

# Laughs, magic and scares hit the Lamorinda theaters this October

By Derek Zemrak



Andrew Norelli



Photos provided Jeff Richards



**R**ound four of the Bay Area's hottest comedy contest, Comedy Noir, returns to the Rheem Theatre at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 6. Come see some of the funniest up and coming Bay Area comics battle it out to advance to the finals at the Rheem Theatre on Friday, Nov. 3. Don't let anyone say your vote doesn't count! Tickets are \$15.

Illusionist Timothy James returns to the Rheem Theatre on Saturday, Oct. 7 with two shows at 6 and 8 p.m. This will be your last chance this year to see the amazing James. Get ready for a night of unbelievable sleight of hand, hilarious audience interaction, and a grand finale that will leave you saying, "What?? How did he do that??" It's fun for the entire family and kids of all ages. The 6 p.m. show is a family show geared toward 12 and under. The 8 p.m. show is 13-plus. Tickets are \$10 (under 18) and \$15 (over 18).

The Bay-Area Grown Comedy show at the Orinda Theatre Thursday, Oct. 12 features Jeff Richards and Andrew Norelli, who both grew up in the Bay Area and became nationally known comedians. Richards came from Walnut Creek and graduated from Las Lomas. He is a Saturday Night Live and MadTV alumnus. His most famous characters were Drunk Girl and Dr. Phil. Norelli grew up in Danville and graduated from San Ramon High School. He has had numerous appearances on late night talk

shows including The Late Show with David Letterman, The Late Show with Craig Ferguson and Jimmy Kimmel Live. Do not miss this rare comedy event with two of the Bay Area's very best performing artists together for the first time on the same stage on the same night! Tickets are \$30.

If you are looking for a scary movie this October you will not want to miss Orinda's free Movie Night on Thursday, Oct. 12 where they are showing the cult classic, "A Nightmare on Elm Street," where a group of teenagers are terrorized by Freddy Krueger (Robert Englund) who attacks his victims by entering their dreams and killing them. Remember free movie night at the Orinda Theatre is always the second Thursday of each month.

How about an independent horror movie to put a little scare into you this Halloween season? The Rheem Theatre has you covered with "The Lost Tree," which starts on Friday, Oct. 13. Yes, Friday the 13th for a week-long engagement. After a serious traumatic accident, a man leaves his old life behind and moves to an isolated cabin to start his life over. He soon learns that the surrounding area has a very dangerous past. "The Lost Tree" stars Scott Grimes ("ER," "Party of Five"), Lacey Chabert ("Party of Five"), Michael Madsen ("Reservoir Dogs," "Kill Bill") and Thomas Ian Nicholas ("American Pie," "Rookie of the Year").

## Lynn's Top Five

### The traditional numbers behind growing non-traditional families

By Lynn Ballou, CFP®

**B**ack-to-school time, Halloween trick-or-treaters, opening holiday presents with small children – all of these Norman Rockwell moments were heart-breaking for me and my husband for many years. After abandoning countless medical options with no results, we heard about open adoptions, a relatively new idea back then, and we were all in! Almost 29 years later and our family continues to grow with the addition of our beautiful granddaughter two years ago.

For those of you who may be struggling to grow a family as we were, and medical options aren't your solution either, let's explore other opportunities and their costs. If you are still reading this column please know that the matters of the heart and family are at the core of your decision. To be helpful, I'm going to focus just on the financial planning aspect and not the real reason we adopt – love and family.

**1) Open domestic adoptions:** Megan Cohen, an attorney with Family Formation Law Offices in Lafayette, told me that for these adoptions you and the birth mother will know each other's identities and how much contact you have is up to both you and the birth mother. The costs for these adoptions can vary quite a bit, but remembering you are in the Bay Area, you should be prepared to spend up to \$40,000. You might think this will mostly be for the birth mother's medical care, however, thankfully in California we have MediCal, so the actual medical costs are not likely to be the largest expense. According to Megan, most of the expenses are for agency and legal fees, home studies, and costs for the birth mother. You can read more about adoption on their website: [www.familyformation.com](http://www.familyformation.com).

**2) Surrogacy:** Friend and colleague at EP Wealth, Tyler Robuck, CFP®, and his husband, determined several years ago that surrogacy offered them their best alternative at building a family. As with adoption, the array of choices and opportunities is stunning as are the potential costs. The good news is that you can choose to have an agency handle every detail for you or you can do some things yourself, such as identifying a surrogate candidate and coordinating medical procedures. Other good news revolves around technology which now means that you can screen for genetically viable eggs thus avoiding multiple or unsuccessful births. Your costs for this path to parenthood can range from \$50,000 at a minimum to well over \$125,000. For more information from one group that specializes in surrogacy go to [www.growinggenerations.com](http://www.growinggenerations.com).

**3) Foster Care Adoptions:** In my chat with Megan Cohen, she explained to me that because these children are wards of the state, the state pays for almost all the costs associated with foster care adoptions. Within these types of adoptions are choices that can include foster to adopt, kids with special needs and safe surrender (infants). You can learn more about these possibilities by going to [www.adoptuskids.org](http://www.adoptuskids.org) and click on the link to California.

**4) International Adoptions:** Within the context of this short column, I cannot begin to do this topic justice. It seems that costs for these vary wildly depending on the circumstances, the country involved and their fees and regulations, the travel costs (including yours to visit, maybe more than once) as well

as fees and legal costs back here. According to Adoptive Families Magazine as quoted on [www.americanadoptions.com](http://www.americanadoptions.com) International Adoption costs in 2012 – 2013 ranged from about \$30,000 to \$45,000. You can read more about international adoptions on the U.S. Department of State's Intercountry Adoption Website: <https://travel.state.gov/content/adoptionsabroad/en/country-information/learn-about-a-country.html>.

**5) Tax Breaks for Adoption:** Some adoption costs can be offset with the Federal Adoption Tax credit which rises to \$13,570 this year, but phases out for parents with more than \$203,540 modified adjusted gross income

and gone when that number is \$243,540 and above. Parents who adopt a child with special needs can claim the full amount. As a non-refundable credit, it can only be used in the year you adopt if you have a tax liability to offset. More information is available on the IRS website: [www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc607.html](http://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc607.html).

As you can see there are many ways to build a family when giving birth to children yourself is not an option. I hope that no matter what path you choose, you will carefully research all the providers and experts you can, so that you find the team that is the best fit for you. It's worth the time, the calls, the meetings – it's a forever decision.



Lynn Ballou is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professional and Regional Director with EP Wealth Advisors, a Registered Investment Advisory Firm in Lafayette. Information used in the writing of this column is believed to be factual and up-to-date, but we do not guarantee its accuracy and it should not be regarded as a complete analysis of the subject(s) discussed. All expressions of opinion reflect the judgment of the author as of the date of publication and are subject to change. Content is not intended to be interpreted as tax or legal advice. Always consult a tax and/or legal professional regarding your specific circumstances.

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