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## Lamorinda Weekly Photographer Retires With Honors



From left, Lamorinda Weekly editor Peggy Spear gives Ohlen Alexander his CNPA First Place plaque.

camera able to take high resolution photos, some people might consider themselves to be photographers, but they would be wrong," says former Lamorinda Weekly Editor Jennifer Wake. Few can pull off the artistry of a photograph like Ohlen Alexander."

The photographer, who has lived in Orinda for 30 years with his wife, Juanita, says he enjoys taking portraits of people even though "It's hard to capture the spirit of a person in a photo."

But in his years with this newspaper, he captured not only the spirit of the community — whether it was people or owls — but he did it with enthusiasm and professionalism.

Between his time in photography he has worked as a professor at the California State University Maritime Academy teaching primarily math and physics. He said he would be spending his newfound free time studying Italian at the Orinda Community Center. — P. Spear




The award winning photo was on our front page on April 22, 2015


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Ohlen Alexander started his newspaper career at age 13 as a paperboy for the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin. He is ending it as an award-winning photographer for the Lamorinda Weekly.

Alexander was recently awarded First Place in the California Newspaper Publishers' Association's Better Newspapers Contest for a photo he took at the 2015 Earth Day celebration at the Wagner Ranch Nature Area. (See the award-winning photo at right.)

"These days, with every smart phone containing a

## Slow Down Lamorinda!

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Moraga interim Chief Jon King with the Slowdown Lamorinda banners and the Slow Down Lamorinda bumper sticker. Photo Sophie Braccini

pay more attention on their routine routes.

King and Christensen met with Orinda Chief of Police Mark Nagel and decided to revive the Slowdown Lamorinda program that had not been activated last year.

The program consists of dedicating five to six police officers that will work all summer long, choosing one day a week, in different places each time, to conduct hours of enforcement. Nagel says that the main purpose of the program is to bring awareness to drivers on the dangers of driving at high rates of speed and distracted driving.

King adds that the police forces have no hidden agendas, they just want to keep the streets safe, and since they are about prevention, the three departments are making sure people know about the campaign and won't be taken by surprise by the surge of enforcement.

King ordered banners that will be displayed in the three cities that recommend slowing down and stop distracted driving. The three chiefs are also using Nextdoor, their city's newsletters, and other media to end complacency over high speeds on local roads.

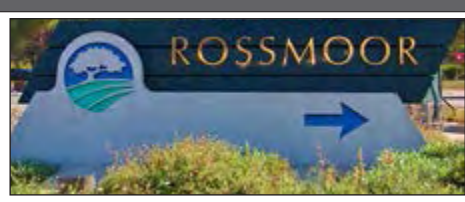
This program is not the only time the three police departments work together. They routinely assist each other monitoring common DUI checkpoints, training together with active shooter drills, and on a daily basis, depending on the severity of calls for service, assisting each other for backup when necessary.

Slow Down Lamorinda will continue until the end of summer and might resume for the holidays. People wanting to support the program can go to their police department, take the pledge of following traffic laws and get a bumper sticker that says "Slow Down Lamorinda."

He says that summer and freedom from schools mean that more young or less experienced drivers socialize with their friends, in cars that can go very fast. Moraga Interim Police Chief Jon King adds that speed is a contributing factor to the seriousness of accidents and that recent complaints have made his department aware that speeding is again becoming more prevalent. For example, in mid-May the police caught a driver doing 76 mph on a 35 route, and the citations for the first five months of the year have increased by 15 percent from 317 last year to 362 in 2016, with the same amount of enforcing.

King also knows that public works departments typically take advantage of the summer to conduct various road repair projects, and that drivers should

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## Downtown Parking

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In reality, the relationship between BART and Orinda's parking issues remains unknown. Kinzel referred to an informal contact he made with BART concerning use of the Orinda station lot, and found that most of the users were from the "greater Orinda area," which includes both Orinda and other communities in the Highway 24 corridor. All of the lots fill up by 7:45 am. Not a lot of Orinda users come from outside, he said, and the percentage from Richmond and El Sobrante is in the single-digit range. One thing is certain: Orinda cannot expect to receive any assistance from BART, as "the likelihood of BART doing anything to increase its parking spots is very, very low," he said.

Kinzel exhibited no familiarity with the casual carpooling area next to Theater Square and its relationship to Bates Boulevard parking, and was confused by the fact that the curb is also marked as a two-hour parking zone. When a member of the audience explained the casual carpooling arrangement, he responded, "Is that a good thing?"

While the study results appear to raise more questions than provide solutions, TJKM does recommend four short-term measures to improve the management of existing parking spots in the study area. The first is to improve

enforcement, a measure favored by 89 percent of the survey respondents to maintain free parking. The consultant recommends that the city allocate one full-time employee for this purpose, funded by citation revenues.

The second recommendation is to change time limits for all four-hour spaces to two-hours, with effective enforcement.

The third is to issue Employee Parking Permits for Study Zones 1 and 2, and the fourth is to consider Residential Parking Permits on selected streets with documented long-term parking.

The study also suggests less specific longer-term measures to reduce parking demand, such as encouraging the growth of bicycle and motorcycle use, and for increasing parking supply by building or sharing parking lots, perhaps coupled with shuttle service.

One measure that TJKM specifically does not recommend is the implementation of parking meters.

The timing of the meeting conflicted with Game 5 of the NBA Finals, a circumstance that could not have been predicted in advance, said Tonya Gilmore, the city's public information officer, and it was sparsely attended. A video of the meeting — albeit of poor quality in some places — can be viewed on the city's website, www.cityoforinda.org.