

Set the table with stuffed mushrooms as side dish or appetizer



Joel's Stuffed Mushrooms

Photo Susie Iventosch

By Susie Iventosch

Back in October when we featured the fig-shallot jam, I mentioned my son's stuffed mushrooms and now it's time to feature them! This recipe calls for a small quantity of a long list of items, because we are trying to replicate a random barbecue seasoning that he happened to have on hand the day he first made up this recipe. We made them

again last week, using this exact list of ingredients and they were fantastic. The thickened juices in the bottom of the baking dish are also really good drizzled back over the top of the mushrooms when you serve them. If you don't have fig jam on hand, try finely smashed fresh or reconstituted dried figs. These mushrooms are great as a side dish or as an appetizer to pass around before dinner.

INGREDIENTS

20 medium-large cremini mushrooms
1-2 large shallots, finely diced (approximately 1/3 cup)
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon dried oregano
¼ teaspoon black pepper
¼ teaspoon white pepper
¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
1/8 teaspoon chili powder
Dash garlic powder
¼ teaspoon sea salt
4 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
2 tablespoons fig jam or fig chutney
½ cup crumbled blue cheese
½ cup grated Parmesan

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 375 F. Spray a baking sheet or 9x13 casserole dish with cooking spray. Heat oil in a skillet and add diced shallots. Cook over medium heat, stirring often until caramelized. Remove from heat and transfer to a bowl.

Meanwhile, clean mushrooms with a soft mushroom brush and remove stems. Finely chop four of the mushrooms and add to bowl with cooked shallots. Set remaining 16 mushroom caps (with cavity up) on the prepared baking dish. Add all remaining ingredients to bowl and mix well with a fork until well blended.

Distribute filling among each of the caps. Bake for approximately 15 minutes, or until cheese is bubbly and tops are getting slightly browned. Serve hot as a side dish or as an appetizer.



Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.

State's water infrastructure and politics to be discussed during Jan. 10 info session

By Lou Fancher

Lifetime learners and people who care about California's water supply will not want to miss the OLLI @Berkeley Info Session held Jan. 10 at the Lafayette Library. OLLI, the jolly moniker that's an acronym for UC Berkeley's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, is known to offer unique, rigorous, education courses to people age 50 and older. In eight locations in Berkeley and at the Lafayette Library, 2,800 members join approximately 75 faculty to explore over 100 courses that include modified medical school-level classes on the brain, creative writing, history, contemporary politics, film, music and art appreciation, and more.

During the free information session in Lafayette, staff and faculty will present highlights of the membership program and preview upcoming courses. Feature Speaker Richard Walker, professor emeritus of geography at UC Berkeley and director of the Living New Deal project, will delve into multiple aspects of the state's water infrastructure and politics in a presentation titled, "California Water Ward in the Age of Climate Change."

Expect Walker to set off ideological fireworks. During

a nearly 40-year career at Cal and as author/co-author of six nonfiction books – including his near opus published in 2018 on the environmental impact in the Bay Area of tech-driven Silicon Valley, "Pictures of a Gone City: Tech and the Dark Side of Prosperity in the San Francisco Bay Area" – Walker has developed powerful and arguably, politically volatile perspectives.

"California water has been badly mismanaged for a century-and-a-half," he says. "The system is a total patchwork of water rights all slapped on top of each other. Everybody sticks their pipe in the water figuring they can take as much as they want."

Walker insists the problems existed long before people heard of climate change. California's inflexible water infrastructure doesn't allow adequate adjustments during droughts is one example. Compounding the problem, continued overdrafts drawn from groundwater and rivers is wasted when used on low-value agriculture, like hay, or homeowners' lawns. "I'll start the talk by saying we have the most magnificent water transfer and storage system. But we believe a marvelous physical structure can solve our problems and it can't. We can only do that by wisely allocating and rationing our water."

Walker will conclude with clarification about an issue foremost on people's minds: wildfires. "Water management and wildfires have almost nothing to do with each other," he says. "Trump tweeted during the Camp Fire that if California managed its water properly, it would have less wildfires. The administration is trying to do an end run around state policy and just expand supply." Walker says raising water levels in dams, a solution suggested by the Trump administration and others, can have only trivial effect. "The confusion about water policy is enormous," he adds. "It's a constant uphill battle by sensible people to get California to revolutionize its water policy."

Delivering his message to an army of actual and future OLLI members might be clever strategy. "They're prime material for learning," says Walker, who will during the next semester lead a course, "The Living New Deal: Remarkable Past, Possible Future."

"They have time to take classes, they love to learn and have lively minds. They want more than a passive class. They're lovers of history, politically astute, and want courses that speak to the present."

