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A chilly day at the Orinda Farmers' Market in front of the Orinda Community Park in Orinda Village. Photo Jeff Heyman

Local farmers' markets offer food and fun, rain or shine

By Jeff Heyman

Recent blustery weather didn't deter eager shoppers of all ages from indulging their culinary curiosity to peruse the bountiful fresh and often organic goods on offer at both the Orinda and Moraga farmers' markets. A weekend morning tradition for not only Lamorindans, but for folks from far and wide, the Moraga Farmers' Market features over 40 farmers and vendors on Sundays in Moraga from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Moraga Shopping Center at Moraga Road and Moraga Way. The Orinda Farmers' Market is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. -- rain or shine -- set in the historic heart of Orinda Village.

With more than 15 vendors, and live music to boot, the range of products is impressive. From seasonal produce and fresh meats, seafood, and cheese, to local

honey, olive oil, vinegar and homemade jam, and, of course, baked goods, there is really something for everyone at the Orinda Farmers' Market. And if all those gastronomic goodies make you hungry, you can choose some munchies, or a full lunch, from one of the vendors or food trucks on site. Tamales, crepes, dumplings and much more are all made fresh on the spot to quell that yearning for a tasty treat.

A visit to the Orinda Farmers' Market is a perfect family outing. The information booth often provides fun activities for kids, not to mention a wealth of information on the farmers at the market and the locally-sourced produce on hand each week.

Find out more about the Orinda Farmers' Market at <http://www.cccfm.org/> and Moraga Farmers' Market at www.cafarmersmkt.com/moraga-farmers-market.

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Contra Costa County only system in Bay Area with no libraries open on Sundays

By Sora O'Doherty



The Orinda Library Photo Sora O'Doherty

Contra Costa is the only county of the nine Bay Area counties whose libraries are closed on Sundays. Long time library supporter Carol W. Brown says that Orinda has enough funding to have the Orinda library

open every Sunday afternoon, but the county won't allow the library to open because they think that it is inequitable to allow cities that can afford to pay to have their libraries open when others cannot.

Historically, nine Contra Costa County libraries, including Orinda and Lafayette, had Sunday opening hours before the pandemic. At that time, Orinda used funds from Measure L, a library bond passed in 2000, to supplement the county-provided hours to assure that Orinda Library would be open 60 hours per week, including Sundays. Orinda voters also passed Measure J in 2018, an extension of the parcel tax passed in 2008, with the promise of maintaining library hours and services.

During lockdown, all the libraries were closed for in-person use, then reopened gradually, starting with grab-and-go services, and then reopening fully, except for Sundays. It should be noted that the nine libraries are not open the same days or number of hours per week, but none are currently open on Sundays.

According to Brooke Converse, Public Information Officer of the Contra Costa Library system, there are a number of factors that prevent Contra Costa County from offering Sunday hours. Chief among them is the union contract with library staff that prevents them from being required to work on Sundays. And, although there are staff members who would be willing

to work Sundays, Converse says that it was an administrative problem trying to fill Sunday hours with library staff, both in terms of administrative time and stress.

Converse provided some numbers in support of her contention. At one time, she said, there were 30 permanent intermittent staff (PIs) who could be required to work on 11 Sundays per year. However, there were 1,728 Sunday shifts, with some holidays included. 330 shifts were required to be filled by PIs, and the rest were filled by staff who volunteered to work Sundays.

The biggest hurdle to more library opening time is funding, and Converse points out that the Contra Costa County Library is funded at a significantly lower level than any of the other eight Bay Area counties. Contra Costa County libraries are funded solely from property tax, of which they receive 1.5%. The library does not receive any general fund monies from the County. The Library's budget for FY23-24 is \$41.3 million, which is less than 1% of the County's entire budget.

A survey of the other eight counties in the Bay Area revealed that they all have libraries that are open on Sundays, some for half days, some for even longer hours. Most county library systems receive funds in addition to property tax allocations.

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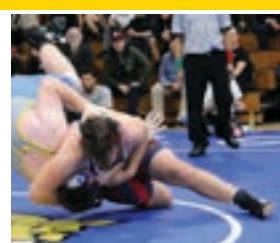
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