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## Lease on Orinda Theatre extended for another five years

By Sora O'Doherty

Derek Zemrak and Leonard Pirkle, who have operated the Orinda Theatre for the last 12 years, recently renegotiated a five-year extension of their lease on the building, which was scheduled to expire in November.

According to Steve Harwood of the Lamorinda Arts Council, Zemrak and Pirkle have "operated the theatre with a passion for film and other forms of entertainment, bringing the community a wide variety of films, the world-class Live at the Orinda! cabaret program, comedy nights, and other entertainments." Harwood stressed that Orinda is lucky to have Zemrak and Pirkle continuing to run the Orinda Theatre.

In the past, Zemrak and Pirkle have maintained the theatre, often, Harwood noted, with their own labor along with that of family and friends. Under their commercial lease, the tenants are responsible for the cost of maintenance and improvements. One recent improvement of note is the Meyer sound systems installed in the large and intermediate-sized theatres.

During the pandemic, Zemrak and Pirkle strove to raise funds to maintain the theatre, including a GoFundMe campaign that raised \$275,000. "Because they are directly responsible for maintenance and improvements," Harwood noted, "they may reach out to the community for financial support in the future. If they do, I urge the community to be supportive."

In addition to showing movies and hosting live performances, the Theatre is the home of the Lamorinda Idol finals. The Lamorinda Arts Council pays market rates to rent the theatre for those performances.

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