

Ware Designs *Fine Jewelry since 1977*

Expanding our Services with
Three Goldsmiths & a Graduate
Gemologist

- Custom Designs
- Appraisals
- Expert Repairs


All your jewelry is insured with Jeweler's Block Insurance.

50% off Watch Battery
Now \$5, Reg \$10
1 watch battery per person. Exp. 2/28/15. Usually installed while you wait. W/coupon. Restrictions apply.



3645 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette between Trader Joes & the Post Office
283-2988 www.waredesigns.com Tuesday-Saturday 10-6

GET AHEAD IN MATH THIS YEAR



WHEN MATH MAKES SENSE, YOU SUCCEED!

MATHNASIUM
The Math Learning Center

GRADES K-12
Pre-Algebra • Algebra 1 & 2 • Geometry
Pre-Calculus & Calculus
SAT/ACT Preparatory
Individualized Instruction

HOMEWORK HELP FOR ALL LEVELS
Flat Monthly Fee
Drop-in any time, no scheduling needed!

1 WEEK FREE TUTORING & HOMEWORK HELP
Must present coupon. New students only.

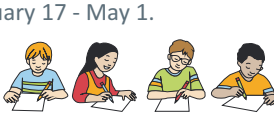
3435 Mt. Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette
(Golden Gate Way at Mt. Diablo Blvd.)
(925) 283-4200 www.mathnasium.com

The Writing Studio
A Place for Young Writers

Classes Start Feb. 17

Join **THE WRITING STUDIO** this fall as your children enter a world of **CREATIVE NARRATIVE AND ESSAY-BASED EXPOSITORY WRITING PROJECTS**. Through grade appropriate classes and one-on-one consultations, students learn proper sentence structure, organizational skills, the elements of well-written essays, creative use of descriptive words, correct grammar, usage, and so much more.

THE WRITING STUDIO is open to elementary, middle and high school students who strive to improve their writing skills. Projects consist of absorbing writing assignments, from first person narratives and persuasive essays to biographies and research projects. Our ten-week program will take place February 17 - May 1. For further information, visit www.lafayettewritingstudio.com or call 925-385-0211.



THE WRITING STUDIO
Where Words Come to Life

3455 Golden Gate Way, Suite A, Lafayette (925) 385-0211

The International Film Showcase

An important part of Lamorinda's cultural landscape

By Sophie Braccini



Efi Lubner Photo Sophie Braccini

Over the past four years, Efi Lubner and Jo Alice Canterbury have brought excellent foreign films to the Orinda Theatre that could not be seen anywhere else in Contra Costa County, and sometimes even in the country, as part of the International Film Showcase. Using discernment, foresight and skilled negotiating with producers, the passionate duo has been able to bring a weeklong showing almost every month of films that sometimes ended up becoming Golden Globe or Oscar nominees. The fifth season will start with the showing of the Italian film "The Human Factor" beginning Jan. 30.

The passion for films, especially foreign films, radiates from Lubner. A native of Israel, the Lafayette resident was nurtured by films from all over the world. "I grew up on movies by Buñel, De Sica, Godart, Kurosawa, and Fellini," he remembers. He came to this country with the idea of becoming a film director and producer, and while he participated and led many projects, he couldn't make a big enough name for himself in the

industry. So, instead, Lubner made his living in the computer industry, founding EDC Computer Systems.

Movies continued to be part of his life, however, and he often attended foreign film festivals, like the Palm Springs International Film Festival recently held Jan. 2-12. "There I would see great movies and I would tell my friends that I would let them know when the films would come to a nearby theater, but most never did!" he says.

Finding an American distributor is hard, explains Lubner; not many are ready to bear the financial risk to take on a foreign film. Sometimes when he and Canterbury want to show a movie here, they have to go directly to the producer and try to negotiate.

"It does not always work," says Lubner. "Sometimes the producers do not have the money to pay to get a rating or for the music rights." To get the recent Showcase movie "Tangerines" – a 2015 Golden Globe nominee which is short-listed for an Oscar – Lubner met with Estonian producer Ivo Felt in Palm Springs last year and negotiated for months until he could get the movie through a Canadian distributor.

The film distribution industry is very structured and finding theaters that can stray from the regimented system is also hard. "We talked to Jim Sheehan when he was managing the Orinda Theatre," remembers Lubner. The Orinda venue was a natural choice since Lubner and Canterbury met while on the Lamorinda Film and Entertainment Foundation, a group that was formed to support the Orinda Theatre. A deal was made with Shee-

han to show a movie once a month for a week. When the management team changed, the deal was upheld, but changed to eight times a year instead of 10. Leonard Pirkle with the Orinda Theatre explains that there are conflicts with the scheduling of films. "We have tried to address this by only having the series occur in those months that seem to have more available slots – less studio releases," he says, adding that the theater plans to continue showing the films.

The duo only selects movies they both love, but Lubner says that he prefers films based on real stories that are not too avant-garde in the way they are filmed. "We are both volunteers; we work for the love of films and our reward is when people love what they've seen," he adds.

