack Black as Po, Angelina Jolie (Tigress), Dustin Hoffman (Shifu), Jackie Chan (Monkey), Seth Rogen (Mantis) and Lucy Liu (Viper). When I asked how difficult was it to get the entire cast to return, Cobb said, "They were all happy to return for they love the franchise and the positive messages in the movies." The addition of Bryan Cranston as Po's father is an added bonus to the already amazing cast.

"Kung Fu Panda 3" is rated PG with a TRT (Total Running Time) of 1 hour and 35 minutes. Go see a quality movie for all ages to enjoy.

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## Service Clubs Announcements



Explore Lamorinda Rotary clubs The heart of Rotary is our clubs- dedicated people who share a passion for both community service and friendship. Learn about Lamorinda's Rotary clubs.

A global volunteer organization working to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment.



We meet Friday mornings at 7:00 am at **The Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa**, 3666 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. For more info, please email us at lamorindasunrise@gmail.com

**January 29:**  
**Brad Davis** will undoubtedly reveal several hilarious episodes from his glorious past.

**February 5:**  
**Susan Wait and Thomas Peeks** discuss Rotary District 5160 International Grant Program.

*When the time is right, we'll unveil a delight. A luxurious tear-drop trailer is an awesome sight!*

## Lafayette Rotary Club

**Step in on a Thursday and join us for our lunch meeting.** Thursday at noon Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette.

**February 4:**  
**Budd MacKenzie** will be speaking about schools in Afghanistan.

**February 18:**  
**John Coleman** from East Bay MUD will be speaking about the drought situation.

www.rotarylafayette.org

### SOROPTIMIST OF 24/680



*"Improving the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment"*

Please join us for our next meeting:

**WHEN:** Wednesday, February 3rd  
Social 5:30-6:00 p.m.  
Meeting 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** The Buttercup Grill  
660 Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek.

For more information, contact:  
Regina Englehart @925-876-9076  
or go to: [sorooptimist24-680.org](http://sorooptimist24-680.org)

## ◆ Not to be missed ◆ Not to be missed ◆

### OTHER ... continued

**Free Tax Preparation for the 2016 tax season is available** starting February 2016 from AARP's Tax-Aide and United Way's Earn It, Keep It, Save It (EKS) programs. All tax preparers are trained and certified by the IRS. While both programs serve taxpayers of any age, Tax-Aide does not have an income limit in whom they can serve but EKS can only serve individuals whose incomes do not exceed \$50,000. For general information and site locations, call: (925) 726-3199. For information on EKS sites call 2-1-1 or visit [www.earnitkeepsaveit.org](http://www.earnitkeepsaveit.org).

**On the Bayou/New Orleans Style dinner and silent auction** at 6 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 14 on the Saint Mary's College campus in Moraga. Music will be provided by the "and that's jazz" band from Alameda. The price for dinner and entertainment is \$45 per person. For info, call (925) 254-3645.

**Lafayette resident, Papa John Kiefer, will offer workshops** on "How to Raise Your Own Chickens." Topics will include raising young chicks, laying hen maintenance, and sustainable coop construction. Workshops are free and will be held in Lafayette from 1 to 3:30 p.m., on Sundays, Feb. 14 and 28. Reservations are required. For info, contact [jhkiefer@comcast.net](mailto:jhkiefer@comcast.net).

### SENIORS

**Valentine Exchange/Sing-Along with the Lafayette Community Center** preschoolers from 11:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 10 at the Cedar Room, Lafayette Community Center. Celebrate Valentine's Day with the darling little ones you see bouncing around the Community Center on a daily basis. Share their joy and enthusiasm by singing along with them to favorites such as "You Are My Sunshine" and "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," all the while enjoying cookies and punch. Valentine cards will be provided for you to exchange with your little buddies. Wear pink or red if you're able! Free.

**Men "of a certain age" (semi- or fully-retired) are invited** to hear a presentation from Linus Eukel who is the Director of the John Muir Land Trust during their regular lunch meeting at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 10, Holy Trinity Church, 1700 School Street, Moraga. SIRs welcomes new members. For details, visit [www.branch174.sirinc2.org](http://www.branch174.sirinc2.org) or call Tyler at (925) 284-5561.

**Discovering Opera: Bizet's "Carmen," presented** by Bradford Wade, opera lover for 35 years from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 11 at the Lafayette Library, Arts and Science Room. Lecturer Bradford Wade will give a guided tour of Carmen, with a description of the plot interspersed with musical examples. This lecture is given in conjunction with Opera San Jose's production of "Carmen," Feb. 13-28, 2016. Members: free; non-Members: \$10.

**Sons In Retirement - Las Trampas Branch 116** welcomes guests to socialize at its monthly luncheon beginning at 11 a.m. Monday, Feb. 15 at the Walnut Creek Elks Lodge, 1475 Creekside Drive. The speaker will be SIR Joel White, physician, who will explore the concept of shared-decision making in medicine in his presentation entitled "What you need to know and do unless you are certain you will live forever," information which will assist in creating better options and making choices that can comfort and enhance our experience even to the end, providing not only a good life but also a good end. Please call (925) 322-1160 to make lunch reservations. Cost for lunch: \$15.

**Ready to give your brain a boost? Join author of Strengthen Your Mind, Kristin Einberger,** for a workshop on the benefits of stimulating your brain and ways to strengthen your mind on Friday, Feb. 19 in Lafayette. You'll be engaged in brain games and activities that will stimulate your mind, memories and senses! Workshop is open only to individuals with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI), early stage Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia, and their care partners. Cost:

\$15 per participant. Pre-screening is required. Exact time and location will be provided upon complete registration. For more information or to register, please contact Lan Trinh at 1.800.272.3900 or [ltrinh@alz.org](mailto:ltrinh@alz.org).

### GARDEN

**Winter Rose Pruning workshop at 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 30** at McDonnell Nursery, 196 Moraga Way in Orinda. To reserve a seat, call (925) 254-3713 or email [info@mcconnellnursery.com](mailto:info@mcconnellnursery.com).

**UC Master Gardeners of Contra Costa at the Moraga Library** - "Growing Apples and Pears - The Basics" at 1 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 30. Master Gardener Darlene DeRosa will cover the basics of growing apples and pears and share tips on growing fruit trees in small spaces.

**The Walnut Creek Garden Club will hold its February meeting** at 9:30 a.m. on Feb. 8 at the Gardens at Heather Farm. Program: "Roses: How to Combat Those Nasty Pests & Diseases." Jolene Adams of the CC Rose Society will share her extensive expertise.

**Montelindo Garden Club meeting will be at 9 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 19** at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 66 St. Stephens Drive, Orinda. Visitors welcome. Presentation: "Incorporating Succulents Into Everyday Garden" by Rebecca Sweet, owner of the garden design company Harmony in the Garden, author, and speaker.

**The Lafayette Community Garden and Outdoor Learning Center** is accepting applications for individual or family memberships for the 2016 season. The season opening is March 12, 2016. If you are interested in getting more information, please go to the garden website at [www.lafayettecommunitygarden.org](http://www.lafayettecommunitygarden.org). To apply for membership, download and fill out a membership form and send it to the address on the form. If membership is full, you will be put on a waiting list. Questions? Call (925) 946-0563.

## Lamorinda Weekly

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