

# Friends of Orinda Creeks Gathers Steam

By Chris Lavin

At a meeting last week of Friends of Orinda Creeks, seven people gathered to do two things: Revitalize their membership, and hear from the California Department of Fish and Game about how they can help chil-

dren get more involved with trout. After all, notes member Brian Waters, a network of creeks is under just about everyone's nose.

"They see neighborhoods, roads, and they don't even know that a creek

runs through it," Waters said.

Michael McGowan is out to change that. As the new person in charge of membership, he is determined to swell the ranks of Friends of Orinda Creeks to well beyond its paltry list today. The Friends are starting with their usual table at the Fourth of July celebration downtown, but McGowan also started a free membership group for any student who wants to join, no matter his or her age.

"It's something we just started, so it's not really going (gangbusters) yet," McGowan said. He plans to revamp the website to make it more appealing to students, make the site more user-friendly, and link it to educational materials.

That's where Ethan Rotman, who has the whopping title of Fishing in the City and Classroom Aquarium Education Programs Director for the state of California, came in. Plus he has a picture of a mountain lion and a trout on his business card, something most people cannot get away with. Rotman described Trout in the Classroom, a program that needs sponsors to provide aquariums and support for teachers who want to hatch trout eggs, then have their students release them into pre-ordained areas where the trout are naturalized.

The Friends group immediately voted to sponsor three classrooms at about \$275 a pop. That pays for the aquarium, the water-cooling system, and posters that show what trout eat (just about anything that moves), where they live and what their habitat is dependent upon. "You have to remember that the high cost is up front, for the equipment," Rotman said. "Then it lasts for years. We haven't had anything break down yet." Teachers throughout the state, including in Orinda, participate in the program.

"It's quite the emotional experience for these kids," Rotman said. "They watch the fish hatch, and then they each get to go out with a tiny fish that can fit in a bottle cap and release it themselves." An added plus: The curriculum fits into the new core standards program in the middle grades.

"We have some schools that keep it going, year to year, adding more complexity," Rotman said. "It would be great if you could hook up with one of our volunteers and work with a classroom." All eight heads in the room nodded.

Rotman's visit seemed to add a new sense of urgency to the Friends' mission - to preserve the watershed, keep the creeks clean, and to increase membership.

"This guy is great," Waters said of Rotman's visit. "And I called him only yesterday."

Information about The Friends of Orinda Creeks can be found at [www.orindacreeks.org](http://www.orindacreeks.org). Teachers wanting to participate in Trout in the Classroom can contact [ethan.rotman@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:ethan.rotman@wildlife.ca.gov).



Lisa Hales of Friends of Orinda Creeks and Chris Lavin check the trap. Photos provided



An overnight capture of wildlife in a tributary of San Pablo Creek in Orinda last week netted a frog, a crayfish and tons of stickleback fish.



Lisa Hales holds a frog for a photo opp before the frog was released.

## Service Clubs Announcements



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Please join us at our new location THE LAFAYETTE PARK HOTEL on Friday mornings at 7am. For more info, please email us at [lamorindasunrise@gmail.com](mailto:lamorindasunrise@gmail.com)

Sat., Aug 22, 2015  
10:00am to 3:00pm  
San Pablo Reservoir  
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diablo ballet

ANNUAL DANCE ON FILM FESTIVAL  
in conjunction with the Lafayette Library & Learning Center and the Lamorinda Weekly

Tuesday July 14 6:30 PM

Top Hat (1935) Oscar nominated musical with music by Irving Berlin  
Starring Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire, this film was the most successful picture of Astaire and Rogers' partnership, achieving second place in worldwide box-office receipts for 1935.

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