Lubner would not say which movies were his favorites: "They were all interesting, and give an opportunity to discover different cultures," he says. He adds that besides "Tangerines," some of the highlights last year were the German movie "Two Lives" and the Japanese film, "Like Father, Like Son."

Lubner and Canterbury are hoping they will be able to continue to bring these gems in Contra Costa County. The key is the location and the attendance. "We have an email list of 2,700 people; if folks want to receive the information about our movies, they can go to our website (internationalshowcase.org) and enter their address," says Lubner.

A review of the movie "The Human Factor" is slated to be published in the Jan. 28 issue of Lamorinda Weekly.

"I love Saklan because we are family"

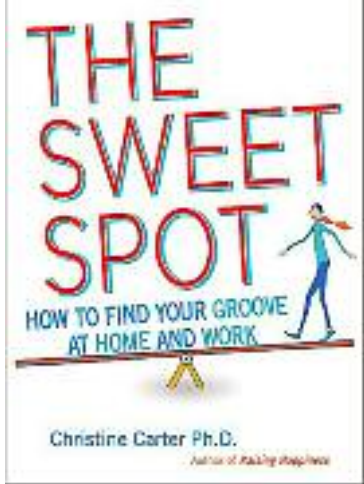


OPEN HOUSE DATES:
K - 5th Grade : Jan 23
Middle School : Jan 16

Nurturing the true spirit of every child
PRE-K — 8TH SAKLAN.ORG 925.376.7900

Finding Your Groove and The Sweet Spot

By Lou Fancher



What elephant are you riding on? This might be the most important question you can ask yourself, according to a new book from sociologist and happiness expert Christine Carter.

"The Sweet Spot: How to Find Your Groove at Home and Work" (Ballantine Books) arrives in mid-January with perfect "New Year's resolution" timing from the UC Berkeley Greater Good Science Center expert and author of the best-selling "Raising Happiness" (2011). Carter spent her early childhood years in Orinda, attending Wagner Ranch Elementary School and Orinda Intermediate School in the 1970s. The Bay Area resident has two daughters and once described their visits to her parents still living in Orinda as "Disneyland to my kids" in an interview for a Lamorinda Weekly article about happiness.

So it's worth wondering how a woman with a Ph.D., a person plugged in to the latest research on happiness, productivity, organization, positive psychology and avoiding pitfalls like over-scheduling, could wind up riding the wild elephant of our 21st century, digital, do-it-all lifestyle. But Carter did.

Joining the herd of over-achievers, Carter cavorted along a dizzying chain that sounds all too familiar: perfect parenting, perfect professional performance, perfect partner to everyone but herself. She wound up perfectly exhausted.

But armed with science, practicality, a sense of humor and actually, frustration at finding herself enervated and disempowered at the intersection of professional success and personal sacrifice, Carter regrouped.

Fortunately for the rest of us, she put her lively personality and rock solid research into 320 pages of sharing her process and procedures for re-assembling a life.

"The Sweet Spot's" 10 chapters divide into five sections: Take Recess; Switch Autopilot On; Unshackle Yourself; Cultivate Relationships; and Tolerate Some Discomfort. Ideas that are useful, but aren't revolutionary, gain substantial authority when backed by real science—specific studies and references that are often expanded upon in highlighted boxes within each chapter. And Carter's autobiographical examples of losing her way and how she found the "groove" leading her back to power and mas-

tery are delivered in a confessional, humble writing style that removes any impression of being "talked down to" or lectured by an expert.

Instead, we're encouraged to "crack the habit code" and given 21 tips to do so, including things like identifying mini-habits and bad habit triggers, designating intrinsic rewards and resisting self-sabotage, and even the counterintuitive "expect failure."

A suggestion to switch herds begins a terrific section in the book that leads a reader through purposeful actions to mindful living. Making conscious choices isn't easy, Carter repeatedly asserts. After all, there's risk and hard work in things like sublime sacrifice. Giving unto others is not simply an antiquated, automatic, "Golden Rule" idea, it takes effort—starting small. Social psychology has proven countless times the value of breaking desired behavioral changes into small, but still challenging steps – or outsmarting our smartphones – turn it off and talk to a stranger for a daily dose of "positivity resonance," among other tips.

Quoting Jonathan Haidt, author of "The Happiness Hypothesis," Carter suggests we avoid trying to control the elephant – Haidt uses an elephant as a metaphor for our most forceful, automatic habits, like seeking food and love – and instead, become skilled riders able to distract or coax the unwieldy beast of habits into more positive territory.

... continued on page B4



Old Firehouse School
www.oldfirehouseschool.com

Announcing Open Houses

Lafayette Open Houses January 12 th February 9 th at 6:30 p.m.	Walnut Creek Open Houses January 27 th February 23 th at 6:30 p.m.
---	---

Open Houses are for adults only

984 Moraga Rd. (925) 284-4321	55 Eckley Lane (925) 934-1507
----------------------------------	----------------------------------