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## Orinda names Citizen of the Year, Volunteer of the Year

By Sora O'Doherty

The Orinda Community Foundation honored Orinda's Citizen of the Year and Volunteer of the Year, 2023 at a celebration dinner on Nov. 5 at the Orinda Community Center

Founders' Auditorium. Bill Waterman, past president of the Orinda Association, was named Citizen of the Year, and John Fazel was named Volunteer of the Year. The dinner

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Photo provided

**Bill Waterman, Orinda's Citizen of the Year**

was catered by Shelby's Restaurant of Orinda.

Waterman was raised in Orinda and came back as an adult with his wife Marie to live in the family home. He joined The Orinda Association in 2000 and has worked with the organization ever since, volunteering his time to put on community forums, to drive seniors to medical appointments, and to chair the Fourth of July Celebration for four years as well as the Classic Car Show.

Waterman has also been a



Photo Sora O'Doherty

**John Fazel, Orinda's Volunteer of the Year**

member of Orinda Rotary for the past five years and has served on numerous city committees including the Historical Landmark Committee (still a member) and disaster preparedness committee.

A semi-retired attorney, he is on the board of directors of the nonprofit organization Congress of Neutrals and volunteers his time as a mediator, helping the courts mediate cases where people don't have attorneys. He also finds time to volunteer as a judge pro tem (a temporary judge) for the Superior Court, hearing small claims cases, traffic cases, and restraining order applications.

Retired real estate agent John Fazel was honored as Orinda Volunteer of the Year. Fazel is responsible for introducing several events into the Orinda Fourth of July Parade: the pancake breakfast, the fun run, (later turned over to Run for a Reason), and the flag raising, and was an active July 4 volunteer for many years.

Fazel also orchestrated the very successful, long running

Three-Quarter Century Club luncheon which is hosted with donations by many local businesses and grocery stores. In the past, over 100 residents in Orinda aged 75 and older enjoyed the event, which is now being expanded to include Moraga and Lafayette. Fazel is also now working with Orinda schools to launch a California mission discovery trail.

Active in the Orinda Trail Council, he helped the Creeks Committee get started, as well as the Orinda Hiking Club, one of the largest in the Bay Area, and was on the board of the Orinda Senior Village, serving as president for five years. Separately, he is an active member of the Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Club which takes on a number of initiatives benefiting all three communities.

Fazel has been a member of Orinda's Road Runner's since 1978. Nowadays Fazel has coffee with the Road Runners and goes on weekend walks with the group, which goes out six days a week.



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## NOV 9 - 16, 2023

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## 'Zoombombing' temporarily halts Council's remote public comments

By Sora O'Doherty

Remote public comments at Orinda City Council meetings conducted on the Zoom video conferencing application have been temporarily suspended starting with the meeting on Nov. 7. According to an announcement by Orinda City Clerk Sheri Smith, this is due to an increase in "Zoombombing" at public agency meetings; Zoombombing includes offensive and derogatory statements. City staff asked the City Council to ratify this decision by City Manager David Biggs at the Nov. 7 meeting and to plan to revisit the discontinuance prior to March, 2024. (That meeting occurred after press time, so we were unable to include the results here.)

The public is invited to present comments to the council in person at their meetings or in writing prior to a meeting. Written communications received prior to 3

p.m. on the day of the meeting are forwarded to the city council and posted on the city's website prior to the meeting. Emails can be sent to [ssmith@cityoforinda.org](mailto:ssmith@cityoforinda.org) or [cityclerk@cityoforinda.org](mailto:cityclerk@cityoforinda.org)

Although there have been no such incidents in Orinda, Biggs was concerned that other cities in the Bay Area and Contra Costa County have been subject to remote comments that contained offensive and derogatory statements targeting persons of color, the LGBTQ+ community, and various religious faiths. According to Biggs' staff report, "These comments are made by people appearing remotely and anonymously using fictitious names," and "have often been expletive laden or obscene in nature."

City Council meetings can still be viewed online as listed on the agenda either via Zoom Webinar and on YouTube.



**City Council Regular Meeting:**  
 Tues., Dec. 5, 7 p.m.  
 Orinda Library Auditorium  
 26 Orinda Way, Orinda

**Planning Comm.:**  
 Wed., Nov. 15, 7 p.m.

Orinda Library Auditorium  
 26 Orinda Way, Orinda

**Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission**  
 Wed. Nov. 8, 6:30 p.m.  
 Sarge Littlehale Community Room, 22 Orinda Way