

# LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Mural begins to take shape with huge printed sheets of velum paper taped to the Orinda Library wall.

Photo Sora O'Doherty

## Orinda mural comes to life on side of library building

By Sora O'Doherty

With the coming of spring, the natural history of Orinda is being brought to life on the side of the Orinda Library by muralist Jane Kim of InkDwell Studios, San Francisco. After the city of Orinda prepared the wall of the library, giving it a coat of off-white paint, the artists of InkDwell got started on March 28, only slightly delayed by rain on that day. The mural is expected to take four weeks to complete and is on schedule, according to Kim.

Kim has done numerous large murals, both indoor and outdoor. Each mural has its own process. For the Orinda library project, the drawing was first done on a small scale, then scaled up to the size of the wall. The company has a very large format printer, which was used to print out the image on huge sheets of velum paper. These sheets were then taped to the library wall, and later, the figures were cut out with Exacto knives, and the outline of the image traced onto the wall with .9mm graphite pencils.

For the details within the shape, InkDwell uses standard transfer paper, working little bit by little bit to transfer the image to the wall and then apply some paint. For this project, Kim has three different transfer techniques going on at the same time. Kim says that her method is very efficient, and that efficiency is key to making a successful project. "Accuracy is very important to us," she noted, "because of our ties to natural history and science. It is not our style to freestyle."

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## Ukrainian mother, grandmother, safe in Orinda, worries about family at home



Photo Sora O'Doherty

Victoria Babich and grandson Ruslan in Orinda.

By Sora O'Doherty

Victoria Babich flew in from Ukraine to visit her son and his family in Orinda on Feb. 12, little knowing that when the end of her month-long visit arrived, she would be unable to return home. As the world now knows, Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24. And so, the Ukrainian forensic psychiatrist remains in Orinda, separated from the rest of her family, including her husband, sister and mother, who, at 86, is unable to leave the country.

Victoria's only son, Kirill Babich, has lived in the U.S. since 2014, when he arrived here for work. He is married with two sons, one of whom was born here. His wife's family is also still in Ukraine.

Babich's family lives in Zaporizhzhya, a city in southeast Ukraine about 20 miles from the conflict and about 100 miles from the sea. Ukraine actually borders two seas, the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Victoria is able to speak with her family every morning; there is a 10-hour time difference. In Zaporizhzhya, they can hear the sounds of war, of missiles landing.

Victoria finds it terribly difficult to watch the news on television. She is affected by the "incredible cruelty of the Russian soldiers," she says. "A lot of buildings are destroyed, and there are people under the destroyed buildings, but the Russian soldiers won't help them. I live in a state of fear every day. I don't know what will be the future of my country."

Still, she is grateful to have new friends in Orinda and Moraga who support her. This is her fourth trip to the Bay Area. Kirill and his family were in Ukraine last summer, when his oldest son, Ruslan, went to camp to improve his language and social skills, he says. Ruslan, who attends Sleepy Hollow Elementary School, speaks better Russian than Ukrainian. His younger brother, Tyler, born in California, is also learning Russian, although he is only 3. Ruslan says that his classmates learned about the situation in Ukraine and made sunflowers, the Ukrainian national flower, but don't discuss politics.

What Victoria wanted most to emphasize is her support for and appreciation of Ukraine president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who was elected to a five-year term two and a half years ago.

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