

Lafayette author discusses new book and contributions of Chinese people in famous wine region

Submitted by
Laurelle Miles

Chinese laborers were once the backbone of Napa Valley. Throughout the 1800s, they toiled in the grape fields, hop farms, leather tanneries, and laundries, and carved out

neighborhoods in towns throughout the Valley. These contributions did little to deter discrimination and Anti-Chinese Leagues sprang up to harass and intimidate immigrants like Chan Wah Jack, who ran the successful Sang Lung store in Napa's Chinatown. In 1882, the Chinese Ex-

clusion Act hastened the decline of local Chinatowns and these once vibrant communities disappeared while the industries they helped to foster flourished. Join John McCormick and Lafayette City Council Member Wei-Tai Kwok as they uncover the forgotten contributions of the Chinese

people in California's most famous wine region as part of the Sweet Thursday Author Series at 7 p.m. Thursday, May 11 in Don Tatzin Community Hall at the Lafayette Library where McCormick will also discuss his book, "The Chinese in Napa Valley: The Forgotten Community that Built Wine Country."

This is a free event, but registration is required at Tinyurl.com/sweet-May23. The doors will be open at 6:30 p.m. for coffee and treats and Orinda Books will be selling copies of the book after the presentation. This program will be presented in-person or via Zoom livestream.

'Swan Lake' comes to the Orinda Library Auditorium

Orinda Ballet Academy's spring production, "Swan Lake and Contemporary Dances," will offer three performances at the Orinda Library Auditorium May 19-21. The academy had planned to perform this program back in spring 2020 before the COVID shut down. Director Patricia Tomlinson noted that while she was "super sad" to have had to close down that performance during

the pandemic, "we are happy to be reviving it with a beautiful cast of students and guest artists."

"Swan Lake" was last performed by the Academy in 2013. This year's guest artists performing along with the Orinda Ballet Academy students are Jackie McConnell, Christopher Dunn and Maurice Monge.

—Sora O'Doherty

Standing, from left: Sadie Elkind, Phoebe Higgins, Maya Elkind, Emily Charo, Bailey Brothers, Ella Pierce, Amy Li, Chloe Sabo-Nichols; kneeling: Gianna Galando, Mia Jeric, Ava Allaire

Photo Patricia Tomlinson



Eagle Project benefit concert held to replace stolen musical instruments

Submitted by **Stephanie Becker**

For Jack Becker's Eagle Project, he is organizing a benefit concert for the Oakland School for the Arts. "Recently, I learned that they had a robbery and over \$25,000 worth of musical instruments were stolen," Becker wrote in a letter to fellow Troop 246 members. "As a musician myself, I couldn't imagine how I would feel showing up to class without the trumpet I have been playing since elementary school." The benefit concert, which will take place at 3:30 p.m. April 30 in the Orinda Library Auditorium and feature the jazz students from both the Oakland School for the Arts and Campolindo High School, will help replace the stolen musical instruments and also raise funds to help the school upgrade the security of instruments in their music room. Admission is free with a donated instrument in good working condition or \$20 for adults and \$10 for students. "I hope you and your families can attend," Becker said. Volunteers on the day of the event will help set up, check people in, clean up and possibly help clean donated musical instruments. To learn more about the Oakland School for the Arts, visit: <https://www.oakarts.org>. Concert tickets can be purchased at: <http://oakarts.tix.com/>

Community Service: We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions may be sent to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com with the subject header In Service to the Community.

FWSF Odyssey of the Mind team heading to World Finals



Photo provided

Submitted by
Seema Jain

A team of seven middle school girls from Lamorinda recently placed second in the Odyssey of the Mind Norcal State Tournament and is now on the way to the next level of competition: the World Finals.

Odyssey of the Mind is a

global competition that challenges teams of students to develop creative solutions to complex problems without any adult help. Team members are Anshika Salgia, Avery O'Connor, Chiara Poletto, Elle Johnson, Emma Howe, Laurel Reader-Taatzes, and Narayani Chandra. The team is sponsored by the Financial Women of San Francisco (FWSF), and coaches are Nicole Reader,

Isaac Reader-Taatzes, and Diego Aguilar. This is the team's first year working together, and they are proud and excited to have accomplished so much in their very first season.

In Odyssey of the Mind, teams of students choose one of five possible problems, then work together for months to create a "solution" that takes the form of an eight-minute skit presented to the judges at the tournament. One of the most unique aspects of Odyssey of the Mind is that all aspects of the solution – script, costumes, props, scenery, technical elements, and more – must be entirely devised and created by the students. "No outside assistance" is the phrase to remember!

The FWSF team tackled a problem called "The Walls of Troy," which required that they create an original story with the theme of using creativity to overcome obstacles. Their solution has ties to Greek mythology (including a character from Homer's Iliad, a Greek chorus, and an animated statue from the Odyssey), but the team gave it their own creative twist.

The Odyssey of the Mind World Finals will take place in late May at Michigan State University in Lansing, Michigan.

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