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Happy Thanksgiving



Thanksgiving is our favorite holiday of all. Time with family and friends, relaxation, football games, the wonderful aroma of turkey, gravy, stuffing, sweet potatoes and cranberry sauce.

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Orinda Council members Visit City of Sisterly Love



A parade helped honor Orinda's delegation.

Photo provided

Vasek and Balogh brought the Orinda delegation to the home of Adam's parents, Martin and Monika Kraus. Their historic home was built 500 years ago and was part of the castle walls. They toured this fascinating and beautiful home, going down deep beneath the castle walls to visit rooms like dungeons. They enjoyed a reception with local wine and cake, and attended a fancy cocktail party at the Hussite Mu-

seum. The mayor of Tabor spoke in Czech, which was translated into German for the benefit of Tabor's German sister cities. Vasek and Balogh translated for the Orindans.

Afterward, everybody went out into the square for a torchlight parade. There was a tremendous fireworks show, and a video was shown on the side of the city hall building. The weather was very hot, in the 90s. The following

morning the delegation donned professional costumes that were provided for them and explored the festival sights. They climbed to the top of the church tower (not easy for Smith in a heavy, floor-length costume gown) and were rewarded with a lovely view.

Then they lined up to take part in the big parade. The Orinda delegation was the last to march, and by that time it was bucketing rain

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and beneath their heavy costumes they were soaked to the skin. The group in front of them, a Slovenian group, were marching to a song, and the group with the Orinda delegation was dismayed that they did not have a song too. Always ready, Smith sprang into action and taught them a song. And so it was that they marched through Tabor singing, "The Stanford Jonah" —"Up with the blue and gold, down with the red!" A group of former visiting students lined up to watch the parade. As the Orinda delegation passed, they applauded them, then ran forward to get in line to do it again further down the parade route.

That evening they turned in their sodden costumes and the rain stopped. At dinner they were treated to toasts, were given gifts of local chocolates, and heard an address by the Chilean ambassador. The Orinda delegation met the Czech Minister of Culture and Prince William zu Lobkowitz and

invited everyone they met to come to Orinda next year for the King Wencesles Festival the last weekend in September, which will be the culmination of the celebrations of Orinda's Year of the Czech.

When Orinda was incorporated in 1985, the city was looking for a sister city. First Orinda mayor Dick Heggie thought that by choosing one that was just coming out of a long period of communism Orinda might be able to offer a helping hand. Former mayor Bobbie Landers cofounded the Orinda-Tabor Sister City Foundation together with Heggie and still plays an active role.

Smith admitted that she hadn't realized just how important the sister city program was until she visited Tabor and felt the warmth of the people and their tremendous affection for Orinda and the United States, as well as the deep appreciation for the help Orinda has provided to the city, which is only 27 years after the fall of communism.

For more information, see the following links:

Tabor Meetings:

www.taborskasetkani.eu/en/pictures/

Orinda's Year of the Czech:

www.cityoforinda.org/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC=%7B27459158-D8BC-4FFC-8ADE-50A8A64156BC%7D

Look for coverage of Tabor's Orinda exchange student, next issue.

Letters to the Editor

Repugnant Use of the Word 'Celebrating'
 Dear Editor,

Imagine if your son, daughter, brother, sister, or spouse was one of the names inscribed on Lafayette's white crosses. What a repugnant and crass use of the verb "celebrating". (Lamorinda Weekly, Nov. 2) We honor, remember, and pay tribute to the sacrifice of those American Service Members who have given their lives in the service of our country. That is the ultimate price of freedom. The US Armed Forces never "celebrates" the death of any service member. The use of the verb "celebrating" in this context is not only disrespectful but inflicts mental anguish to the survivors. This monumental disrespect is like describing a superb athlete who has just preformed a remarkable athletic skill as heroic. Nonsense. The quintessential definition of heroic is the young men and women who have sacrificed life or limb in the service of their fellow comrades-in-arms and our country. Please give these men and women the honor and respect for their truly heroic actions.

Stephen Anderson
 Orinda

Congratulations to Gee and Miller
 Dear Editor,

I congratulate Inga Miller and Darlene Gee on their success in the Orinda City Council election. Approximately 64 percent of Orindans cast their votes in support of these two candidates, creating a mandate for the council to complete the road repair program and develop a plan for an improved downtown. I look forward to supporting progress in both of these areas which are the highest priorities for Orinda at this time.

Bob Burt
 Orinda

Crosses are a Tacky Eyesore
 Dear Editor

It's unfortunate that we still have the eyesore that sits on Deer Hill Road. One of the more frustrating things is that the Lamorinda Weekly perpetuates the myth that anyone involved in the crosses ever reached out to the neighbors or residents to "build

support among the community" as the paper states. The Lafayette community worked to stop this visual protest but the Lafayette City Council was handcuffed by signage laws. These laws have subsequently been remedied so that this very visually loud folly cannot be repeated elsewhere in Lafayette — which in itself is telling - but sadly for the community the laws are not retroactive and this annoyance remains.

As to the "memorial" itself, the sheer scale and bluntness of the display should give its viewers a fair idea what message is being delivered. Indeed this is one-way "discourse" and is essentially screaming a political view at neighbors and passersby. We are reminded (ironically) of a certain politician on the national stage who doesn't give a fig for any other view but their own, and is as loud, rude and garish as Heaton's annoying selfish display.

I am a proud supporter of veterans and believe that as a country we should acknowledge them and thank them for their service. I also believe that war can be a horrible thing to be avoided and I appreciate those who voice their concerns and work for peace. I am equally a supporter of people's rights to express their views. Heaton and company are doing something that is lawful even if it is tacky or annoying. It does not raise itself quite to the level of the Westboro Baptist Church, but their fervent expression of their views is similarly grating and distasteful.

I wish that Heaton, et al, would step back and consider how negatively this display might be seen by those living nearby who are perhaps more polite in expressing their views. It is in polite and civil discussion that we find common ground and mutual respect.

Shane Palmer
 Lafayette

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines. Email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

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