OLLI Operations Manager

Lisa Hardy says members are curious and appreciate learning in a social setting. Faculty are experts in their fields, able to offer breadth and depth. Courses that limit size to allow greater one-on-one interaction between faculty and members tend to sell out within hours of registration opening. Hardy admits, the greatest challenge other than finding venues is "meeting the incredible demands of Bay Area members eager to learn."

Enthusiasm for hands-on learning explains why among the most popular OLLI courses are writing, international current affairs, history and cultural appreciation. Walker's New Deal class integrates all of those features and offers a citizen science-style opportunity, in addition to the regular classroom curriculum. Students will first study the New Deal that was launched by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933, largely in response to the Great Depression. The New Deal continued until America entered the Second World War in 1942 and had four primary components: economic recovery, job creation, investment in public works and active citizenship aimed

at the common good.

During the semester, students will learn about the role they might play in the Living New Deal project, of which Walker is director and a board member. Designed like a scavenger hunt, participants nationwide are invited to document and submit to a growing project database their encounters with New Deal public works, printed materials and photographs. Walker says, "The New Deal built things and employed people from all corners of the country. To lift the country up, it had to do that. Likewise, it's important that our Living New Deal as it is constructed has an economic foundation in terms of training and structure, but also a moral, or ethical, higher purpose. We're sorely lacking the idea that government is meant for everyone and to help the whole country."

Other OLLI classes beginning in January include "The Genius of Bach" with Stephen Schultz; "Our Brains: Molecules to Memory Part 2" with Peter Ralston; "The Silver Age of Russian Culture" with Elena Sheygal-Placzek; "Country Music" with Pete Elman; and more.

Info: <https://olli.berkeley.edu/>

Classical music concert at St. Mark's on Jan. 12



Ensemble Ari

Photo provided

Submitted by Jean Ahn

Ensemble Ari, a group of Korean American musicians in the Bay Area who strive to bridge Korea and other communities through western instruments while honoring Korean history and culture, will perform music by Bach, Handel, Cassado and living composers Ruviano and Ahn at 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 12 at St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Orinda.

Korean native composer Jean Ahn has been recognized, awarded, and honored by many. Her compositions have

been featured at Aspen New Music Festival, American Composers Orchestra's Ear Shot (by Memphis Symphony), June in Buffalo, Oregon Bach Festival, Etchings Festival, Festival of Contemporary Music, IAWM, Berkeley Symphony Under Construction, Pacific Korean Music Festival, and College Music Society Conferences, among others. Other members of Ensemble Ari include Baritone Joo Won Kang, Pianist Sharon Lee Kim, Violist Jaehee Jeong, Cellist Sarah Hong, and Violinists Ji-won Evelyn Kwark and Heeguen Song.

Info: <http://jeanahn.com/semble-ari/>

Live at the Orinda announces a stellar artist lineup for 2019 season



Rita Moreno Photo Mark Hill

Submitted by Derek Zemrak

The Live At the Orinda concert series, which presents world-renowned musical artists at the beautiful art-deco Orinda Theatre, will kick off its 2019 season on Saturday, Jan. 19 with legendary actor/singer Rita Moreno in her first Bay Area concert in many years, followed by a matinee performance on Sunday, Jan. 20.

Moreno was recently

Info: www.lamorindatheatres.com

signed by Steven Spielberg to co-star in and executive produce his remake of "West Side Story," which will begin filming this summer. Moreno currently stars in the Netflix reboot of "One Day At A Time." The Live At the Orinda opening weekend performances will also serve as a fundraiser for the historic Orinda movie theater to purchase permanent concert lighting for the venue to enhance the live music experience even further.

The season continues on Feb. 17 with three-time Tony nominated Broadway star Carolee Carmello ("Scandalous," "Mamma Mia!" "Finding Neverland") making her long-awaited Bay Area concert debut. On March 14, Broadway and TV star Telly Leung ("Aladdin," "Wicked," "Allegiance," "GLEE") comes directly from his starring role in Disney's "Aladdin" for his first Bay Area concert in many years. Platinum-selling singer/songwriter Ann Hampton Callaway ("At the Same Time") will reunite with Broadway star Liz Callaway

("Miss Saigon," "Cats") on April 4 for their award-winning show "Sibling Revelry." This also marks the first Bay Area duo concert by the Tony-nominated sisters in several years. Live At the Orinda will celebrate the finale of the first half of the season, before a summer break, on May 2, with Broadway and West End star Brent Barrett. This will also mark the Bay Area concert debut of the Olivier Award nominee and star of "Phantom Of the Opera," "Chicago" and "Kiss Me Kate."

All shows are presented in an intimate 180-seat theater inside the Orinda Movie Theatre complex. All seating is reserved, with most tickets from \$55-\$100 and no ticket service charges, nor food or drink minimums. Subscribers enjoy substantial ticket discounts and first choice of reserved seats for the season. VIP subscribers and donors are also invited to the private post-show receptions with each artist at Ciné Cuvée Wine Bar, adjacent to the theater.

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